

Live With Your Mind

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[0 : 0 0] for some time this morning to look at the chapter that we read together or the section of the chapter we read together and first Peter it's on page 127 of the Pew Bible and it's the section entitled Be Holy. We looked last week at kind of introduction to this letter where Peter was laying foundations, not just for those to whom he was writing, but people who were persecuted for their faith spread around Asia and maybe sometimes feeling lonely and isolated but it's through the spirit of God a message for all of us as we think and consider our Christian lives.

And when we recognise this foundation it changes our life, it changes the way we live having Christ in our lives changes us and we saw a little bit about that last week and we're going to see a little bit more about that today and Emily is getting baptised later on and Christ in her life has changed her and she looks with all of us, your Christians, to take the foundation that we have of peace and grace and allowing that to apply to our lives and change our lives because foundations matter don't they? You don't build a foundation and just walk away and start building some things somewhere else you know the foundation is integral to the building it's absolutely vital and so we take the truth of God and therefore with that foundation we allow it to apply to our lives and I want to see a couple of things today about that foundation, the foundation of truth it links us to God and therefore we are also in our lives to be like God because we love the foundation that He gives us, it's a link to God and it's looking like or loving like or being like God, there are some one or two structured notes there in the bulletin sheet to help you if you want to look at that but the foundation I want to start with is something that links us to God and that's very important it's very important, we start reading the passage that we read today starts with one word and it's a linking word, it's a therefore you don't start there for at the beginning of something new, you wouldn't want to start a letter with therefore or you wouldn't start an essay in college with therefore because you would think well what's before it a therefore is always in the middle of something, it's just something that happens before it and it's a linking word so we have this great foundation which Peter lays down for us as Christians and then he says therefore because of the truth, because of this great foundation of relationship with God our lives are going to be different and changed and that is the great truth isn't it of revelation, is that God wants us to learn about Him and therefore allow us in our learning to be changed, you see church is hopeless and useless and reading the word is hopeless and if studying the word together is hopeless if it's just an academic exercise, if we're just passing the time and we read the Bible a little bit and then go away, there's a therefore there's a link word that's absolutely crucial to our understanding of truth, people say I just love Jesus, don't give me all that theology nonsense that's crazy thinking, crazy mad thinking because theology is the knowledge of God, it's knowing the person we're in relationship with, if we don't know Him then we don't understand Him and we can't learn from

Him and so the more we love someone the more we are in relationship with someone we love, the more we want to know about them and that's what theology is, therefore the link is tremendously important between truth and life, we're looking to apply truth and the challenge of truth through the Holy Spirit to our lives, we're looking to be equipped to live as Christians through our knowledge of God, is that why you're here today? Is that why you open the word? Is that why you would study Scripture, the living word of God? Because you're aware of a therefore a link between what you know about God and therefore how you act, tremendously important, therefore in the light of the foundation in the light of the knowledge of God that we have through Jesus Christ, the grace and peace that are ours, He says we're to do several things.

We're to, I'm modernizing the parlance here, we're to roll up the sleeves of our mind, that's what we're to do in the original, let's say well it says here, prepare your minds for action, in the old Bible it would be gird up the loins of your mind, you know, just lift up that long flowing gear that you're wearing with a belt so that you can run so that your legs are free to run and be active, that's what girding up your loins means.

Sounds kind of un-painful really, but it's about being prepared, it's about being active, it's about being ready and so I've modernized it, let's roll up the sleeves of your mind let's get ready to get active and get busy around God's word. You see the mind is the engine room in many ways for our faith, it's what informs our faith and it's what drives our feelings, I'm not saying feelings are important, but I'm saying that they need to be informed and they need to be led and guided by truth and by the truth of God.

[6 : 00] And we need therefore as Christians, and I'm asking you very specially today as you think about your life out of here your life in here as well, but your life out of here more importantly, beware of things as Christians, beware of things that anaesthetize your mind, that dull your mind, that stop you thinking. There's lots of things that encourage us to be un-thinking, thoughtless Christians.

But when we know the truth and when we've been touched by grace and peace, we are to be those who gird up our minds, who roll up the sleeves of our minds and be thinking through the reality of applying God and the relationship of God to our lives. That's hugely important.

