

12093-A November 25, 2012

How to Take Heart

1 Peter 1:13-21

I. **Jesus prepared his disciples for hard times. John 16:33; 14:27**

A. It's going to be harder than you think.

1. Primarily for me, alone. Because you will fail here.
2. Yet my Father is with me.

B. I will be with you despite what you think.

1. I have told you things that will bring you peace in me.
2. I will be alone, but my concern is for your peace.

C. I have overcome more than you think—the world itself.

1. This world will be hard for you, but I have overcome it.
2. Tribulation: stress, sorrow, trauma.
3. Take heart: to have confidence or firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing.

D. *Peter was there for all of this and he reminds his suffering friends that their suffering is not in vain.*

II. **First Peter is written to Christians feeling alone, traumatized, confused in the world.**

A. Spiritually all the best things happen in the desert, in the trials.

III. **How to take heart in the trials: Four things, 1:13-21.**

A. Set your understanding in the truth of your rescue. *We tend to lose heart when we forget that we are part of a new eternal reality.*

1. *Therefore* (dio): looks back to everything God has done for you in Christ:
 - a) He has chosen you and given you citizenship in his kingdom
 - (1) You are chosen and an expatriate here.
 - b) He has given you an indestructible inheritance in the other dimension and in the next age
 - (1) Both invisible to you right now, but more real than this age.
 - c) He has invested your trials here with meaning—strengthening your grasp on him.
 - (1) Tested faith is knowledge of God more precious than gold
2. *We simply have a terrible time continuing to grasp the truth of the news of Christ's life, death and resurrection. It fades in our mind, which is why we take communion.*
3. *When we lose that grip, life degenerates into rebellion or moralism*

B. Set your hope fully on the grace Christ will bring when he returns. 13b. *We tend to lose heart when we look at this age for hope by not thinking hard and long about the gospel.*

1. We are hope-based creatures. If we set our hope anywhere in this age (self, success, nation, Jer.9:23, strength, shekels, smarts—all idols if we worship them)
 - a) Where you set your hope is what will shape your character and destiny.
 - b) FULLY set on that future hope—not part here and part there.
2. How do we set our hope fully on the revelation of Christ? 13a
 - a) Preparing our minds for action.
 - b) Being clear-headed about ultimate reality.
 - (1) Clear headed: nephontes = well balanced, not intoxicated.
 - (2) In control of one's thought processes and thus not in danger of irrational thinking (Louw-Nida)
3. *So, Roll up your mental sleeves and clear your head.*
 - a) The gospel is not a philosophy, but an announcement of historical reality.
 - (1) The incarnation, death/resurrection/ascension, and the Return of the King.
 - b) Faith in Christ is relentlessly thoughtful and cogent and based on eye-witness testimony.
 - c) Faith in Christ is not the absence of thinking—it is the strongest form of thinking, based on what God has done and said.

- C. Set your character on God's character. 14-16. *We tend to lose heart when we go back to old ways to handle our stress, refuse to lean into growth, and become careless about our life*
1. Resist the pressure from your former ignorant addictions. 14
 - a) Passions: epithumia = driving desires, over-desires = addictions
 - (1) Not just chemicals, but emotions, coping mechanisms that manipulate this age into solving our problem.
 - b) Ignorance: agnoia = out of touch with spiritual reality
 - (1) *Worldthink offers ways of dealing with stress that are addictive, destructive ignorance. It will not help you get through your trauma!!*
 2. Lean into your new character—a character just like Christ. 15
 - a) Be holy in your conduct because God is holy. (Lev.11:44)
 - (1) Holiness does not mean religiosity, moralism, or Pharisaism—it means to be set apart for God himself personally: knowing, loving, serving, trusting and learning to think like God. Like a good marriage, personal and exclusive
 - (2) *It produces a character matrix of virtues like the ones Jesus enjoys.*
 - (3) *Look to the character and actions of Jesus. Good, gracious, loving, kind, smart, wise, sacrificial, strong, radically committed to God the Father and the redemption of the world. Matt.11:29*
 3. Be careful in your exile. 17
 - a) Conduct your life in fear?
 - (1) Not on a tightrope, but like running on a horse. It's a rush but you have to pay attention.
 - b) Careful of what?
 - (1) *Of thinking of yourself as a citizen of this age instead of child of God, an expatriate here, and member of the next age.*
 - c) Why? Because God the Judge is your Father.
 - (1) Fatherly discipline is a real thing but it is based on love, relationship.
 - (a) This is a sensible and wise fear, not the terror of a slave, but the respect of a son.
 - (2) *Base your resistance to sin not on legalism, but on relationship with your Father.*
 - (a) *Children obey not in order to be children but because they are children.*
- D. Set your confidence in God's work. 18-21. *We tend to lose heart when we get our eyes off The Cross.*
Three reasons:
1. You were not purchased by things from this age, but by God's own life
 - a) The precious blood of Christ, The ultimate Passover: his sacrifice at the cross, death/resurrection
 2. You were not brought into your own story, but God's ancient and eternal story.
 - a) Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world, and brought at the right time. This is an historical reality and God has joined you to it.
 - b) The destiny of the universe has been changed and your destiny is now attached to this new reality.
 - (1) Eph.1:10, God is summing up all human history in Christ.
 3. You are not being saved by faith in your own obedience, but faith in God directly through Christ.
 - a) God himself is saving you singlehandedly through Christ—this cannot fail! Rom.8:32
 - b) *Christ's obedience on your behalf is what saves you, not your obedience on his behalf.*
 - c) Through Christ—the only way to know God. Jn.14:6

- IV. **Think!** *Worldthink offers no real answer to the questions that plague humanity: Origins, Destiny, Meaning, Morality. So it has no answer for Suffering—because it doesn't offer a rescue from evil or death, just a coping mechanism for managing the grief. The World offers limited choices:*
- A. Stoicism: *Suck it up*; that's the way it is, you're just a tiny part of a big universe.
 - B. Epicureanism: *Live it up*: Carpe Diem;
 - 1. *Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero* – "Seize the Day, putting as little trust as possible in the future" (Horace).
 - 2. *This is the exact opposite of the hope God offers in the gospel.*
 - C. Nihilism: *Give it up*: It's all meaningless.
 - 1. *Oh, Joy! I'm a grown up germ destined to extinction.*
 - D. Moralism: *Measure up*; pull yourself up by your moral bootstraps.
 - 1. Religion is theological moralism with biblical vocabulary.
 - a) Pharisaism: righteousness based on human obedience to Torah
 - b) Islam: obedience to Koran
 - 2. Karma is spiritistic moralism extended into past lives, metaphysical moralism. Suffering is your fault from a previous life.
 - 3. *Problem with moralism is that it's hopelessly impossible.*
 - E. Spiritism: *Make it up*. We'll imagine ourselves into a new earth?
 - 1. Eckhart Tolle and the New Earth has humanity self-evolving an entirely new universe because of our positive mental energy (?)
 - 2. Depak Chopra picks what he likes from religion and spirituality on his own authority, but has no proof of anything, no real authority or experience to prove what he says.
 - 3. *Talk about a leap of faith!!!*
- V. **Only the gospel of Christ says *Look Up! You are being rescued!!(Lk.21:28)*.**