

Good morning, we are continuing our message from last week, which walked us through the ideas of thinking rightly as a Christian. The impetus for this is that we are called to holiness. That is, as Peter began his epistle, that we were chosen and redeemed to be cleansed from sin and set apart for God. Last week we considered the content under the question, “what are you thinking?” It really is a question that springs from Peter’s content. We have another question that is presented for us in the next three verses, which will be our focus this morning, **verses 14-16**. If the first question that Peter leads us to ask in relation to holiness is what we are thinking, the second question concerns what we are doing.

**.II. What are you doing?** Two things are mentioned that give a **framework for action**, the **first** is that we who are in Christ are identified as **obedient children**. By making this statement Peter is reaching back to **verse 2** which highlights that part of our salvation is that we have been chosen by the foreknowledge of God (verse 1 elect, verse 2 God’s foreknowledge) in sanctification and for obedience. Being a child of God, and consequently being called to obedience are amazing thoughts.

Just think of how being a child of God elevates us? Whatever brokenness your own families display, and we all display some brokenness, something that is off, we are ultimately part of the family of God. God is the perfect, loving Father. His eternally begotten Son and His Holy Spirit, who are of the same essence as the Father, communicate the Father’s love and care to us. So, being a child of God by the work of sanctification, and for the purpose of obedience, distinguishes **identity** and **obedience** as a **foundational part of the Christian life**. These are key components **in my sanctification**, my growing **in holiness**.

Let’s consider obedience for a moment. This is a terribly important thought, especially for those of us who really have been out from under our parents’ oversight and authority for some time. For adults, our relationship with our parents has changed from honoring through obedience, to honoring through care and respect. But as Christians, there is never a point in time where our relationship with God grows beyond obedience, though certainly we are to respect and fear the Lord. Peter makes that clear in **verse 17** But that word obedience, especially for we who are relatively free in all of our actions, is anathema to us. The phrase, “I don’t answer to anyone,” should never be uttered from the Christian because we answer to God, and in God’s created order, He has established areas of authority which we must follow throughout our lives. We might properly recognize that we do not answer to certain people, or that if anyone in authority wants us to disobey the commands of God we are under no obligation to obey, but rather disobey. But there is never a time when we are to be disobedient to God as our Father.

**Are you being an obedient child of God?** **Philippians 2:8** tells us that even Jesus displayed obedience, and He was so faithful to God’s call upon His life that He was obedient to the point to death. That is an amazing idea. The Christian, who is sometimes confronted with fiery trials, is to stay the course in obedience to God even if it should result in death. Now I need to add this caveat, biblical Christianity does not spread through violence, as some have tried in the past. Neither is biblical Christianity going to call us to murder in order advance our cause. Suicide bomber and true Christian are mutually exclusive. *But there are times when God’s call, which we must obey, will become the means through which we are brought into His presence.* That is the example of Jesus Christ, and of Jesus has stayed His obedience, you and I would have no hope. Are you being an obedient child of God?

**How are we to be obedient?** In the next phrase, Peter gives us the **second** thing that gives us a **framework for action**, and that is that we display a commitment to being **conformed to the holiness of God**. (**v 14/15**) He gets us there by telling us first that we are not to be conformed to the passions of our former ignorance. What does he mean? It is helpful to look at this word “conformed.” The word translated “conformed” has as its **root** the word from where we derive the word “**schematic**.” It is a great word picture.

My father was a carpenter, and there were times growing up when I would be at work with him and he combed over blueprints. Later on, construction became the way that I was able to survive during seminary. I often had blueprints of project in my vehicle or was looking over blueprints with contractors. What are blueprints? Well, they are not blue anymore. The blue came from the way that we used to make copies. Some of you may remember the heliographic copiers that smelled like ammonia, and all the copies looked blue or purple. But blueprints served a purpose, they were a to scale sketch of something that was intended to be built. Some blueprints are cars, or landscaping, or digital systems infrastructure. The ones I am used to are of houses, or a kitchen, or an electrical or plumbing plan for a house or building. But even written music could be considered a blueprint for what the musician wants played, or sung. In all these cases, a contractor that goes out on his or her own will invariably cause problems with the rest of the construction. A musician that sings or plays in the wrong key when everyone else is playing in the right key does not inspire the welcome sound of harmony. Have you ever sung a wrong note really loudly? It's like a big pimple on the end of your nose.

