Introduction

I have titled our message today, "How Christians should conduct themselves." I believe this is a timely and needed message in the church. Our passage today begins with Peter saying, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." This is an older and wiser Peter than the outspoken fisherman that Jesus trained for three years. In Proverbs, Solomon wrote that "the heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips." Peter was direct and blunt in his younger years, and he may have worded it a little different when he was younger. He may have said, "If you call yourself a Christian, act like it." But he has matured, instructed his mouth, and now communicates the same message in a much softer and persuasive way. I have also been a very direct and sometimes blunt person, so I have been learning some of the same lessons out of Proverbs that Peter learned.

> (1 Pe 1:17) "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth;*"
>
> (Pr 16:23) "The heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips."

The first section in 1 Peter is about how we should respond to our wonderful salvation. I have broken it down into five messages. In the first message, we covered verses three through nine, and saw that we are to rejoice in God. Peter gave four things to rejoice about, even though they were going through trials. They were to rejoice in their salvation. They were to rejoice in their inheritance that is reserved for them. They were to rejoice in the protection that God gives them. And they were to rejoice in the results that would come after their faith had been proven by testing.

Section One of 1 Peter	
Four reasons to rejoice in God (1 Pe 1:3-9) 1. Rejoice in their salvation 2. Rejoice in their inheritance 3. Rejoice in their protection 4. Rejoice in the results	**Responding to the gospel of grace** (1 Pe 1:10-16) 1. Rejoice in God for revealing this salvation to us 2. Prepare our minds for action 3. Live a holy life
How Christians should conduct themselves (1 Pe 1:17-25) 1. They should conduct themselves with fear 2. They should fervently love one another	**Living Transformed Lives** (1 Pe 2:1-3) 1. Lay aside all sin 2. Long for God's Word 3. Abide in God's Word

Next, we saw in verses ten through sixteen how believers should respond to the gospel of grace. They were to rejoice in their salvation, prepare their minds for action, and to live a holy and obedient lives. They were not to be conformed to their former lusts, but to be holy in all their behavior, just as God is holy.

Today, in verses seventeen through twenty-one, we will see today that Christians are to conduct themselves in fear of God during their time of stay on earth. Then, in verses twenty-two through twenty-five, Christians are to fervently love one another.

Next week, in the first three verses of chapter two, we will see that Peter exhorts believers to put aside all sin and long for the pure milk of the word so that they can grow in respect to salvation. He is talking about spiritual growth and transformed lives.

> (1 Pe 1:17–21) "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; {18} knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, {19} but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. {20} For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you {21} who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

> (1 Pe 1:22–25) "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, {23} for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is,* through the living and enduring word of God. {24} For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, {25} BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you."

1. **They should conduct themselves in fear** (1 Pe 1:17-21)

Our passage begins with Peter saying, "if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." Peter is addressing believers, those who are chosen and have been born again. These believers know the Father, so he is indirectly telling them how they are to conduct themselves.

> (1 Pe 1:17) "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth;*"

Peter prefaces his exhortation with a statement about the Father, "the One who impartially judges according to each one's work." All of us are going to stand before God and give account for our lives. He is going to judge every believer, and He is going to judge impartially. There are no favorites who get special consideration; God is an impartial judge. Jesus said in John 5:24 that believers do not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life. There is not a contradiction; there are two separate judgments. There is a judgment of the righteous and a judgment of those who have not believed in Jesus, and received His payment for their sins.

> (Jn 5:24) "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

In Romans 14:10, Paul wrote, "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God." One day, every one of us will have to stand before God and give account for our lives. Paul is talking about the judgment of the righteous in Romans 14:10.

> (Rom 14:10) "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."

In the judgment of the righteous, we will all have to give account. In Hebrews 13:17, we see that those in a body that do not obey their leaders will not have a profitable time. They may lose some possible rewards, as their sins are already forgiven.

> (Heb 13:17) "Obey your leaders and submit *to them,* for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

There are a number of rewards or crowns that can be awarded to believers. Here is a list of those crowns.

