

Moved to Obeying God Triune (Part 1)

1 Peter 1:3-16 (text: v.13-16)

19 July 2020, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 am

(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The other day, when Annette & I were visiting friends in our denomination, they told us an almost unbelievable thing.

You see, we were talking about marriage and about couples' behaviours toward one another.

And so it came that they told me about relatives of theirs – yes, of a husband & wife who lived long ago, in the 1940's, in the Netherlands; a couple whose marriage, sadly, was anything but godly & happy!

You see, often when this husband came home from work, he would take his wife into a back room of the house and give her a hiding! He belted her! Then she would come out with tear-filled eyes and prepared dinner for them.

And a few preschool children, nephews & nieces who at times stayed with this couple, were witnesses to those events. Also, it seems that many adult relatives, at the time, knew about this woman's hardship, but they felt incompetent to do anything about it.

Well, this sad story made me think. You see, if any husband sinks so low as to lift up his hand (or a belt or stick) against his wife to hit her, then he is not worthy of her.

After all, if a man cannot, with his character and kind deeds & words, win a woman's heart so that she would, of her own will (and from her heart), love and respect him, then he is not fit to be a husband to anyone.

But, this husband of the 1940's – well, he was trying to *forcefully demand* obedience from his wife; yes, he literally forced her to, kicking and screaming against her will, obey his wishes.

Why have I shared this “story” with you?

Well, is it not true that the Bible often compares the *believer's relationship with God Triune* to that of a *wife with her husband* – God/Christ is our husband/groom, and we are His wife/bride!?

And here is something significant...

You see, we learn from the Bible that God (our Husband) never forces us *against our will* to love Him. Granted, at times God might discipline His hard-of-heart loved ones to make them cry out to Him, so that when they come to Him they come willingly! However, unlike that unloving husband of long ago in the Netherlands, God never forces us, kicking and screaming against our will, to love & obey Him!

Rather, with His *character* (yes, with *who* God is), and with His gracious *deeds & words* to us, He powerfully & irresistibly wins our hearts so that when we receive Him (and when we come to obey Him), we do so willingly, joyfully and from the heart!

After all, remember how Christ once said (in Jn 6:44), “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*”¹ And, of course, this *drawing* of the cold human heart is the work of the Holy Spirit.

So, what do we see?

Well, we see that when someone receives & obeys God Triune as his/her Lord & Saviour (and “Husband” so to speak), that person has first been *moved* by God’s character and awe-inspiring love-deeds & words!

My brother & sister, that’s exactly the same with the commands of our Bible passage! You see, in this passage, God, through Peter, gives us (His wife/bride) four commands – two of which we will look at this morning, and two of which we will look at during this afternoon’s service!

Commands!

However, God does not give us only these commands *by themselves*!

No, each time God gives a command in our text, He also reminds us of *who He is* and of *what He has already done* for us.

Indeed, with every command in our text, God gives us also the reason (or the *ground on which*) He gives that command – yes, an incentive prompting the pious heart to obey God!

Here are the first two commands – and they form the two points of our text...

- Christian, *hope* (keep on hoping) because...!
- Christian, *be holy* because...!

Christian, hope because...!

My brother & sister, in v.13 of our text, God gives all believers (you & me?) this command/exhortation: “Christian, despite your trials (temptations or hardships) in this world, set your hope fully on that day when Christ will return and when you will see/experience God’s grace to the measure you have never before experienced it!”² “Set your hope fully on that glorious day of Christ!”

That’s the *command* which God, our “Husband,” gives us in v.13 of our text!

But look! God’s command does not come like that of an unloving husband to his wife!

No, God has firmly grounded this command in a reason. And the reason has to do with God’s kind & gracious deeds of the past – kind deeds of our “Husband” by which you & I should be moved to obeying this command!

You say, “But, pastor, what *is* that reason/ground that’s undergirding this command?”

Well, have you seen the word “therefore” at the start of v.13?

Do you know what this “therefore” is reminding Peter’s first readers (and you & me) of?

Well, it reminds us of our God’s great deeds mentioned in the previous passage, i.e. that God, in untold mercy, has caused you & me to be born again by the Holy Spirit (1:3).

Indeed, God, by His grace and love, has for reasons unknown to us, decided to include even you & me in His gift of new & everlasting spiritual life!³

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 6:44). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles (Emphasis mine).

