Set Apart Part 2:
Living Holy In an Unholy World

- We are back in this new series and remember, Peter was writing this letter from Rome. The Emperor at the time in Rome is a man by the name of Nero. He was responsible for some of the most horrific atrocities to the Christian community, this is the backdrop for His letter. A world where professing faith in Jesus could and very possibly would cost you everything. A world that choosing Jesus mean't choosing suffering.

- This is the world where Peter through the Holy Spirit tells the churches of Asia-Minor that we are to rejoice in the trials and sufferings! I want to reread verse 6 of this chapter, because I think it perfectly summarizes the points of the last sermon…

1 Peter 1:6-7: "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." NIV

- If you don't see your trials through the lens of God's mercy, of God's living hope, your salvation, your unshakable inheritance then the fires of trial and struggle you go through will feel too unbearable. But when you do see through that lens of Christ you can rejoice in the trials, not because they are easy but because you know your outcome is certain! God has not abandoned you, He wants to refine you, build something in you! God isn't trying to break you, He is trying to build you!

- Now, let's jump back into 1 Peter chapter 1! And the goal for this morning is to finish off the end of chapter 1 today, so we are going to jump in at verse 13 today, so let's get to it! Now I want to start with the first word of verse 13 because this word is actually very significant even though it doesn't seem that way.

1 Peter 1:13: "Therefore,…" NIV

- There is a principal to reading and interpreting the Bible and that is every time you see the word "therefore" you have to figure out what it is there for. I know thats a silly way to say it but whenever you see this word it means everything coming after it is there as a result or because of what came before. It shows

how important context is. Everything we are going to go over today from verse 13 and after is based on something we've already read and discussed.

- We reviewed for a reason I wanted it to be fresh in your mind because you need the context of verses 1-12 to get verse 13 and beyond. Let me give you the big picture things revealed in those 12 verses:

1 Peter 1:1-12:
-Because we have salvation and suffering -Because we are elect and exiles -Because we have been chosen -Because we have a living hope -Because we have an eternal inheritance

- Peter is saying because of all of this, because of all these things, if all that is true then we come to the therefore, so because of these amazing things shown to us in verses 1-12 now we get verses 13 and beyond. Peter is answering the question of because of this salvation, because of all these things how then should we live. How should our lives reflect these spiritual truths.

- The big core of today and these verses are all about that, how we live. How do we live holy in an unholy world? Because our world is not holy, but we are called to holiness. But please don't check out on me here I'm not trying to put us into legalism on you, I know many of us have been judged and hurt under the guise holiness, but ***the thing about holiness is it isn't about looking religious it's about being set apart!***

- There is a reason I called this series Set Apart, it is a major theme in this letter of 1 Peter. And holiness itself is solely about being set apart, and when I say living set apart I'm not talking about avoiding people, I'm not saying we avoid non believers I'm saying we live differently among them. We in church culture have cheapened holiness and made it about what we don't do. We've made it about not wearing jewelry, not playing cards, not going to the movies, don't, don't, don't don't. ***Holiness isn't a list of do's and don't's it is about who you belong to!***

- We can't make it about legalism, it has to be about transformation! Peter says therefore, because we are saved, we have an inheritance because of these things we live this way, let's read the rest of 13 and 14…

<u>1 Peter 1:13-14: "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed</u>

at his coming. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance." NIV

- I love verse 13 the first phrase, a mind that is alert. If you have a literal translation like the ESV it says "**Preparing your minds for action"** which stems from the greek phrase **"girding up the loins of your mind"** which is such a confusing phrase to me. I did some research and it is referring to the long robes men would wear at the time and to gird them up was taking up the loose fabric and tucking it into your belt or girdle. This allowed you to not trip when doing strenuous things like battle or work.

- Thinking of that imagery I love this because we need to prepare our mind for spiritual battle, getting rid of the distractions or things that can trip us up. Our mind must always be ready and distraction free because we live in enemy territory, spiritual battle could happen anytime and we need our minds to be prepare. Gird the loins of your mind! He goes on to say: ***"Be sober minded".***

- We can't afford to be spiritually careless in a world at war. Soldiers don't get drunk before war, and I'm going to be spiritually armed and ready always, that's one reason why I choose to stay and live a sober life. I'm going to always be alert and sober because I never know when an attack is going to come or when a brother or sister is going to need me, it's not worth it. ***I want to be ready at the drop of a hat to fight the battles God has called me to fight! I'm going to remain sober minded and alert always!***

- Peter is telling us here we live and reside in enemy territory, if all of verses 1-12 are true and you are a chosen, saved, elect of God well guess what you are alway an exile in a fallen world and so the world is spiritually hostile against you because you are a child of God behind enemy lines! And because of all that be alert and ready, gird up the loins of your mind! Stand at the ready for battle!