1. **Crown of Righteousness.** This crown is rewarded for purity in life by living in light of the return of Christ and loving His return. (2 Tim 4:7-8)
2. **Crown of Life.** This is a crown given for persevering through trials and tribulation, sometimes at the expense of one's own life. It is sometimes called the martyr's crown. (James 1:12, Rev 2:10, 3:10-12)
3. **Crown of glory.** This is a crown given to elders for their faithful care of the flock of God. Many believe that it will also be given to those who faithfully support their overseers, based on the promise in Matthew 10:41. (Matt 10:41, 1 Pet 5:1-4)
4. **Crown of Beauty.** This is also called the crown of wisdom. It is given by the Lord for those who have sought and acquired wisdom. (Pr 4:5-9)
5. **Crown of Rejoicing.** This is also known as the soul winners crown, or the crown of rejoicing. It is given as a reward to those who win people to Christ. (1 Thess 2:19, Pr 11:30, Phil 4:1)
6. **The Incorruptible Crown.** This crown is rewarded for discipline in the Christian life. It is mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, where he compares the Christian life to the life of an Olympic athlete who is competing for a perishable wreath. He says that our wreath (crown) is imperishable or incorruptible. Therefore, we must run our race in such a way that we might win, living with purpose and discipline, buffeting our body and making it our slave. (1 Cor 9:24-27)

The judgment of the wicked is also known as the Great White Throne Room Judgment. In this judgment, the wicked are judged and sent to the eternal fire that had been prepared for the devil and his angels.

> (Matt 25:41, 46) ""Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...{46} And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.""

In Revelations, John gives us another glimpse of this day of judgment. All the dead, great or small, stood before the throne, and the book of life was opened. Each person was judged according to their deeds. If anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

> (Rev 20:12-15) "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. {14} And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

> {15} And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

In Revelations 21:6-8 John wrote that the unbelievers and unrighteous will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The immoral and unrighteous people, those who had not trusted and believed in Christ, were thrown into the lake that burns with fire.

> (Rev 21:6-8) "And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. {7} "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. {8} "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.""

So, there are two judgments, one for the righteous, who will give account for their lives, and also be awarded various crowns. There is also the judgment of the wicked, where they will be cast into the eternal fire. Peter is referring to the judgment of the righteous, who will be judging the work of believers.

He exhorts believers to conduct themselves in fear during the time of their stay on earth. The word conduct comes from the Greek word anastrepho (Strong's G390), which refers to how a person carries himself, behaves, lives, acts, or conducts himself.

In 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Paul used the word in telling Timothy that the reason that he wrote him was so that believers would know how to conduct (anastrepho) themselves in the household of God, the church. The overall emphasis in Timothy is honor. We are to honor God; and we are to honor one another. We are to honor older men and women. We are to honor younger men and women. We are to honor widows. We are to honor pastors. Servants were to honor their masters. All of us are called to honor one another. In addition to honor, believers are exhorted to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

> (1 Ti 3:14–15) "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; {15} but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

We find in Hebrews 13:18-19, that those who wrote that letter said, "pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct (anastrepho) ourselves honorable in all things. Our conduct needs to be honorable in all things.

> (He 13:18) "Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves (anastrepho) honorably in all things."

When I first earned my PGA Tour card in 1978, I had to attend the PGA Tour Business School. They covered many different topics, including professional conduct. They brought in someone from Dale Carnegie to speak on player/sponsor relationships. Players were not allowed to say anything derogatory about a tournament sponsor, host club, or the PGA Tour. In other words, players were not to give bad reports or it would be considered unprofessional conduct. There used to be a private joke among players about how to answer a media question about a course

that you did not like. If a player said, "It's the finest of its kind," you would know that it was not a very good course.

Many employee agreements have a conduct clause in them. They want to make it clear what good conduct is, and what conduct would be a violation of professional conduct is. Here is a sample clause in an employee agreement:

> **Professional Conduct and Workplace Behavior**
>
> Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, ethical, and responsible manner in all work-related activities. Employees shall treat colleagues, supervisors, customers, vendors, and other individuals with courtesy and respect. Conduct inconsistent with these standards may include, but is not limited to:
> - Disrespectful or abusive behavior: Harassment, bullying, intimidation, threats, abusive language, or other inappropriate treatment of colleagues or others.
> - Dishonesty or misconduct: Fraud, falsification of records, misrepresentation, theft, or deliberate violations of company policies.
> - Disruptive behavior: Actions that materially interfere with workplace operations, undermine a safe working environment, or prevent others from performing their duties.
> - Misuse of position or authority: Abuse of supervisory authority, conflicts of interest, or using one's position for improper personal advantage.
> - Conduct damaging to professional relationships: Behavior in work-related settings that materially undermines trust, workplace cooperation, or the organization's legitimate business interests.
> - Policy and legal violations: Failure to comply with applicable laws, established workplace policies, confidentiality requirements, or other legitimate job-related obligations.
>
> The organization will review alleged violations fairly and consistently, taking into account the nature and severity of the conduct, the surrounding circumstances, applicable policies, and any relevant mitigating factors. Confirmed violations may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, consistent with applicable law and organizational policy.

