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**Following Jesus Today  
Called to Make a Difference**  
1 Peter 1:13-25  
November 25, 2018, Pastor Jeff Germs

[Jeff Beselt to read Scripture]

[2]

1 Peter 1:13–25 (NLT)

***13 So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.***

[3]

***15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. 16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy." 17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."***

[4]

***18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.***

[5]

***21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. 22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.***

[6]

***23 For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24 As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades. 25 But the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.***

[7]

This is the third sermon in our series on 1 Peter. The first part of chapter one laid some theological groundwork for what is about to come next. In verse 13 of chapter one Peter begins with "**So**." Most other translations use the word "**Therefore...**" Remember whenever you see a "therefore" when you are reading your Bible you always want to ask, "What it is there for?"

It refers to something he has just written. He has just finished extolling the benefits that the follower of Jesus has in salvation: new birth, a living hope, and an assured eternal inheritance. Now he says, because of those things you should be living differently. You have a higher calling. In other words, truth should influence how you live.

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I've said it before that **our behaviour is determined by what we believe, not necessarily by what we know intellectually.**

For example, I would like to get in better physical shape. I know intellectually, that for health reasons and quality of life, it would be good for me to enter into a program of healthy diet and regular exercise. But, I also know that if I am going to be serious about this it will mean that I will have to give up something else in order to enter that training. Not only would I have to give up something, I would also have to add something difficult to my life – the discipline of training.

So, in order for me to do this I need to believe in my heart that the thing I am gaining is of greater benefit to me than the thing I am losing. I can know it intellectually, but if I don't believe it in my heart it's not going to affect my behaviour.

In our passage, Peter says if you really believe from your heart that the benefits you have received from the Lord are greater than the benefits of life in the world, it will change how you live. You will have a new eternal perspective.

In this passage there are some ethical reflections that should influence the life of the follower of Jesus, based on what Christ has done for the believer.

There are four calls that Peter shouts out to us.

**[9]**

**A. A Call to Hope (13)**

**B. A Call to Holiness (14-16)**

**C. A Call to Fear God (17-21)**

**D. A Call to Love One Another (22-25)**

Remember, the background of 1 Peter is that they were living in a foreign land, in the midst of impending persecution. Peter's main concern in writing this letter was to help them understand how they were to live as followers of Jesus in an unbelieving community that was very much against what they believed, so much so that they were persecuted for it.

In the first part of chapter one from verses 3-12, as we saw last week, he said that in order to make it through difficult times they would need to change their focus.

They would need to have God's perspective in these three ways. The same is true for us. We need to look back to our...

**[10]**

**A. Past Salvation**

God has saved us from our sin and the old way of living.

We need to also focus on our...

**B. Present Faith**

He is using our current circumstances, no matter how hard they may be, to transform us into the image of Christ.

And finally, we need to look forward to our...

**C. Future Hope**

The benefits of salvation are not just in this present life. They extend to eternity. One day, Christ will return and all of our sorrows, pain, and tears will cease and we will live in God's eternal *shalom*.

Now he says, with this new perspective in mind, the way you live will change. If you truly believe these things it will affect your behaviour, and even how you feel — eventually.

**[11]**

**1 Peter 1:13–25 (NLT)**

***<sup>13</sup> So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control.***

**“So...”** Because of all he previously said... (v. 13)

***“...prepare your minds for action...”***

Literally, in the Greek this says, “gird up the loins of your mind,” which is how the KJV renders it.

**[12]**

In those days men wore long robes or loose garments that would hang down to their ankles and they would get in the way when they were working or when they ran. What they would do in those situations was grab the bottom of their robe and pull it up from the front and back and tuck it into their belt or tie it in a knot. That would free up their legs for hard work. It would look like they were wearing baggie shorts. Now they were ready for action, to work or to run. It was called “girding up your loins.”

In our vernacular we might say, “roll up your sleeves,” or “pull up your socks.” Get ready for some hard work. Prepare for battle. This is what Peter says here.

“Because of what you believe is true about God and the benefits of salvation, prepare your minds for some hard work.” Get psychologically prepared.

**[13]**

Peter continues, “Exercise self-control.” Some translations use the word “self-discipline.” There’s that hated word – “discipline.” It’s the opposite of doing what comes naturally. The natural thing to do when I see ice cream is to eat it. That is what everything in me says to do. But, if I listened to that loud voice reverberating in my head every time I heard it, I would be out of control – and forty pounds heavier.

What Peter is saying here is that what he is about to tell us is going to take hard work and discipline.

***“<sup>13</sup> So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control.”***

***“Gird up the loins of your minds and be self-disciplined.”***

Don’t just do what comes naturally because it will get you into trouble.