² 1 Pt 1:13, “...**set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

³ And we have an inheritance in heaven – an inheritance that cannot perish or fade; one which is kept in heaven for us (v1:4)!

How can we be so sure of that?

Well, because of another mind-bendingly powerful deed of God – i.e. that He raised Jesus Christ from the dead (1:3). And if He did that, well, then why will He not surely raise also you & me (His loved ones) from the dead!?

My brother & sister, see? See these merciful, kind, gracious and powerful deeds of God, our “Husband”?

See, how, by these kind deeds, our text is moving you & me to obey God’s command/exhortation to “set our hope fully” on the Last Day – the Day of Christ?

You ask, “Pastor, you have now given us God’s *command* as well as the *foundation/reason* for that command, but please tell us now the “how” of that command; yes, how we can set our hope fully on the Day of Christ!”

Well, v.3 tells us that the way of setting our hope fully on the Day of Christ is twofold: 1) to “gird the loins of our mind” and 2) to stay sober!

What does “gird the loins of your mind” mean?

Well, here’s a picture...

Remember how God told the Ancient Israelites to *gird their loins* – i.e. to tuck their cloaks in – as they were about to get out of Egypt (Ex. 12:11)?⁴

That was just a way of saying to them, “Look, you’re about to leave this place of slavery and to take the road to your promised land!” “On this trip you can’t afford any hindrance!” “So, tuck in your cloak so that you can walk resolutely and with direction to your promised land!”

My brother & sister, in the same way should the Christian (you & I) “hit” the road to our promised land with minds that are free from any hindrance!

Look, that’s also why v.13 says that you & I should be sober-minded, i.e. not getting drunk!

You say, “Not getting drunk?”

Yes, not getting drunk in a *literal* sense, but also in a *spiritual* sense!

First in a literal sense: You see, indulgence in alcohol impairs the body’s motor skills and the mind’s ability to make rational decisions!

So, first of all, the mind which is set upon our Lord’s return, should never be befuddled by alcohol! Imagine someone is drunk the moment when our Lord returns!

Wow! Would you want to be in that person’s shoes?

Secondly (and in a spiritual sense), here’s another danger, i.e. that the Christian’s mind can get befuddled and numbed by the lures of this world – e.g. the failure to recognise temptation as temptation; yes, the failure to assess situations from a Christian point of view. You see, when modern Christians go visit the Parthenon and the Areopagus in Athens today, they rave on about the beautiful architecture of these buildings. However, that was not how the *Apostle Paul* reacted to these. No, his mind was not numbed!

Rather, he looked past the beautiful architecture and saw the idol worship represented by those buildings, and got stirred up to anger against those things!

My brother & sister, the Christian (you & I) need to see the world (and our duty in it) realistically – in such a way that, if the Day of Christ happened to be tonight while we’re watching the tele or surfing the internet, we will not say, “Mountains, fall on us!” “This is the last thing I expected to happen!”

⁴ Ex 12:11 **Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord’s Passover.**

I love how one commentator has put it: “Just as an engaged couple makes all their plans in the light of that future wedding, so Christians today live with the expectation of seeing Jesus Christ.”⁵

My brother & sister, the person who is looking for the glory of God has a greater motivation for present obedience than a Christian who ignores the Lord’s return.

Look, is this contrast not clearly seen in the lives of Abraham and Lot?⁶ I mean, did not Abraham have his eyes of faith on that heavenly city, resulting in the fact that he had no interest in the world’s real estate?

But Lot? Well, remember how he tasted the pleasures of the world in Egypt? What next? Well, next, Lot gradually moved toward Sodom.

See? See how outlook determines outcome?⁷

Someone once said, “When the *outlook* is gloomy, try the *uplook!*”⁸ However, the Christian is the one who never lets go of the *uplook!* And that’s why the Christian can already in this life experience part of that grace which will be fully his when Christ returns!

“Set your hope fully on the grace which will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ!” – that’s the first command given by our text, but a command that did not come without a reminder of the kind/gracious deed of God by which He, through His Holy Spirit caused us to be born again; yes, that kind deed which should now move you & me towards willingly/thankfully obeying our heavenly “Husband.”

Here’s our heavenly “Husband’s” second command/exhortation...

Christian, be holy because...!