Friends this is what Peter is warning us about. God has a blueprint to make us holy, but there is also a blueprint that is set by sinful passions. These blueprints work against each other. The Christian that is in a life pattern of sin and seeking conformity to the world's passions is a Christian building off plan, singing off note. But Christians, we must also not forget that this is the reason that the world despises Christianity. True Christianity is dissonance to the world, instead of harmony with it. That is why the bible uses language like repentance, and news heavens and new earth, and people of God, to describe those who truly follow Christ in this world. There is a contrast. The goal of the Christian life is in part to reveal how much more beautiful and true the blueprint of God is for life if people will but repent and embrace Christ.

So, Christian brother, or sister, to what are you conforming your life? What schematic are you molding you life towards? Just think of the social issues that the bible speaks to and ask yourself, would I uphold or reject the biblical teaching on these issues if I was asked what I believed? Is sexual expression sinful outside of marriage? Is God's plan of marriage really only between one biologically male and one biologically female person? Is abortion really murder, and is it murder even when a woman has been violated? Do people really go to hell for eternity if they reject repentance and belief in Jesus Christ as the only means of relationship with God? Biblically speaking, however difficult it may seem to bear in our cultures and because of the consequence of these experiences to the innocent, the answer to all those questions is, yes. So the question about what schematic we are conforming our life to becomes a little more difficult to answer ***if we are not biblically informed Christians***. But we need not look at those issues only. What does my work ethic say about who I am really obeying? The Bible teaches us that whatever we find to do we are to do it with all our might as unto the Lord. Does our work ethic reveal that we are being conformed to holiness? What about my relationships, close and otherwise, do they reflect a life that is marked by obedience to the end that we might reflect the holiness of God?

The answer to what we are conforming our life to is undergirded by the knowledge that **we need to know what God teaches us** if we are to be obedient children who are being conformed to His holiness. Peter directs our attention to God's teaching in **1:10-12**, God has been speaking. He is not silent. You might remember that the O.T. prophets always prefaced their speech with, "**the word of the LORD came unto me,**" or, "**thus says the LORD.**" The Psalms tell us that God even uses creation to communicate His wisdom and glory to us. But we need not leave the epistle to see this teaching layered throughout Peter's exhortation. In **chapter 1:25**, the word of God is **eternal**, and it is good news that is **proclaimed**. If it is proclaimed, it can be known. In **chapter 2:2** he likens this word to a mother's milk that infants crave for their very existence. And in this analogy is where I think the issue really lies. There are three things on an infants mind, milk, mom, milk, sleep, and milk. If they are hungry and you aren't mom or food, its not going to be a good day. If you are mom but want to get your child on a schedule, and they are hungry, it's not going to be a good day. Do we crave God's word like an infant craves food?

Allow me to show you how important God shows His word to be. Moses had been wandering around the wilderness with a bunch of obstinate people. He had been often frustrated, angered, and even threatened by these people. But Moses had been given a gift. Although Moses couldn't see God, he was allowed to be in the presence of God to

receive God's words for God's people. But one day Moses dares ask God if God would show Moses His glory. God agrees and says that He would hide Moses in a cleft and cover Moses while He allowed all His goodness to pass by Moses, but that Moses could only be allowed to see His back. The next day as Moses hid in the cleft of a rock and God covered Moses to protect Moses from seeing His face, God passed by Moses as He proclaimed His goodness and steadfast love. Then Moses saw the back of God. Connect the dots. **To request to see the glory of the LORD was granted primarily through the declaration of who God is.** Notice the verses that teach this to us:

Exodus 34:5-8 (ESV) <sup>5</sup>The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." <sup>8</sup> And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

God was seen by hearing and understanding who He is. Though seeing the back of God in His glory was magnificent, to be sure, **it is the knowledge of His glory that allows us to see God.** Now fast forward 1500 years in Israel's history, and notice how the Apostle John distinguishes Jesus Christ.

John 1:1-2, 14 (ESV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God...<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In Jesus Christ those who saw Him were blessed with something that God could not satisfy with Moses, they heard God, and saw God. But what about us? We are 2000 years removed from Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. How can we know God? How can we see God? Peter actually answers this question in his second epistle. **2 Peter 1:16-21** talks about the privilege that Peter, James, and John had in seeing the glory of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. The glory was such that Peter, James, and John became like dead men before Jesus. Jesus actually had to lift them up off the ground and tell them not to fear. And of that event Peter says, **"we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."** (2 Peter 1:19 ESV)

My friends, **the point of all of this is that God's schematic for life is seen in His word because there we see God the Father, His only begotten Son full of grace and truth, and His Holy Spirit who is our comforter.** There we see how to live a life that is holy before the Lord. Are you being an obedient child of God? You cannot if you are not consuming and living the word of God. How can you be if you are not consuming the word? You cannot know what He desires. But it should also be asked, are you really a child of God? If you are not a child of God, repent of your sins today, and put your belief for eternal life and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Amen.