As believers, we are to have honorable conduct. The motivation behind our conduct is that God is going to impartially judge us according to our work. He sees everything and knows everything about each one of us. He even knows our thoughts before we speak them. David understood this, and wrote about it in Psalm 139.

> (Ps 139:1–4) "O LORD, You have searched me and known *me.* {2} You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. {3} You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. {4} Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all."

When Peter wrote that we are to live our lives in fear, it was not a fear of judgment. Believers have passed out of judgment. There is a righteous and holy fear of God that believers should have. Many today teach that we should not live our lives in fear, and that the fear of the Lord is the Old Covenant. However, that is not correct. When we look at the fear of the Lord, we see that believers in the New Testament, which is the New Covenant, had a fear of the Lord. We see an example in Acts 5, where the Lord took the lives of Ananias and Saphira for lying about the

offering that they gave. Afterwards, a great fear of the Lord came over the whole church. Believers may not be judged and sent to hell, but they may be disciplined by the Lord, or put to sleep for their sins.

> (Ac 5:1–11) "But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, {2} and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. {3} But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? {4} While it remained *unsold,* did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." {5} And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. {6} The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. {7} Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. {8} And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." {9} Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*." {10} And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. {11} And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things."

We find another example in Acts 9, where the church throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase. The fear of the Lord is not spoken of in a negative sense, but in a positive way.

> (Ac 9:31) "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."

In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul wrote, "Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. We need a healthy fear of the Lord today, and we need to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit.

> (2 Co 7:1) "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

In Ephesians 5, Paul wrote about walking as wise men. He told them not to be drunk with wine, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, he concluded, saying, "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

> (Eph 5:21) "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

Similarly, Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:17, that believers are to honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king. We are exhorted to fear God, and we have Biblical examples and precedents.

> (1 Pe 2:17) "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

Some say that the fear of the Lord is just a reverence for God. It is a reverence and awe and respect for God, for He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is all powerful, omniscient, and a holy God. We should have an awe and respect for Him. But the fear of the Lord is more than just respect. It is living with an awareness that God is with us, and knows everything that we think, say, and do. It is an awareness that He is our Father, and He will discipline His children as needed.

Notice that in Hebrews 12 that God deals with us as sons, and He disciplines us. If we are without discipline, we are illegitimate children and not sons. God disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. It may not be joyful for the moment, but it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness after we have been trained by it.

> (Heb 12:7–11) "It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? {8} But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. {9} Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? {10} For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. {11} All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

Many years ago, I did a study of the fear of the Lord, and I identified twenty-nine different benefits from having a fear of the Lord.

- It is the beginning of wisdom (Pr 9:10).
- It is the beginning of knowledge (Pr 1:7).
- God promises His provision to those who fear Him (Ps 34:9).
- The fear of the Lord helps us avoid and overcome sin in our lives (Pr 16:6).
- God promises wealth, honor, and life to those who fear Him (Pr 22:4).
- God reveals His covenant and His secrets to those who fear Him (Ps 25:14).
- He stores up goodness for those who fear Him (Ps 31:19).
- God protects and delivers those who fear Him (Ps 33:18-19).

Those are just a few of those benefits. We have a New Covenant, but that does not mean that these benefits of have a fear and reverence of God ended; we still greatly benefit from the fear of the Lord. I pray for it in my own life, and I often pray it for others. The church today needs a healthy fear of the Lord.

Peter then mentioned that our lives here on earth are temporal. We are to conduct ourselves in fear during the time of our stay on earth. We are going to spend an eternity with God. Our suffering is only temporary.

> (1 Pe 1:17) "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;"

Then, Peter wrote a second reason that our conduct should be honorable. He wrote that we were not redeemed with perishable things like silver of gold from our futile way of life inherited from our forefather, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. We have been bought with a price, a very expensive price, the blood of Jesus. He died so

that we could be set free from sin. It is often said that something is only worth as much as someone will pay. Our salvation is extremely valuable because Jesus was willing to pay everything He had, His life. We should be appreciative and conduct ourselves honorably in light of what Jesus did to save us.