Please don't be an un-thinking Christian, that's one of the reasons we've tried these questions for Sunday night, just to stimulate us a little bit about thinking through the word of God and how it applies to our lives and how it should change us.

Should we have a five minute spot at the beginning of each service saying, okay how has God's word changed you since last week? How has God spoken? Have you rolled up the sleeves of your mind?

Have you made an effort? Has there been energy, mental energy engaged in your Christian life? Or are we passive and flabby in our thinking and loose and careless about Jesus Christ?

[7 : 32] Roll up, set your prepare your minds for action. Be self-controlled, that is take charge of your life as a Christian. It's the same word for being not drunk, being sober, sober-minded.

Great illustration, great picture, word pictures that we have. Don't be out of control. Don't be self-indulgent, work within the parameters of grace in your life.

Be focused, you know, you're drunk, the eyes go, you're not quite sure where you're walking, you stumble.

Your limbs don't work the way they normally do, you're out of control. You can't see properly, you can't think clearly. You wake up the next morning with a belly full of regret for the things you've said and done, because you weren't really in control.

And you say, be sober-minded spiritually. Don't be self-indulgent and careless and thoughtless, but really be someone who is disciplined spiritually.

[8 : 44] Realizing the reality we live in which is one where we can rejoice as Christians, but where we're also refined as we saw last week. Think about that.

Think about the refining, the testing of our faith. Don't try and escape that. Don't avoid the realities of that in life, but be thinking, taking charge of our lives because we're linked to God, foundation.

Therefore, because of what we have, this is how our lives look. And at the same time also, there should be those who put all our eggs into the one basket of grace.

People always say, don't put your eggs into one basket. I've never quite known really what that's all about. Well, I guess I do, but I suppose it means don't focus on one thing altogether.

Hedge your bets, maybe, to use a different illustration. Put all your eggs into one basket. But Christ says exactly the opposite. He says, put all your eggs into one basket of grace at the end of verse 13. He says, set your hope fully, fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

[10 : 04] That means, when it says set your mind fully, it means completely without reserve, without holding back all your eggs in one basket. That's what he's saying. Say, don't hedge your bets if there's another way. There's grace plus which we might be looking at tonight in the story of Acts.

But we risk it all. We gamble it all. Well, there's no gamble at all, of course, because we have the resurrected and redeemed Savior who has given us His promises.

But we give it all for Christ. That we live that life of hope and grace. We set our hope fully on that grace.

That's how we're to live. We're to live like grace is all we have. Grace is the acceptance we have from God through Christ. Grace is the life we have from God through Christ.

Grace is the life we live and we set our hope fully on it. We don't say I'm a little bit of grace and a little bit of meanness, a little bit of grace and a little bit of works, a little bit of grace and a lot of self-indulgence, a little bit of grace. This, that and the next.

[11 : 16] No, we wholeheartedly and fully go the road of grace and set our hopes fully on it. Not just when things are going well, but when we're being refined, we still set our hopes on grace. Maybe you've come today and you've had a rubbish week. You think Christ has left me? Is it that promise that the minister started with and all that pious nonsense about I'll with you until the end of the age? He's not there. I haven't seen him. He's abandoned me.

Follow the way of grace. Set your hope fully on grace even when it doesn't look like it. So we are linked to God. That's our foundation. Therefore, can you apply the truth to your life this week? Will you be able to do that? Is the foundation something that is reflected in your Christian life?

That's very important for us. Then also, so is the importance of being like God. We are linked to God and the foundation therefore means that we are like God. If you look at a foundation from above, when it's still a foundation, you'll see the shape that the building's going to be. It's going to be roughly the same.

Well, not roughly, probably. I hope. Identical to the way that it's certainly in terms of its main structure to what the foundation is. Sometimes you can't see it from my level, but if you're looking from on top.

So you have that great foundation and it looks like the building it's going to become. Or the building looks like the foundation that's there. And so in Christ we are to become like God. And He says that very clearly here.

[12 : 48] Because of what we have, grace and peace, He says be holy because I am holy. That's the likeness to God that He wants from us. Because I am.

That's what we're asked to do. That's how we're asked to live. That's the challenge for all of us as baptized Christians. It's a challenge for Emily that she will face through grace and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All of us are to be like God, be holy, because He is holy. What does that mean? Well, primarily it means just be different.

