

Rock Solid Faith In a Rocky World

Be Different

April 23, 2023

Overarching Theme: 2023 – Living the Dream

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point: 2023 can be a year of living the dream of faithful discipleship as we take a next step forward in following Jesus Christ.

Reflect on this Scripture: **1 Peter 1:13-23**

¹³ Therefore prepare your minds for action;^[a] discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. ¹⁴ Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. ¹⁵ Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, ¹⁶ for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

¹⁷ If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸ You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰ He was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹ Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your trust and hope are set on God.

²² Now that you have purified your souls^[b] by your obedience to the truth^[c] so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.^[d] ²³ You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.^[e]

Commentary: First Peter addresses Gentile converts ("exiles") who are struggling to dis-identify with their former way of life. These believers have

been given new birth by God into a new family, but they must familiarize themselves with the values and lifestyle of their new reality as Christians. First Peter understands how becoming Christian is a process of becoming like Christ that involves not only spiritual transformation but identity formation.

This means that Christians voluntarily embrace an exilic orientation toward the world. It means that Christians not withdraw from the dominant culture but engage those in it while maintaining their social and moral difference. We are to think graciously (*prepare your minds – set all your hope on the grace... v. 13*), desire reflectively (versus *desires that you formerly had in ignorance v. 14*) and love deeply (*love one another deeply from the heart v 22*). This moral difference is made possible through Christ's redemptive power (*precious blood of Christ, v. 19*) to liberate Christians from their pasts, making it possible for them to live a radically transformed existence.

As obedient children of God the Father who have been "*born anew*," Christians can truly **be different** in the best possible way and find their meaning and coherence in "the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

Adapted from online commentary by Janette OK
workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/third-sunday-of-easter/commentary-on-1-peter-117-23-5

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. 1 Peter 1:13 ("prepare your minds for action") literally means 'gird the loins of your mind' or so one isn't tripped up mentally by toxic, ungodly thinking. What are some examples of how people can get tripped up in how they think?
2. In contrast, what are some ways that we can *set our hope on the grace that Jesus brings*, looking for signs of God's grace in daily life?
3. Can you think of an example how people might succumb to 'ignorant desires' (v. 14)? How does the sacrifice of Christ and his resurrection (vs 19-21) help us grow in more godly desires (to be holy as God is holy)?

4. What are some ways that we can love more deeply and more genuinely (v. 22)?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: ***22** Now that you have purified your souls^[b] by your obedience to the truth^[c] so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.^[d] **23** You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.^[e]" (1 Peter 1: 22-23).*