

Minds Prepared for Action

Thomas Robinson, *Born to a Living Hope 3*, April 17, 2016

1 Peter 1:13-25

¹³ Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully** on the **grace** that is being brought to you in the **revealing of Jesus Messiah**.

¹⁴ As **children who listen and follow**, do not be molded to the passions that were part of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but just as **the one who called you is holy, become holy** yourselves in all aspects of your way of life. ¹⁶ That's what scripture means when it says, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*" [Lev 19:2]

¹⁷ And if you **invoke as Father** the one who **judges impartially** according to each person's **actions**, then **shape your way of life** with awe throughout the time of your **sojourn**, ¹⁸ since you know that it was not with corruptible things like silver or gold that **you were redeemed** from the **futile way of life** inherited from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but **with the precious blood** of the Messiah, as of an unblemished, spotless lamb. ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but made manifest in the end of times for your sake, ²¹ who through him **trust in the God who raised him from the dead** and gave him **glory**, so that **your faith and hope are in God**.

²² As you have **purified your lives/souls by listening to the truth and following it**, which results in a love of brothers and sisters that is without hypocrisy, then **love one another eagerly from a pure heart**, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of **imperishable**, through the **living and abiding word of God**; ²⁴ for "*All flesh is like grass | and all its glory like the flower of grass. | The grass withers, | and the flower falls, | ²⁵ but the Lord's word remains forever.*" [Isa 40:6-8] And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Exodus 12:11

¹¹ In this manner you shall eat the Passover: with your belt fastened (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.

Exodus 6:6

⁶ "Say therefore to ... Israel, 'I am THE LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm...."

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be molded to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Isaiah 40:3-11

³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of THE LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God [Mt 3:3]. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of THE LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of THE LORD has spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of THE LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him ... ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd....

Minds Ready to Move, Act, Serve, Do...

In 1 Pet 1:1-12, Peter writes to believers as “resident aliens” facing intense trials, but born again into “a living hope” by Jesus’ resurrection. Thus they celebrate even under persecution. They have not seen Jesus, but love and trust him, and experience joy and glory and the deliverance of their lives.

The result is not passivity but readiness for action that can respond to diverse challenging situations.

We “*gird up the loins of our minds*” (KJV). Like Israel at the Exodus, ready to move, to act at a moment’s notice. Deliverance of our life / soul is a process in which we actively participate. Think clearly, soberly. Commit to our direction: *Set your hope* on the *grace* we see as we see *Jesus*. That grace has already been revealed and will be fully revealed. We live in and learn that Grace.

Even under persecution as a tiny minority, the believers knew that they were part of God’s rule over his whole world by astonishing grace. They knew that their reality would outlast the Roman empire.

Peter sees this revelation in the promise of Isaiah 40 in the revealing of God’s lasting glory.

Training for a New Way of Life: Learning from God

Amazingly, we are children of God! We listen and follow (‘obedience’) as we are trained into a new way of living. It’s like learning a new science or profession or being apprenticed in a new skill. There are patterns of thinking, desires for power, self-indulgence, self-assertion, and exclusion of others that flow from not knowing God and his grace in Jesus. Peter says, that’s where you were. You were shaped by those patterns. You can empathize with those who still see life through those lenses.

Those patterns of mind and life are still all around trying to squeeze us into a mold. Like Paul (Rm 8:2), Peter stresses the need to recognize that squeezing process. Only by listening to a new vision, transformation into a new way of thinking, can we recognize God’s will and shape our lives by it.

The challenge is to know who to listen to and follow. God called us into this life in Jesus. He shows his unique character/holiness in Jesus. We are apprentices. We listen and practice, practice, practice! Peter, like Paul, had experienced the power of the story of Jesus to change lives. Even pagans did not just learn about Jesus. Jesus’ reality – grace – grasped their lives, changed them from inside.

Being children of this Father, listening to Jesus, is what makes disciples into “resident aliens” in every human society based on human power, domination, exclusion, violence. God is everyone’s God – Jews, Gentiles, slave, free. He evaluates life, knowing & loving each person, by their own actions. In Jesus, he redeems us from slavery (like the Exodus) by giving himself in Jesus’ death (like the blood of the lamb) to free us from bondage to the futility of life in the ignorance that excludes God.

Peter says this is a reality of God embedded in the whole story of the world. God in his Word created the world leading to the complex beauty and brokenness of human life. It is that Word that became flesh and showed us true beauty, but also took on our brokenness and death. Through him we see God’s grace overcoming death in Jesus’ resurrection revealing the glory of new life. This is where the whole story is going. We learn that God intends that conquest of death not just for Jesus but for us. We learn new faith / trust and hope in God that empowers our present actions and aspirations.

Training for Love and Lasting Life

Peter says that the believers’ lives / souls (psyche) have been cleaned / purified by listening to the truth of what God has done in Jesus and by letting that grace shape life. The result is that the love of God that is at the heart of that grace grows a corresponding love in the believer and in their community. It is a love without manipulation or hypocrisy. A self-giving love that seeks the good of others. Peter says practice it eagerly as it keeps purifying you from the inside. Practice it close up with brothers and sisters who have problems and struggle with suffering and sin like you do.

This is the ongoing process of new birth. Birth not by our flesh, subject to death (Peter quotes Isa 40). A seed is planted by God’s word – the powerful event / word of Jesus – a seed that the Spirit uses to create God’s own eternal life in us. Jesus, the living Word of God, becomes our joy and glory. Now we’re dressed for action, for facing, dealing with, growing into the challenges that life offers.