Verse 15 gives us God’s command: “...*be holy in all your conduct...*”

That’s the *command!*

But here’s our “husband’s” *reason* – a reason which reminds us of the character of God – a character that should move every Christian to willingly obeying this command!

So, what’s that reason? Why should you & I be holy in all our conduct?

Well, because God (our awe-inspiring “Husband”) is holy. Verse 15-16 says: “as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.””⁹

See? See how our heavenly “Husband” moves you & me to obey His command for us to be holy? He reminds us of His *character* – He is holy, sinless, righteous, perfect, pure, and totally other! If He to whom we belong is like that, then why should we not be striving to be like Him!?

Well, we’ve seen the command and its reason/ground. But what is now the “how”? yes, how will we do it?

Look, that’s given in v.14, which Peter has, first of all, written to Christians who, a short time before, were still pagans & unbelievers! So, Peter tells them that they will live holier lives if they would not go back to their pagan lifestyles – lifestyles in which they simply & selfishly followed their own passions! The way to live holy lives is to now not become again conformed¹⁰ to those passions which they cherished while they were still ignorant of God Triune and His love in Christ!

⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 395–400). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Cf. Gen. 12–13; Heb. 11:8–16

⁷ The Abraham-Lot illustration borrowed/adapted from Wiersbe (ibid).

⁸ Wiersbe (ibid)

⁹ Emphasis mine (underscoring the reason why we’re called to holy living)

¹⁰ Paul says the same in Rm 12:1-2

Well, my brother & sister, most of us here have never been pagans because most of us were born into God's covenant people/family, and have had the blessings of growing up in the church! So, in a way, you and I cannot go *back* to our pagan ways! Yet, in another sense, because we are still sin-marred people living in a sin-marred world, we still carry in us pretty much all the desires of pagans! So, we know these desires – desires which belong to our *earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry...*¹¹ *and anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from our lips*¹² *and lying to each other.*¹³

See? See how God desires that the way in which you & I live should testify to our faith in God – should reflect the character of our holy God? And this should move other people to believe in Christ, our Lord!

Well, I know that up until this point in the sermon, I have often referred to our relationship to God as that of a wife toward her husband (And, in other Bible verses – outside of our text – the Bible often does this). But look, when this command tells us to be holy, it compares our relationship with God as that of children towards their *respected yet loving father*.

Indeed, in the Biblical world, the characteristic quality associated with a father was *care* for his children!¹⁴ And guess what? The corresponding characteristic of children was *obedience* to their father!¹⁵

Verses 14 & 15 say, “*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,*¹⁵ *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...*”¹⁶

My brother & sister, we have heard two commandments from our heavenly Father. Here they are together with their foundations by which God (our heavenly Husband) is prompting us (moving us) toward obedience:

¹¹ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Col 3:5). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹² [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Col 3:8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹³ Cf. Col 3:9-10, “*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*¹⁰ *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*”

¹⁴ Well-said words of Marshall, I. H. (1991). [1 Peter](#) (1 Pe 1:13–2:9). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Also cf. e.g. Ps 103:13, *As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.*

Also cf. Mt 7:9-11, *Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?*¹⁰ *Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?*¹¹ *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. Prov 1:8 *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching*, and Prov 6:20 *My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching.*

Also Ps 34:11 *Come, my children, listen to me;*

I will teach you the fear of the Lord, and Eph 6:1-3 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

² “*Honor your father and mother*”—*which is the first commandment with a promise*—³ “*so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.*”

¹⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Pe 1:14–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Command number 1: “Christian (Wainui member), are you really living this day in light of that Day?” “Christian (Wainui member), despite your trials (temptations or hardships) in this world, set your hope fully (and without literal or spiritual drunkenness) on that day when Christ will return and when you will see/experience God’s grace to the measure you have never before experienced it!”

Incentive number 1: “Christian (Wainui member), do you remember My gracious love-deed to you?” “I am the One who decreed that you should not only be born *physically*, but that you should also be born *spiritually* (born again)!” “You are mine!”

Command number 2: “Christian (Wainui member), ***be holy in all your conduct...***”

Incentive number 2: “Christian, remember My character?” “I am holy – yes, I am light and in Me there’s no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5)! “Christian (Wainui member?), you say you are mine, but are you really striving to be like Me – and different to the unbelievers around you?” “How do you answer?”

AMEN (2,497 words excluding footnotes)