

Standing Fast in the Grace of God

"If Ye Call..."

The Conduct of the Holy

1 Peter 1:17-21

The first four words of verse 17 – *"And if ye call"* – use a verb often connected with prayer, the idea of calling upon God for help. Peter assumes that these believers, facing severe trials, would naturally cry out to their heavenly Father, just as a child instinctively calls to his earthly father in distress.

Peter's purpose here, however, is not to teach them *how to pray*, but to remind them *how to live* as those who pray. If we are people who call God "Father," then our conduct ought to reflect the character of the One upon whom we call. Peter moves from the command to "be holy" in verses 15-16 to the practical outworking of that holiness in verse 17:

- A life marked by reverent fear,
- Grounded in the price of our redemption,
- Fueled by faith,
- And anchored in hope.

So, while this passage touches our prayer life, its deeper purpose is to shape our daily conduct as those who call upon the Father.

The question then is, "What does Peter say must characterize the conduct of those who call upon God?"

I. A LIFE OF REVERENCE BEFORE THE FATHER (VS. 17) – THE FEAR OF GOD

A. The reality of our relationship

"If ye call on the Father"

1. "If" (εἰ - meaning since or if indeed) – this assumes the relationship is genuine. In other words, "If you call Him Father, then live like His child."
2. The terms used of "calling" on the Father would have reminded the Jews to whom Peter was writing of the covenant language of the Old Testament, particularly as found in the Psalms.

Psalm 116:4

⁴ Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

Romans 10:12-13 [parenthetical portion - chs. 9-11 - dealing with Israel]

¹² For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

3. This addresses privilege and responsibility.

➤ Holiness begins with remembering *whose* you are before *how* you live.

B. The righteousness of His judgment

"Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work"

1. "Without respect of persons" (ἀπροσωπολήπτως) – impartial judgment; God is not swayed by appearances, status, or public reputation.

This is fatherly judgment, NOT condemnation (Heb. 12:6-10; 1 Cor. 11:32).

1 Corinthians 11:32

³² But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

2. "Judgeth according to every man's work" – He evaluates our works as His children.

"... we are not to understand that He is a critical judge trying always to find a defect or flaw in our conduct or service. [This] word is found [more often] in a good than in a bad sense. That is, God's impartiality is an honest appraisal of things, while His heart is always with His child and goes out to him in a spirit of love." (Wuest)

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether *it be good or bad*.

- Holiness is lived with accountability in view.

C. The reverence of our pilgrimage

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

1. "Pass the time" – live our life in such a way as to make sure it points to our heavenly Father.
2. "Sojourning" (παροικίας) – living as temporary residents; pilgrims (Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 11:13-16; 1 Pet. 2:11).

1 Peter 2:11

¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

3. "In fear" – this is:
 - a) Not fear of condemnation – Christ bore that on the cross (Rom. 8:1; John 5:24).
 - b) Not fear of arbitrary punishment – the discipline of the Father flows from love (Heb. 12:6).

c) Real fear of His holiness – “judgeth”

The “fear” Peter means is the fear of:

d) Disappointing the Father,

e) Dishonoring His name,

f) Wasting our stewardship,

g) Treating redemption lightly,

h) Living carelessly in a world where God sees all.

- This fear is not dread, but it is not casual reverence either. It is a holy caution rooted in the nature of God.

Psalm 2:11

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Proverbs 8:13

¹³ The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Philippians 2:12

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

II. A LIFE GROUNDED IN REDEMPTION THROUGH THE SON (VS. 18-19) – THE PRICE OF OUR SALVATION

Holiness doesn't come from any self-motivation or effort on our part, but from understanding the price of redemption.

A. The corruption we are delivered from

“Vain conversation received by tradition”

1. "Vain" (ματαιίας) – empty, futile, powerless to save.
2. "Conversation" (ἀναστροφή) – in this context, primarily speaking of our conduct in life; lifestyle.
3. "Tradition from your fathers" (πατροπαράδοτος – only time used in the Greek NT) – speaking to the inherited way of life of not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well.

The phrase "tradition from your fathers" simply means the life that was handed down to you before you knew Christ – the empty, powerless, Christless way of living that was passed down to you. Whether someone was raised in religious tradition or idolatrous superstition, it was all equally empty apart from the blood of Christ. Peter is reminding them that they did not escape that life through money, rituals, or moral effort, but only through the precious blood of the Lamb.

B. The cost we were delivered by

"Not redeemed with corruptible things... but with the precious blood of Christ"

1. "Redeemed" (λύτρον) – to release by paying a ransom, or to set free by the payment of a price. It's a word that emphasizes liberation – not just purchase, but purchase for the purpose of freeing, or buying out of bondage.

There are three essential ideas of redemption:

- a) A captive – we were slaves to sin (Rom. 6:17).
- b) A cost – freedom required a payment and the only payment God accepted was the blood of

His Son (Heb. 9:12, 22).

c) A change – redemption means we now belong to God – set free to serve, not free to sin (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

2. Negatively: we were not redeemed with “silver and gold” for riches cannot redeem.

Psalm 49:7-8

⁷ None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: ⁸ (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

3. Positively: “But with the precious blood of Christ” (vs. 19a).

C. The character of the Deliverer

“As of a lamb without blemish and without spot”

1. There is an allusion here to the Passover Lamb.

Exodus 12:5

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

2. “Without blemish and without spot” – outwardly perfect, inwardly pure.
3. Christ is the flawless sacrifice foretold in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 53:7

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

- Holiness remembers the One who died to make us holy.

III. A LIFE GUIDED BY REVELATION (VS. 20) – THE PLAN OF GOD

A. Redemption was foreknown

“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world”

1. “Foreordained” (προεγνωσμένου)
 - a) Perfect passive participle, meaning known beforehand with continuing effect.
 - b) It emphasizes deliberate divine planning. Redemption was not God’s reaction to Adam’s sin, it was God’s eternal purpose, revealed when man sinned.
2. “Before the foundation of the world” – God planned the Redeemer before He made the world. Man’s fall did not force God to adjust His plan; it revealed the plan He already established in Christ.

Revelation 13:8

⁸ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

B. Redemption was manifest

“But was manifest in these last times”

C. Redemption was personal

“For you” – This is directed toward believers under trial.

IV. A LIFE GUARDED BY FAITH (VS. 21A) – TRUST IN GOD

“Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory...”

A. Christ is the Mediator of our faith

B. Christ is the ground of our faith

C. Christ is the goal of our faith

John 14:1

¹ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Hebrews 12:2

² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

V. A LIFE GUARDED BY HOPE (VS. 21B) – CONFIDENCE IN GOD

“That your faith and hope might be in God.”

A. Hope anchored in God’s character

Not in circumstances, nor in deliverance from trials, but in God Himself.

B. Hope strengthened by the resurrection

Because Christ lives, our hope is sure.

C. Hope sustained through trials

Trials reveal where our hope truly rests.

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1 Peter 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Conclusion:

Peter began this section (vs. 13-25) by calling us to holiness (vs. 13-16). Now he shows us how holiness behaves: it fears God, remembers the price of redemption, trusts in Christ, and hopes in God. If we call God our Father, then our lives must reflect His character.

Holiness is not something we talk about; it is something we live. It shapes how we respond to trials, how we guard our conduct, how we view our past, and how we face the future.

- We cannot call on the Father without living as His children.
- We cannot remember the blood of Christ and treat sin lightly.
- We cannot believe in God without placing all our hope in Him.

The conduct of the holy is a life transformed by reverence, redemption, faith, and hope.

May the Lord make us such people.