> (1 Pe 1:18-19) "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, {19} but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

There is something else worth noting. Peter mentioned the time of our stay on earth. Then, he mentioned our futile or vain way of life. Earlier, he had mentioned that our inheritance was imperishable, undefiled, and would not fade away. The things on earth are perishable. The things on earth get defiled, and they fade away. There is an obvious contrast between our eternal life with God, and our vain, futile, temporal life here on earth. We need to keep that perspective at all times, and live for eternity.

After mentioning that we had been redeemed with the unblemished, spotless blood of Christ, Peter wrote that Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but appeared in these last times for our sake, who are through Him believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. God, in His foreknowledge, knew that man would sin, and would need to be redeemed. According to His predetermined plan before the foundation of the world, God was going to send Jesus to die for our sins and be raised again from the dead so that our faith and hope are in God.

> (1 Pe 1:20-21) "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you {21} who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

> (Ac 2:23) "this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."

2. **They should fervently love one another** (1 Pe 1:22-25)

Peter's next point is to fervently love one another from the heart. He prefaces that exhortation by saying, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren." The Greek word for obedience is hupakoe (Strong's G5218). Hupo means to be under, and akouo means to hear. Hearing did not mean that you could recite the words spoken; it meant that you were doing what was said. Hupakoe was used for children obeying their parents, or slaves obeying their masters. It required two things, listening with understanding and then obeying the word.

> (1 Pe 1:22) "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,"

Peter uses the word three times in this first chapter. In verse 2, he wrote that we have been chosen to obey Jesus Christ. In verse fourteen, he wrote that "as obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts. In verse twenty-two he wrote that in obedience to the truth we have purified our souls. The Christian life is about obedience. The Navigators is a ministry that was started by Dawson Trotman. He developed the disciples' wheel. At the center was Christ, who must be the center of our lives. There were two vertical spokes. The top vertical spoke

represented prayer, and the bottom spoke represented God's word. Our relationship with God depends on both prayer and the word. The two horizontal spokes represented our relationships with other, either witnessing to nonbelievers or fellowshipping with believers. Notice that the perimeter of the wheel was titled, "The Obedient Christian In Action." Dawson Trotman got it right; the Christian life is about obedience. We have been chosen to obey.

> (1 Pe 1:2) "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood…"

> (1 Pe 1:14) "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,"

In the Old Testament, God expected His people to obey Him. In the New Testament, God still expects His people to obey Him. In the New Covenant, He gives us a heart of flesh and puts His Spirit in us so that we can obey. In Ezekiel 36, God said, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Morevoer, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." God has chosen us to obey Him. He has cleansed and purified us. He has given us a tender heart and put His Spirit in us. He has done all of this so that we can obey Him and His commandments. We have been chosen to obey Him. In obedience to the truth, we are to purify our souls so that we can fervently love our brothers and sisters in Christ.

> (Eze 36:25–27) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. {26} Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. {27} I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

We have purified our hearts for a sincere love of the brethren. We saw in our study of 1 Timothy 1:5, that Paul's goal was love from a sincere faith. The same Greek word, anypokritos (Strong's G505), which means without hypocrisy, is used here. For us to love one another, we cannot be hypocritical; we must have pure hearts. Jesus hated the hypocrisy in the Pharisees and Sadducees, and He does not like hypocrisy in the church. Jesus wants us to purify our hearts and have a sincere faith, and a sincere and fervent love for one another.

> (1 Pe 1:22) "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,"

We should love one another for we "have been born again, not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." We see again the contrast that Peter has made between the perishable and the imperishable. Our life here during our time of stay on earth is temporal, but we will spend an eternity with the Father. Our inheritance is imperishable, while the things on earth are perishable, and can be defile and fade away. We have been born again through the living and enduring word of God. Because we have been born again, and received God's love, we should fervently love one another.

> (1 Pe 1:23) "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is,* through the **living** and **enduring** word of God."

Peter continues with his comparison of the temporal and the eternal. He quotes Isaiah 40:6, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever." This living and enduring word, the gospel, was preached to us, and through it, we have been born again.

> (1 Pe 1:24–25) "For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, {25} BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you."