- Verse 14 talks about as obedient children we can no longer conform to our evil desires. The way we used to live when we were spiritually ignorant. We all have different ways we lived and things we did before Jesus. Different ways of thinking, reacting, coping, different ways of handling stress, dealing with sin, we used to conform to and fit the world because we didn't know any better. But now we do! But the crazy thing is even as believers we still feel temptations and the pull to go back.

- Peter is giving a challenge to the church of Rome and us to move forward in our faith even in the midst of turmoil.

Sometimes the greatest danger to your faith isn't just what's ahead or what you are in the middle of, it's the temptation to turn back.

- I don't think most people who turn away from Christ just wake up someday and say, I'm going to leave Christ. It happens slowly and gradually. It's the choice to compromise on something, then compromise again, it's step by step, it's drifting away not flat out running away. Peter is through the Holy Spirit writing this to the believers in the middle of intense testing because God knows there is a temptation to turn back. Even now for us in the middle of trouble, struggle, and pain the temptation to turn back gets so loud.

- I want to tackle this morning this question this morning:

Why do we get tempted to turn back?

- Why in this context is Peter through the Holy Spirit telling this to the church in Rome and why do we today face that same temptation. Because that temptation is real, there is a pull especially in trials and struggles to turn back to something God already set us free from. Maybe you are here today and you've already experienced some drift back, compromise, or even finding yourself fully back in old patterns. Let me tell you no matter where you are today God is calling you to move forward in Jesus name!

- So the question is why, why did this make chapter one, the beginning of 1 Peter, the start of the letter, why is this temptation so strong. I'm going to give you three reasons, why this temptation hits extra strong especially in trials and struggle.

- ***Trials Make us Long for Comfort More than Obedience***

- Remember the audience of the Church of Rome and Asia-Minor they are going through extreme trials and in our trials sometimes we don't turn back out of rebellion we turn back because the trial is just too hard. When life gets difficult we all naturally, instinctively want to look for some relief, we want some reprieve from the fire. The thing is faith requires trust but comfort is familiar! And gosh it's just so comfortable!

- Obediences requires obedience but compromise and returning to the past offers you a short cut that "looks" promising. It's the same reason the people of Israel after being delivered out of Egypt and slavery they were in the wildness headed towards to the promised land but they couldn't stop thinking

about the past. The past of Egypt, what God has already delivered them out of.

- ***Spiritual Apathy Creeps in When We Lose Urgency***

- We don't always get tempted to turn back because we are struggling sometimes it is because we just stopped caring as much. We stopped pursuing God, we stopped pressing in, we stopped feeling the weight of eternity. It's not that we reject God we just slowly drift apart from Him.

- A lukewarm faith may be comfortable but it is useless. It just sits there stagnant, indifferent, and ineffective. God doesn't want our half-hearted surrender, He wants people who are fully and wholly His! We don't want to be salt that lost it's flavor, it's saltiness, what good is that? Let me give you the third reason turning back becomes such a hard temptation in trial…

- ***We Forget What We've Been Saved From***

- One of the greatest dangers in life as a follower of Jesus isn't just falling into sin, it's forgetting why we left it in the first place. At first, at the beginning of our relationship we walk in gratitude because we directly remember how lost we were and how deeply much we needed the grace of God to be set free! But over time that urgency fades.

- The devil doesn't have to convince you that sin is good, he just needs to make you forget how destructive it was. If you lose sight of those chains you may find yourself walking right back into them. Peter understood the temptation to turn back is real. He is writing to believers who are scattered, they are in the middle of persecution, they feel the immense pressure to compromise, to blend in.

- And in the next few verses Peter doesn't just warn them, he gives them the reason, he doesn't just say: "hey you shouldn't turn back". But Peter says: "hey, here is why you should keep moving forward". The Holy Spirit through Peter doesn't just say: "Be holy" but he says why holiness matters in your life. Peter is actually about to give us 7 reasons why we should live spiritually alert and sober. We must focus on it!

