

Privilege of Sons

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1 Peter 1:17-25 ¹⁷ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like silver or gold*, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²² Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because "All flesh *is* as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, ²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

In college when I delivered furniture, I once delivered a brand-new sofa and love seat to a customer's house. Before we could drop off the new stuff we moved their old couch down to the basement. Their old couch was a filthy disgusting, uncomfortable thing. They now had a new clean sofa set. About a month later we had to go back out to pick up the new stuff and bring their old couch back up from the basement into their living room because they said the new set didn't fit.

Our previous lives, that is before we came to know Christ, were useless, worn out, worthless, but now God has set us free from that way of living, are we going to destroy this new life that we have in Christ. Are we going to rip it up and stain it, or even worse throw it out because it just doesn't fit right in our lives, because Christ keeps getting in the way. Are we going to bring back from the basement the old way of living? Or are we going to cherish the new life that we have in Christ?

This new life is a privilege and like many privileges it comes with heavy responsibilities. Most of us were pretty excited as teenagers to get our driver's license. Most of us probably didn't think much about the responsibility of driving a car. How with one moment of inattention, we could take a life.

In our text this morning Peter talks both about the great privilege we have through Jesus' resurrection and also the reason we ought to take this privilege serious, the responsibility we have as sons.

Peter here talks about another privilege that is ours, a most precious privilege, the privilege that we are called sons of God. The privilege that we may approach the Almighty God and ask of Him as a son to a father, and what is more to a heavenly father, and He will answer. Because we have the privilege to be called sons of God, and to call on God as a child would call on his father, we also have responsibilities. **The Responsibilities of Sons, Live in Fear and Live in Love**

"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." To be anyone's son is a privilege, there are many blessings which come to us directly through our fathers. But it is also true that the sons bear responsibilities to their earthly fathers. We have a more perfect, a heavenly father, and we ought to bear the responsibilities of this privilege. Moreover, our heavenly Father looks down from heaven and sees all the children of men, and judges them, each one impartially. There is no escape, **"The soul who sins," says the Lord, "shall die."** His criteria are either met or they aren't, there is no favoritism with Him. Because of this Peter says we are to live in reverent fear.

But what is this reverent fear? Does this mean that we should live in terror of God, certainly not for what manner of son is terrified of his father. The fear that Paul here describes is not terror but more properly awe, it is a feeling of such great respect that we dare not do anything to disappoint him.

It is a feeling not unlike what you probably felt of your earthly Dad at some point when you were a child. Perhaps you can remember a time when your father towered above you. A time when your father seemed to know everything. A time when you were safe as long as your father was near. At that same time, you may have been afraid of messing up or being caught doing anything wrong. This fear wasn't a fear of being disciplined, it wasn't a fear of losing his love, it was simply a fear of being less in his eyes or disappointing him.

This is the attitude that we should have towards our heavenly Father, we should be so amazed with his justice, so overpowered by the thought that He is my father that loves me, that we are utterly ashamed that we have stepped one inch over the line, this is the proper fear of our Father.

But now Peter doesn't stop there he gives us further reason to **Live in Fear**. He continues **"For you know . . . that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,"**

The people I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon gave back a very good thing and replaced it with a very bad thing, but after all it was only a couch, and it was bought with nothing more than money. However, with what were we set free, **"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."** Nothing so pathetic as gold or silver, Peter says. But we were set free with the precious holy blood of a lamb spotless and blameless before God. This is the price for our redemption; of such a lamb there is only one. This new life was bought for us, at

an incredible price, beyond what we could have ever imagine, we dare not despise it. It is a very serious thing, and we ought to treasure this gift from God for what it is the most precious of all treasures. We must hold it securely. We must **Live in Fear**.

This too is the fear of God. It is the fear you might get if you hold an incredible precious thing in your hand. If you were to hold the Mona Lisa or the Crown Jewels. To even touch them might make you very afraid lest you accidently break or ruin them.

My brother Aaron and I once rented ATVs in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. The man who rented the ATVs was very protective of his vehicles and required a very high deposited from anyone who rented them. The rental price was I think less than \$100 but the deposit was a couple thousand dollars. I was very worried lest I give the owner any reason to keep that deposit.

Jesus has a very high price for our salvation. It is not a thing to be taken lightly. Paul reminds us in Philippians

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

We have received the privilege to call God our father. We have received it through the death and resurrection of his son. This is not a gift to misuse or take lightly but we ought to live in the fear of God.

Peter speaks of another privilege, the privilege to live in love:

V22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Peter's words here might at first sound contradictory. He says "**you have sincere love . . . [therefore] love one another.**" Someone might ask if you have sincere love than why do we need the exhortation to love one another.

Well perhaps your mother told you when you were young. "You two are brothers, now act like it." In the same way Peter reminds us that we have been made brothers through Christ's resurrection, now act like it. The same savior who gave his life for you, gave his life also for the one sitting next to you, or a few pews up. Whether you know it or not, you do love one another, you just keep forgetting that you love one another. It goes back to the couch I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon. You have the nice new couch upstairs and the old disgusting couch downstairs which will you keep? Which will you use?

You have the two lives, the new life which is born of the Father's love for you and the death of his son, and the old life which is born of sin and every evil desire. Which will you make use of? Since you have been given the new life of love, love one another.

This life comes as Peter says from obedience to the truth:
you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth

We talked about this last week. This is the same wording that Peter used when he was talking to the Jewish leaders:

Acts 5:32 the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him

Peter is not here talking about obedience to the Law. We cannot purify ourselves by keeping the law ourselves. We cannot live a life of love by our own efforts to keep the law. Peter himself makes the clear in our text when he says:

v23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

When Peter talks about obedience he talks about those who hear the word. As the Emmaus disciples heard the word and received the word gladly.

Thus, Peter makes it clear that it is the Word of God which gives us a new birth and a new life. Through Jesus we are reborn as those who live in the love of God. We think again of the couch. The new clean couch is like the new purified life that God has given to us as a free gift through Jesus. Do not bring up the old dirty couch.

So then we have received the love of Christ in our hearts through the Word of God. Because we have received the love of Christ we ought to love one another.

Living a life for God is an act which flows from a heart of love for God, Love for God is the result of Faith in Christ and what He did for me. Which He did once for all and has given the blessing of as a free gift to all those who believe in His name. By so doing He has washed and cleansed us and presented us to His Father, so that through Him we receive adoption as the sons of the Most High. Having become sons of the righteous, just and merciful God, let us take seriously the **Responsibilities of The Sons** and therefore **Live in Fear** and **Live in Love**. To God who creates, enables, and sustains not only the ability but also the will to for this service glory and honor and dominion forever and ever. Amen.