I want to talk for a few minutes about this living and enduring word. In Hebrews 4:12, we find that the word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow. God's word is living, and it is active.

> (Heb 4:12) "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

While outside of our hearts and minds, it cannot do its work. We must put God's word in our hearts. We have to read His word. We have to think, ponder, and meditate on His word, and memorizing His word greatly helps us in that endeavor. We have to study His word. We have to learn what God is telling us in His word. God's word will do its work in our lives, but we must do our work and get His word in our hearts. Once in our hearts, it is sharp and can divide what is of the spirit and what is of the soul. It can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. God's word is living and active, but we must take in the word of God.

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he constantly thanked God that when they received the word of God from Timothy, Silas, and himself, that they accepted it for what it really is, the word of God which performs its work in you who believe. The church today needs to receive the word of God for what it really is, God's Word, which is living and active, and performs its work in our lives.

> (1 Th 2:13) "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."

We have been born again through the living and enduring word of God, and in obedience to God, we are to obey His commands. What was the new commandment that Jesus gave? It was to love one another. Therefore, we are to sincerely and fervently love one another from the heart.

> (Jn 13:34) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

Conclusion and Applications

All of us are going to stand before God, who is an impartial judge. Those that address Him as Father, believers, will have a different judgment, a judgment of their work. Peter exhorts the believers to conduct themselves in fear during their time of stay on earth. The fear of the Lord is a good thing, and it brings holiness, wisdom, and many other benefits. In this case our conduct should be honorable in light of the fact that we will stand before God.

Peter said that we were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. We should appreciate the sacrifice that He made for us, and our lives should reflect our humility, gratefulness, and appreciation.

Peter wrote that we have purified our souls in obedience to the truth, and now we should fervently love one another from the heart. We were born again by the imperishable word of God, which is living and enduring. We should have tremendous respect and appreciation for the gospel message, and our conduct should reflect that respect and appreciation.

Our first application is for those that may have never believed and received Christ. You cannot address God as your Father, and your day to stand before God will be very different. Because your sins have not been forgiven, you will not be able to come into the kingdom of God. You will be judged according to your sins, and the consequences of that are horrifying. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, and you would like to receive Jesus into your life today, I encourage you to pray right now.

> "Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You came in the flesh and died for our sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I yield my life to You right now, and I confess You as Lord of my life. Help me to follow and obey you. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

Our second application is for believers. The Holy Spirit may have spoken to you about your conduct, and there are areas of your life that are not honoring to God. I exhort you to confess these to the Lord, and ask the Lord to forgive you. I encourage you to make a fresh commitment to follow and obey the Lord in all areas of your life.

Our third application is to encourage believers to fervently love one another from the heart. Make a commitment to meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and to ask the Holy Spirit to help you apply those principles in your life.

Closing Prayer

Father God, You have chosen us to obey You. Jesus, You redeemed us with Your precious blood. Help us to show appreciation to you for the sacrifice You made. Help us to conduct ourselves honorably and to live with a healthy fear of You. Jesus, You gave us an example of what it means to love one another; You laid Your life down for us. Help us to lay our lives down for one another. Help us to fervently love one another. When people see us, may they know that we are Your disciples because of our love for one another. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What does the fear of God look like to you?
- Why does Peter use the phrase, "during the time of your stay on earth?"
- What have believers been redeemed from?
- How should the blood of Christ help us conduct ourselves during our stay on earth?
- How do we purify our souls? How do we maintain a pure soul?
- What is an example of how the Word of God has been living in you?
- How is the Word of God enduring forever?
- What two things are required for the Word of God to be active in our lives?

How Christians Should Conduct Themselves (1 Pe 1:17-25)

Introduction (1 Pe 1:17-25, Pr 16:23)

1. **They should conduct themselves in fear** (1 Pe 1:17-21, Jn 5:24, Ro 14:10, Heb 13:17, Mt 25:41, 46, Re 20:12-15, 21:6-8, 1 Ti 3:14-15, He 13:18, Ps 139:1-4, Ac 5:1-11, 9:31, 2 Co 7:1, Eph 5:18-21, 1 Pe 2:17, Heb 12:7-11, Ac 2:23)

2. **They should fervently love one another** (1 Pe 1:22-25, 1 Pe 1:2, 1:14, Eze 36:25-27, Isa 40:6, Heb 4:12, 1 Th 2:13, Jn 13:34)

Conclusion and Applications