7 Reasons Why We Should Live Spiritually Alert, Sober, and Holy

- This isn't about legalism, this is about calling, your purpose, about being set apart. ***Holiness isn't about arbitrary restriction it is about intentional***

preparation! It's about training your mind, guarding your heart, staying ready for the battles that are in front of you. We can't afford to take the foot off the gas of our faith and spiritually coast, it results in not only less spiritual development but going backwards. Our world is a battlefield! We can't afford to grow stagnant!

- In the next few verses of this chapter God tells us through Peter why it's worth it. Why do we live set apart, therefore, if all that is true: if we are going to be tested and tried, if we are living for heaven and not here, why should we live set apart. And if you are wondering where I get these seven points these are simply in the scripture. They aren't mine, they are God's through Peter. I'm simply giving you the Bible today. Every verse is pretty much a point. So if you don't like one I didn't come up with it, it's purely scripture.

- Seven reasons ripped right from scripture why we should live Set Apart in an unholy and spiritually hostile world. Number one…

1. Your Hope is in Eternity, Not in This World

- So instead of looking for this world to give you hope, to give you rest, reprieve, to give you peace, or joy we are told to fix our eyes forward to eternity with God in heaven! Where you set your hope in determines how you are going to live. If your hope is found in this world or something of this world you will be shaken by every hardship. If your hope is in a person than you will be shaken when they disappoint you and fail you.

- If your hope is in comfort than you are going to compromise when things get hard. But if your hope is in eternity you can endure trials with joy! You can resist temptation with confidence! You can live with holiness and purpose when you hope is found in eternity with Christ.

1 Peter 1:13: "…set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming." NIV

Jumping to verse 21 we read even more about this…

1 Peter 1:21 "Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God." NIV

- This is a constant theme all throughout the 1 Peter, having hope is a huge concept all throughout Peter's letters. But he uses it differently through us, it's not just wishful thinking. A lot of times we make hope or our concept of hope

as just wishful thinking. And that isn't really what The Bible is talking about here. ***Instead of wishful thinking God here through Peter is defining hope and calling us to this idea of hope that instead of wishful thinking is confident expectation.***

- Hope is not just optimism in situations and looking for the good in things. Biblical hope is absolute certainty that's God's promises are already fulfilled in my life, they are yes and amen!

Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value]." Amplified Bible

- A mind set on heaven leads to a life lived out for heaven and God. When we live our lives for earthly things, earthly success it will control us. But when we live for the eternal reward it guides us! Peter begins by reminding us we will not be here forever so don't live like this is all there is. This is one of the reasons we should live set apart because this world is not our home.

- The second of the seven reasons God gives us through Peter here is…

2. Compromise Leads to Captivity

- Peter warns us here not to conform, because compromise leads to captivity. Listen church the very second we start conforming is the very second we stop transforming for Christ. The moment we start excusing we stop growing. What starts as one small compromise leads to a whole new way of life. That is how sin works, it never stops where you think it will. What you allow in your life will eventually lead your life!

- What you tolerate today will become your master tomorrow. Looking back to verse 14 of chapter 1…

1 Peter 1:14: "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance." NIV

- We get the reminder here that before Christ we didn't know any better but now we have Christ we should know better, and we need to be obedient to our Heavenly Father! Do not conform! Before Christ we conformed because we didn't know any other way, but now as transformed Sons and Daughters of Christ what once felt normal should feel foreign!

- Those old things should just not even feel right, old confessions shouldn't even taste right coming out of your mouth, you are a new creation! You are new!

John 8:34: "Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. 35 A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever." NLT

- Sin may seem good in the moment but all it does is lead you back into slavery, when Christ already delivered you from that and made you a son that is apart of the forever family of God! Sin may look like freedom in the moment but all it does is lock you in chains of bondage. It feels like a choice but it becomes the only choice you can make. ***You were set free by God to live free as part of the family, don't go back to what makes you bound!***

- We are being told here that when we compromise we are walking ourselves back into enemy captivity. Let's move on to number three of the seven reasons we are giving to live set apart, alert, and sober minded spiritual lives…

3. Holiness Isn't a Suggestion, It's a Calling

- The Holy Spirit didn't inspire Peter to simply write: "try to be holy, when you can, you know if you want to, no pressure guys". He doesn't even say "just do your best to be holy". He simply writes: "be holy"! Let's look at verse 15 and 16, which is extra special because this was the last memory of Lifewise for the year, let me tell you it's a beautiful sound hearing second graders quote these verses to you. But now let me read them to you.