This leads us to Peter’s first call for action:

**[14]**

#### **A. The Call to Hope (13)**

The first two verbal clauses, “***prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control***” are subordinate and modify the main verbal clause which is “***Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world.***”

So, the hard work Peter says we are to prepare for is to keep our focus on the fact that Jesus will one day return to take us home. This is the hope of the follower of Jesus.

Perhaps this doesn’t seem like hard work, but let me ask you this.

**[15]**

There are 1440 minutes in a day. Last time I checked we all have the same amount of time. I think most of us wish we could add one more day of margin to our week, but we can’t.

**[16]**

We all have 86,400 seconds in each day. How many of those seconds or minutes do you focus on the fact that Jesus will one day return?

If we ask the question like that, most of us probably do not focus much or any thought on the return of Jesus. Maybe a better way to shape the question is like this: Is the way you think and live motivated by the fact that your life on earth is temporary and you will spend an eternity with Christ in heaven? The litmus test is this: **What we believe is important will be revealed by what we invest our time, energy, and finances in.**

[17]

**Do we spend our time, energy and finances on things of eternal value or things of temporal value?** Are we attempting to set up a heaven on earth for ourselves, or are we continually aware of the fact that our lives on earth are fleeting?

I don't think it's a coincidence that Peter starts and ends this passage the same way. This is called an inclusio in the language of theologians. It's a biblical literary device that sort of acts like a set of bookends, or the like the bread in a sandwich. The writer begins with a thought, goes on to say some things about the thought, and then says the same thing again at the end to wrap it up.

In verse 13, Peter tells us to look forward, to put *all* our hope in Christ's return. Then he adds a whole bunch of tasty filler relating to how our lives will be impacted if we focus our hearts upward. And then he ends with this in verse 24. This is a beautiful sandwich.

[18]

**1 Peter 1:24 (NLT)**

***24...“People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades.”***

Our lives down here on earth are fleeting.

[19]

Life expectancy in Canada is increasing every year. But we don't live forever. In 1920 the life expectancy for women in Canada was 61 and for men 59. In 1992 it was 81 and 75 respectively. Today it is 84 for women and 80 for men.

When I was born in 1960, life expectancy was at about 73 for women and 69 for men. When I was a young kid I thought, “Wow, that's old.” I thought it was long enough. In about a week I will be 58. The older I get the faster life seems to fly by and it seems far too short now.

Life expectancy in Canada continues to trend upward. Scientists are working continually on ways of extending the life expectancy of human beings on earth. This is a very natural pull for us as human beings. We want to live forever. And we will. The problem comes when we live as if **life on earth** is forever. It's not.

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***24...“People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades.”***

Our bodies break down and get weaker the older we get. And each of us, some sooner than others, will one day die. Our lives on earth will be complete. But, the Bible tells us that death is not the end. If we live our lives thinking that the here and now is all there is, we will focus on the wrong things.

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Peter says, <sup>13</sup> ***So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world.***

There is so much more to life than what our five senses can experience here on earth. Peter's first call in living as followers of Jesus in Campbell River is to work hard at keeping our focus on things of eternal consequence.

What's eternal?

Well, verse 25 tells us.

[22]

***25 But the word of the Lord remains forever.” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.***

God's Word is forever. The Good News of Jesus. He is eternal. Our first focus and priority in life should be on knowing and loving God. What else is eternal? People are eternal. Our life on earth is fleeting, but followers of Jesus will live for eternity with Jesus. That's why Jesus said the two most important commandments are to love God and to love people. Life on earth is about relationships – our relationship with God and with people.

That's why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12 that the greatest thing we can do on earth is to express love well. Prepare your minds for hard work. Be disciplined. Roll up your sleeves. Pull up your socks. Get ready for action, because keeping that focus is not easy or natural.

We have so many things vying for our attention. There are so many things keeping us from loving God and people the way we should.

[23]

**If the driving focus of your life isn't to love God and people and bringing more people to Jesus you are missing the point of life.**

So, Peter's first call is...

[24]

#### **A. The Call to Hope**

Eyes upward.

The next call is...

[25]

#### **B. The Call to Holiness (14-16)**

***14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. 16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."***

What we as human beings like to do is reduce holiness to a set of dos and don'ts. We like to have our lists because it makes us feel safe. We can know what our boundaries are and who is inside the group and who is on the outside. That's not what the Biblical idea of holiness means.

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**Biblical holiness begins with the character of God.** When we speak of God's holiness we refer to his innermost nature. Everything about God is holy. God's holiness encompasses all of his attributes: his omnipotence, his eternal nature, his omnipresence, his omniscience, and his glory, his love, his gentleness – everything about God is holy. His holiness evokes awe, and it is the reason he says that **we** are to be holy.

