

Prestonwood Connection #1-2003

Journey With Hope Series

Deacon Ordination / Communion

1 Peter 1:1

Wednesday, January 15, 2003 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message] <side 1 @ 424>

The Bible describes the church of Jesus Christ in a variety of ways. We are often referred to as sheep who have a shepherd. We are referred to together as a part of the bricks as though it were, of the building of God. But one of the most precious pictures that the Bible uses to describe the church is that of the family. And it really doesn't matter what size your family may be or the family that you've grown up in a... may happen to be. The truth of the matter is, is that once you are in Christ you're a part of a big family and tonight what we have experienced has been something of the family life and love that we have in Christ and a... it has been precious and from the hugs and from the tears and from the pats on the back a... their just, it's just and incredible moment of marking spiritual growth and spiritual commitment in the lives of men and their families in our church and we do believe this so much to be the biblical model and the biblical plan for God's leadership in the church, that it's to be led through a God called, God anointed a... spirit filled Pastor and God's given us that and then that it is to be affected through the gifts that God has given in ministry and through the structure in particular of the office of the deacon. And a... our deacons leading their families and leading in the church and sharing in the ministry and a... that's what this has been about tonight.

You know if I had to pick one word that I believe epitomizes as though it were the total life focus and that ultimately is the evident expression of the life attitude of the Christian it is a word that is found in the book of 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 2. And I'm gonna ask you is you have your Bible tonight to take it and open it to 1st Peter because you need to put a crease in 1 Peter and a bookmark there because beginning tonight and throughout all of this time in the winter and the spring that we are together in these Wednesday night Connection Services we're gonna to going over and over again to the book of 1 Peter, a book that is filled with encouragement, with blessing and with hope. In fact we're gonna call the series that we're going to examine together a... a series that we're gonna call, *Journey With Hope*. Because God has given us hope and while things may be changing and may be ever uncertain and unsettled in the world around us in Jesus Christ and in this world because of Christ we have hope and so we're gonna be talking a lot about the hope that we have. And

tonight in particular at the very outset, at the foundation we are gonna look at what is the absolute anchor of the hope that we have. And I believe a songwriter has said it best when he said:

*My hope is built on nothing less, then Jesus blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name.*

And tonight what we're going to look at as we prepare our hearts for the gathering at this table is that which is the anchor of our hope, that which is the truth that we have, it is that which is done in our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's read together 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 1:

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Holy Spirit, for...

What is the next word?

Obedience!

Let's say it one more time together.

...for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus...

If there is one matter that every Christian must give total focus and absolute and undivided commitment to in life, it is the issue of obedience to Jesus Christ. Now the question is why? Why does the Bible tell us that all of God's work is to bring us to a place to an attitude, to a life agenda of obedience in Jesus Christ? Well, you might stop and say it's because of guilt, because I'm guilty I need to turn from my guilt and turn to obedience in Christ. Others may say because of shame, I'm so ashamed of what I've done. I need to try to be obedient to God. Others still may say it's because it's an obligation in the Christian life that we are now obligated to be obedient or that it's something that God demands. But to all of these things I would have to say an absolute "No" that is not why we have been called and we have been challenged to obedience. There is one reason for which we are obedient to Christ and it is the very thing that is referenced in verse 2 but expanded in verse 18 and 19. Lets look at it together.

*¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
¹⁹but with the...*

What can we say?

...precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.

When we speak of our obedience to Christ, the whole basis, the whole motivation, the whole foundation of our obedience is rooted in the grace

and the mercy of God who has loved us, who has sought us, who has bought us with a price and therefore the entirety of my life is now lived in grateful expression to God as a desire to do what pleases and to do what honors Him. It is an issue of gratitude. I can never repay the grace of God but I can live every day to re...comply in my life to God's will and to God's purpose and one of the greatest evidences that a person has been saved, has been born again is that there is a disposition, a desire, a passion to be obedient to God. And so that is the heart and the heartbeat of every Christian, the life purpose of every Christian; that I might so live my life in obedience to the will of God that my life would look like the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, during His time here on earth lived His life in perfect submission and obedience to the will of the Father and that is to be the design and that is to be the outcome of every Christian's life. It is to be obedient above all else to Jesus Christ that we might be like Jesus. Now talking about being like Jesus and actually being like Jesus are 2 different things.