1 Peter 1:15-16: "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." NIV

- We are told here holiness isn't optional, it is essential. Holiness isn't just for people who want to feel spiritually elite, it is for every single believer! It's not about perfection, it's about transformation! I'm not sure why so many treat holiness like it's only for Pastor's or those in leadership positions but 1 Peter makes it very clear here that holiness is the standard for everyone who is following Jesus.

- And the key component to holiness we so often mix up and it's causes the easy slip into legalism, holiness isn't about behavior it is about identity. Each and every one of us are called to be holy because we belong to a holy God! Peter is not saying here: "be holy so you can belong to God." That's not it.

What is being said is: “because you belong to God be holy”. Holiness is not about legalism it is about likeness!

- Holiness isn’t about following rules it’s about being a reflection of the nature of God. Holiness is not just about what you do, it’s about who you are, and whose you are! God doesn’t just call us to holiness, He empowers us for it! We were born again, given a new nature with new desires, made set apart to live differently than the world around us, and we were given The Holy Spirit to make that possible.

- So the way to live holy isn’t by striving or trying with all our might it’s by surrendering to God. Not by all the effort we can muster but by staying connected to God. If God is holy and His spirit lives in you, holiness is in you. So the question isn’t: can I be holy, the question becomes: Am I going to choose to be who God created me to be? It is a calling for all of us! We are called to live alert and sober minded and called apart.

4. God is Both Our Father and Our Judge

- We are reminded here that we call on God as Father, but He also is the ultimate judge. We love to talk about God as Father, which He is. But we don’t talk as much about God being the judge of all creation, which He also is. We really need to know God as Father, especially in our world today where fatherlessness is an epidemic. There is a woeful lack of good strong spiritual Fathers. So we need to know God as our Good Father! But we must also know Him as the Ultimate Authority and Wholly Just and Perfect Judge.

1 Peter 1:17: “Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.” NIV

- Perfect Father and Perfect Judge. The beautiful thing is these two things don’t contradict each other like sometimes it may feel. These two aspects actually complete each other. As a Father, God loves us unconditionally, but as a Judge, God will hold us accountable, that is true love. As a Father He welcomes us into the family but as a Judge He will one day evaluate how we lived our lives as believers, and His children.

- Because we know that we will stand before Him one day, man, we should live in reverence! We need reverent fear and awe in God! That isn’t a fear of punishment, that is actually a deep respect for the Glory of God. We will be judged for how we lived our lives as believers. In the Bible there are two judgements. The first is about: do you know Jesus as your personal savior or

not. That is the first judgment. There is a second judgment that we as believers get.

- This judgement is about how you stewarded your life: your time, your gifts, your resources. How did you steward what God gave you in this life. It is called: ***"The Judgement Seat of Christ"***

2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." NKJV

- This judgement isn't about salvation, it's an account for what we did as believers, whether good or bad. God is going to hold us accountable. This isn't about salvation it's about how we honor God after we receive the free grace gift of salvation. What we do on earth reverberates and echoes throughout eternity. Every choice, every sacrifice, every act of faithfulness matters. We will stand before a Holy God not to be condemned but to give an account.

- I think when you realize you are going to answer to God it changes how you live for God. We have to be alert, gird up those mind loins!

5. The Ways of This World Are Empty

- Peter here reminds us the ways of this world are empty and meaningless!

1 Peter 1:18-19: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." NIV

- We so often try to put security in these earthly things, like money, retirement, your job, but those are empty, they don't redeem us, those things don't save us or bring us true security, those things are empty. But the precious split blood of Jesus gives us eternal security and peace!

- It's too easy to chase success, to chase pleasure, to chase money at all cost, or approval, or possessions. But none of those things satisfy your soul! We follow what is handed down to us in this world but all it does is lead to emptiness not fulfillment! The world will try to sell you the illusion of fulfillment but the more you chase it the more you realize it is a mirage. It's fake. It's empty and hollow.