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When the Bible speaks of the holiness of God's people it has a little different meaning. It means **"to be set apart."** **It means that we are set apart for God's purposes.**

In Old Testament worship there was the tabernacle, or the tent of meeting, and in this tabernacle were articles, or utensils of worship, that were set apart for the sole purpose of worshipping God. They were not to be used for common purposes. The wash basin and ladle were not meant for making chicken noodle soup. They were for ceremonial cleansing in the tabernacle — only.

So, when the Bible says that we are to be holy because of God's holiness it means that our lives are to be set apart solely for God's purposes. Our energy, our time, our finances, our focus should be on God's purposes for us, which is the mission of Jesus, to make disciples of all people. That is what we are about at CRBC.

We are called to be holy, set apart for God's purposes. Our lives are not to be about building for ourselves a heaven on earth. We tend to do that, but simply because God has written eternity in our hearts. And we replace what is eternal and most important for things that are fleeting and easily satisfy for a moment. Our sole purpose while we are on this earth is to be about his business, making disciples of Jesus. We are called to be holy, set apart for that alone.

That doesn't mean that you shouldn't go to work or school or have fun. But while you are at work or school or having fun what is your focus? Is it on building a heaven on earth for yourself or are you aware of the presence and work of Jesus as you are going about your life?

[28]

So, number one, our focus is not to be on the temporal things of earth, but on our hope of the resurrection.

Number two, we are to be set apart solely for God's purposes.

And the third call Peter gives us is...

[29]

### C. Call to Fear God (17-21)

***17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."*** <sup>18</sup> ***For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value.***

[30]

***19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. 21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.***

[31]

The main clause here is in verse 17, "***you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."***" Everything else modifies this clause.

The ESV translates verse 17 like this:

[32]

#### 1 Peter 1:17 (ESV)

***17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,***

***"If you call on him as Father..."***

We touched on this last week. If you had a good relationship with your father, or a father figure, you will have an easy time understanding what this means. But, if your relationship with your father was, or is, abusive in any way, or perhaps distant, this is going to take a little more work for you to grasp.

If your relationship with your father was not very loving you might get stuck on the part where Peter says, "***conduct yourselves with fear.***" That might conjure up images that are not very pleasant. There is no father born of woman who is perfect. There is no such person. And no matter how bad your father is or was, or no matter how good he is or was, our heavenly Father is infinitely better.

Love covers everything he does. Look at what he did for you.

[33]

***18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value.***

**[34]**

***19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. 21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.***

God gave his only Son to buy us back. The precious blood of Jesus paid the penalty for our sins so we could get back in relationship with our Father, God. He loved us so much. He gave up everything. He planned this before the creation of the world. That's how much he loves us. His very purpose in creating us was to have loving relationships.

So when Peter says that we are to fear our Heavenly Father, he does not mean that we should fear that he will abuse us. He will never ever do that. He is the perfect lover. He does not just *know how* to love. He is in his very essence love. Without God there would be no love.

He did all of this for you ***“so that your faith and hope are in God.”*** (v.21)

To fear God means to have a holy reverence. In a loving, healthy father/child relationship the child has a reverent fear of his or her father. If the relationship is healthy the child wants to obey her father because she respects his authority and wants to stay in right relationship with him, knowing that he has her best in mind. She knows that she is the child, and he is the father and as such authority resides in him. But she also knows that he has the authority to judge her actions and to discipline her accordingly, for her good.

In our relationship with our heavenly Father it is the same. We know he has our best in mind.

**[35]**

**Romans 8:28 (NLT)**

***28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.***

**[36]**

**To fear God simply means to know that he is God and we are not.** We can trust that he is going to do what is best for us. Our future is secure. He is the perfect good, good Father. But fear of God is also a healthy knowledge that, as verse 17 says, he will judge impartially, and that he lovingly and redemptively disciplines his children.

Here are a couple Psalms that express God's heart towards us and what it means to fear him.

**[37]**

**Psalm 147:11 (NLT)**

***11 ...the Lord's delight is in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love.***

**[38]**

**Psalm 145:19 (NLT)**

***19 He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them.***

As these verses clearly show, a godly fear is not the kind that runs away, but a reverence that moves towards him and trusts him because he is trustworthy.

So, three calls from Peter so far;

**A. Call to Hope**

**B. Call to Holiness**

### C. Call to Fear God

And finally...

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### C. Call to Love One Another (22-25)

***22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.***

This can be a bit confusing. It looks very much like what Peter is saying is that we are cleansed from our sin by obeying God. It obviously can't mean that because we know that ***"It is by grace we are saved, not by works"*** (Eph. 2:8-9). The truth Peter is referring to is the truth that our sins are cleansed by the death of Jesus. It refers back to what he has already said in the previous verses.

***22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth,***

That truth, if it has penetrated the soft soil of our hearts, *will* produce fruit.