I heard about a mom who was fixing pancakes one morning for her children. Her son Ryan was age 5, her son Kevin age 3 and the boys did as many boys do at a breakfast table they started arguing, because they were both hungry, over who was going to get their pancakes first. And so the mom decided this was a prime teachable moment and so she looked at her boys and she said, "Ryan" she said, "Kevin, if Jesus were here Jesus would say let my brother have the first pancake and then I will take the other." Well, they set there silent for just a moment and finally the older brother Ryan looked at the little brother Kevin and said, "I'll tell you what Kevin, we'll play like Jesus and you be Jesus, I'll get the first pancake." [pause for congregation laughter]

Well, it's one thing to talk about being like Jesus it's another thing to be like Jesus and yet the Word of God calls us and compels us to a life of total obedience. That's really what this night is all about, it's a night where we recommit, where we remember, where we reflect upon what Christ has done for us and where we embrace again the reality of how precious the blood of Christ is in each one of our lives. Now you know in our world today the world is seeing red financially. Wall street had many symbols representing companies that ended in the red instead of in the black last year and in the financial world being in the red is a very negative thing. But I want you to know in the spiritual world we will always live in the red, we will always live with a debt of love and mercy and grace to Jesus Christ and every day of my life I get up living in the red spiritually and I thank God for the privilege of living in the red because it reminds me of the precious blood of Jesus. You know the blood is precious in the Bible, it's precious to God. The Bible tells us in the book of Leviticus that the blood of animals reminds us that life is in the blood and God established an atonement, a covering for sin by the shedding of the blood of animals as a symbol, as a reminder that sin brings death but that through the shedding of blood there is remission of sins. Then the Bible reminds us that the blood of mankind is precious to God. In fact when Cain killed his brother Abel, the Bible says that God spoke and said:

"The voice of your brothers blood cries out from the ground."

And one of the reasons that we as a church take such a strong stand and voice on the sanctity of human life is that God says the blood of mankind is of value. Jesus died and shed His blood for all of mankind. Next Wednesday night we're gonna be together in celebrating a great sanctity of life rally, I hope every one of you will be here because we believe that we stand on the foundation of the Word of God when we honor the value of the blood of all mankind. **<turn tape>** ...is the blood of animals and of mankind there is nothing that is such great value as the blood of Jesus Christ. It is the precious blood and today it is as though religion would drain all of the blood out of the atonement of Jesus Christ. People love religion without blood but we cannot get beyond the fact that this book is a book that bleeds red, not because it has red-letter print but because of the precious blood of Jesus and we live in the red. What does it be to live in the red? Let me give you 3 words to think about as you take your cup, as you take your bread tonight.

Living in the red first and foremost means, **FREEDOM**, it means freedom. When you're in the red in the financial world, you're in bondage, you're in debt, but when you're in red in Jesus you've been set free because you see the Bible says in verse 18 we were not redeemed with corruptible things. The word redeemed means that we were bought, bought out of bondage. In the ancient world the word redeemed was not a word that was used as we do in the theological world it was a common word in the culture of that day and it was primarily used to speak of the price that was paid to buy a slave out of the slave market. And I want you to know tonight that when I think that I am living in the red it reminds me that if the Son has made me free I am free indeed. You are free, set free in Jesus Christ. And every day when you live in the red you are living in the freedom of Christ.

But not only does it mean freedom, it means **FORGIVENESS**. Freedom from everything that has happened in the past but thank God I am forgiven today. My sins have been washed away. I am clean and I am forgiven. The song says it:

What can wash away my sins?

You answer!

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Tonight we are forgiven in Christ. Jesus wanted us to come back, to remember Him and the price that He paid. But I believe that He wants us to come to this table to remember that He paid that price that we might be forgiven.

Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Do you remember how white that snow was coming down on Sunday? How beautiful that was. How precious that He has forgiven us.

But I believe it means one other thing, not only freedom and forgiveness it means **FAITHFULNESS**. I live in the red because Jesus once and for all has shed His blood for me. He will forever be faithful to His covenant. He is the same yesterday, today and forever and Jesus will never change and Jesus will never fail. But let me also say this, because I live in the red, the only desire of my heart is to be faithful to Jesus Christ. And it is only through the power of His blood and the work of His Spirit that I can live a life of faithfulness to God. You see the blood of Christ is precious to you and to me, and all that God has planned and all that God has provided for us is found in the blood of His Son. We owe a debt to grace and grace calls me to turn away from a life of pride, to pursue a life of humility. Grace calls me to move from a self-driven existence in a self-absorbed world so that my life might be lived in service to others. And grace moves me from my aimless indulgences to a purposeful life lived for the glory of Jesus Christ. See we come to the table to celebrate His grace. The freedom, the forgiveness and the faithfulness that He shows to us, and the commitment of faithfulness that is in our heart to Him. Let me be sure you understand we don't gain grace by coming to this table. Don't ever think that by coming here, taking these elements that somehow you've done something that gains grace or adds grace or God's favor to your life. None of us are worthy to come here. We come because of what Christ has done. We come having received Christ as our Lord and Savior and we celebrate remembering what He has done for us. But we do come to this place tonight remembering that we live in the red. And I want you with me, not to sing, but to say the words to a precious song that reminds us what it means to live in the red. The words are on the screen. Let's share it together.

*O to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be!
 Let Thy goodness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee:
 Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
 Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it; seal for Thy courts above.*