- Money be able to buy you comfort but it can never buy you contentment. Pleasure may be able to numb your pain but it will never heal your soul. Success can impress people but it will never satisfy your heart! At the end of all of it the world's best offer still leaves people empty.

- Look at King Solomon who at his time was the richest and wisest man on the entire planet, one of the richest and most powerful kings in history, He had everything and yet said this…

Ecclesiastes 2:11: "Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun." NIV

- None of his earthly possessions, his earthly success satisfied him. But Peter reminds us we were rescued from the trap of chasing things that don't matter. God gave us something eternal and real! Don't try to replace the eternal with the empty! Nothing in this world will fulfill you or redeem you, only Christ will!

6. Your Freedom Wasn't Free

- Salvation is a free gift but it costed Jesus everything. We didn't earn our way to God, we were purchased by God at a high price! We were redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, God in flesh! Our salvation wasn't an afterthought it was a plan before the creation of the world.

1 Peter 1:19-21: "but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God." NIV

- The redemption came at a deep cost, not silver, not gold, but the spilt blood of Jesus and that was always the plan, the trajectory or history, the sacrificial system in The Old Testament, the shadows of Christ, the eventually coming of Christ, the death, the resurrection, it was all planned for our sake, but it was costly! And God, knowing the immense cost said you are worth it!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." NLT

- Our lives are not our own, we were purchased with a high price, and if we truly understood the cost of our freedom we wouldn't live carelessly! When we truly grasp what it cost Jesus then we wouldn't treat holiness as optional. ***But a cheap view of grace leads to a casual view of holiness! When you understand how deep the cost, you live with gratitude, with reverence, with purpose, the price has been paid and God is telling here to live like it matters! You've been set apart and though the grace gift for us was free it wasn't free to God!***

- Lastly, number seven…

7. Holiness Isn't Just Personal It Is Relational

- Holiness is more than just your private walk with God, it's also outward, it's apart of how you love people. If your holiness doesn't make you more loving than that isn't holiness it's just religion. If your pursuit of God is pushing people away and not drawing them closer to Christ than something is off with your pursuit. The more you become like Jesus, the more your love for others should grow!

- In Peter's letter here see the connection between the purity of heart with the depth of love. A holy heart is a soft heart, a holy life is a life that loves deeply. Look at verse 22…

1 Peter 1:22: "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart." NIV

- True holiness isn't just about the things you avoid it's about the way you love. You can have great theology, and deep knowledge of God's Word but still have a cold heart. You can quote all the Bible verses and still treat people terribly. You can live morally clean and still be spiritually empty if love isn't at the center of your life. The world doesn't need more religious and legalistic people it needs more people who love like Jesus.

- It's what Jesus said in John 13…

John 13:35: "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love and unselfish concern for one another." Amplified Bible

- Love is the evidence of your transformation, it's the proof you've been set apart, true Christlike love separates us from the rest of the world! The real test of holiness is how we treat people who are the hardest to love. Holiness is about love transformation. Everything in this world is temporary, the success we chase, the wealth you accumulate, the reputation you are trying to build it all fades.

- Peter started this chapter by pointing us to eternity, to the things above, and this chapter ends by pointing us again to what truly eternally matters. Let's read the closing of this chapter…

1 Peter 1:23-25: "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you." NIV

- Everything in this world is like grass and flowers, they grow and wither, they come and go, it's like a vapor in the wind. But the one thing that endures forever is the Word of the Lord! You life was not mean't to be lived for temporary things, you weren't made for this world. You were made for eternity! You weren't saved to live for yourself but live for something that lasts.
- You weren't redeemed to fit in, you were redeemed to stand apart! We need to raise up our eyes, fix our eyes on the eternal, the things that fade. Are you building your life on things that will burn away? Or are you investing in the Kingdom that never fades? Don't trade what is eternal for what is temporary!

- I think the final take away of chapter 1 of 1 Peter is…

Don't Live for What Fades, Live for What Lasts Forever

- This world is not your home! We don't belong here. And if all this is true, what God spoke through Peter here that we are saved and we will face suffering, we are the elect of God but exiles in this world, that we have a living hope of an eternal inheritance waiting for us, how then should we live? We should live spiritually sober and alert. We should live ready for battle, set apart for what God has called us to!