***so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.***

What kind of fruit does Jesus want to produce in us? **Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

The truth of what God did for us should change how we do life, which is precisely why Jesus said that if you want to obey all of the commandments, focus on two – Love God, and Love people. That is what Peter is calling us to. He's calling us to learn from Jesus who is gentle and humble in heart. He is calling us to respond to his invitation to live differently than what our feelings tell us. He's calling us to something higher than what our natural inclination is.

He's calling us to gird up the loins of our minds and prepare for the hard work of cleaning the toxic waste from our minds and hearts, and to love with an unconditional kind of love - no strings attached.

***22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.***

**A. Called to Hope**

**B. Called to Holiness**

**C. Called to Fear God**

**D. Called to Love One Another**

[40]

The Gospel of Jesus will change the direction of our lives in very profound ways if we cooperate with him. *[Jeff Beselt to talk about how God has changed the direction of his life.]*





***Following Jesus Today  
Called to Make a Difference  
1 Peter 1:13-25  
Week of November 25, 2018***

**Objective of this study:** To respond to Peter's four calls to Hope, Holiness, Fear of God, and Love for Others.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us.]

**Welcome (5 minutes)**

How has something that you've hoped for affected your behaviour?

**Worship (5 – 10 minutes)**

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Psalm 145:1-13** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything "jump out at you"?**

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

**Word/Work (60-90 minutes)**

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. In the passage for today, Peter is talking about our **hope** and the **difference** it makes in our life.

Sermon quote: Peter is calling us to learn from Jesus who is gentle and humble in heart. He is calling us to respond to his invitation to live differently than what our feelings tell us. He's calling us to something higher than what our natural inclination is....He's calling us to gird up the loins of our minds and prepare for the hard work of cleaning the toxic waste from our minds and hearts, and to love with an unconditional kind of love.

3. As you read the Scripture, and as you go through the study, be thinking about this question: "What **difference(s)** will it make in my life if I actually look forward to the hope Peter is talking about? How will this hope affect my attitude, thoughts about people, relationships, choices, behaviour?"
4. Read 1 Peter 1:13-25, thinking about the above question.
5. **A. Call to Hope (13)** Read 1 Peter 1:13 and Hebrews 12:1-3.

What hope is Peter talking about? What hope did Jesus have (Heb. 12:1-3)? How did it affect him?

**Sermon Quote:** "What we believe is important will be revealed by what we invest our time, energy, and finances in. Do we spend our time, energy and finances on things of eternal value or things of temporal value? Are we attempting to set up a heaven on earth for ourselves, or are we continually aware of the fact that our lives on earth are fleeting? ... If the driving focus of your life isn't to love God and people you are missing the point of life."

6. What is one way you can change your behaviour, choices, or relationships to be more in line with your future hope?

7. **Call to Holiness (14-16).** Read 1 Peter 1:14-16.

**Sermon quote:** “What we as human beings like to do is reduce holiness to a set of dos and don’ts....But Biblical holiness begins with the character of God...When the Bible speaks of the holiness of God’s people...it means “to be set apart.” It means that we are set apart for God’s purposes.”

How is true holiness bigger than a list of dos and don’ts?

Do you have a sense of God’s purpose for your life? What does it mean **to you** to invest your life being about God’s business, being about the mission of Jesus?

8. **Call to Fear God (17-21).** Read 1 Peter 1:17-21; Psalm 145:19; Psalm 147:11.

**Sermon quote:** “To fear God means to have a holy reverence...To fear God simply means to know that he is God and we are not. We can trust that he is going to do what is best for us. Our future is secure. He is the perfect good, good Father. But fear of God is also a healthy knowledge that, as verse 17 says, he will judge impartially, and that he lovingly and redemptively disciplines his children.”

Do you feel that you both revere God and deeply trust him? How would you like to grow in this area?

9. **Call to Love One Another (22-25).** Read 1 Peter 1:22-25.

How is this (loving each other sincerely, deeply, with all your heart) different than what comes naturally to you? How does having an eternal perspective help you do this? How does remembering that God has your best in mind help you do this? How does anything else covered in this study help you do this?

How would you like to grow in this area this week?

10. Look back at the question from the beginning of the study: “What **difference(s)** will it make in my life if I actually look forward to the hope Peter is talking about? How will this hope affect my attitude, thoughts about people, relationships, choices, behaviour?”

11. What is your take-away from today?

### Prayer

1. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other. **Praise God together for how he works, and how he allows us to partner with him to accomplish things in his kingdom.**
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
  - a) That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
  - b) Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus.
  - c) River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
  - d) **Our missionary of the week:** Duane and Dawn Bakken with Ethnos
  - e) **Local CR church:** CLF Pastor Blair and Angela Phibbs