Be separate. Be different from what you were before and what may be those around you are like who don't know Christ. They were to be different separate because God is different and separate.

He is pure and good and absolutely free from sin. And that is how we are to seek to be in our lives. And there's four things briefly that this section encourages us, helps it, enables us or challenges us to be like God, to be holy like God. And the first is that we're rebels against evil. He wants us to be to rebel against evil. He wants us to move away from evil. As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but be holy because I am. So He wants us to be people who are rebels yeah? In our lives the mindset is we're to be people who recognize sin and evil in our lives and who move against it, who react against it.

That it's bad for us. Why? Because it separates us from God who's good, who is perfect and good. And because it's bad because it leads to death. The trouble is we like it.

[14 : 48] We like it. Maybe you don't. I like it. I like a lot of the things because of the remaining sin in my heart that Jesus doesn't want me to like. It's junk food for the soul.

We like junk food. Some of us who are less disciplined than others of course. Like the junk food of the soul. This is much more serious. Some people who don't keep that well physically are wheat intolerant. Can't take anything with wheat in it.

I'm sure there's a lot of other intolerances that people have diets. God is asking us here to be sin intolerant to become sin intolerant so that we find that we react against it. That we're not to live in a way that we did before. Not conforming but being rebels against the way we live. That's what we're asked to be. That's a really difficult thing.

But we're asked by God's grace to do that and He encourages us to do that. That requires discipline and it requires we use our mind, doesn't it? And it requires us to know this Christ and this God so that we know what He loves and what He knows is good for us and we avoid what is not. So we're to be rebels against evil. Stand against evil in our lives.

We're also to be those who live for worship. That's what makes us different, doesn't it? And that makes us different, separate, holy because we rebel against it. Where would you go anywhere else in the world that would give that kind of advice? Don't do the things that God doesn't like that He reveals.

[16 : 36] And live for worship for God. That separates us out from the world. Separates us out from those who don't. Because all of us today, all of us Christians are not give something or someone the preeminence. Someone receives that or something. It may be a career, maybe a relationship, it may be our bank balance, it may be ourselves, it may be our self esteem. Maybe lots of different things that are given the preeminence. The first place, that's the place of worship, the place of significance. And what's happened when we've moved spiritually from death to life, is that it moves to God and God becomes the one who takes first place in our lives so that we can recognize that we live here as strangers in reverent fear.

We worship Him with reverence, our maker or judge that sooner or later we will face, one who is worthy.

He's worthy of our worship. You know the great danger is always trying to make church funky or popular or something that people would come to because it's a great hour together.

But it will never be what God wants it unless you and I give Him the worth that He is due. That comes from knowing Him and wrestling with His character so that we see His worthiness. It's from within, that there's a reverence that comes from within. This is not an entertainment show, it can't be. It must be about reverencing and worshiping the living God. Worshiping Him with reverence and with insight. Verse 18 to 21 speaks about recognizing that we've been redeemed not with perishable things, as you said in the earlier part of the chapter we did last week or the empty way of life handed down to you and your forefathers, but the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect chosen before the creation of the world. With insight. So today you worship the living God, we reverence Him with that insight of knowing that we sit here because He has been so costly.

He's been so sacrificial in giving us the precious blood of His Son. That we recognize that. That there was a great cost to bringing us back to sitting here casually in our lives. That we have this great, greater love as no man in any lay down in his life or his friends. That this is this God.

[19 : 24] Recognize that today as we think through Him and we can therefore worship Him. This unbelievably massive, eternal knowing all, saying God shed blood in order to redeem us to give us spiritual life insight. And also with that great faith, that great faith and love of the second part of verse 21, through Him you believe in God who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him so your faith and hope are in God. So we worship God as the object of our faith and our hope in life.

That transforms our lives. Why? Because it's that resurrection life, isn't it? The resurrection power. The God who raised Christ from the dead and glorified Him. That's why we have faith. Easter really is significant.

Massively important because we see and celebrate their resurrected, redeemed, empowered Saviour. And the power that took Him, given victory over death and the grave, is the same power that gives us spiritual life and victory over death and the grave.

So that is tremendously important. It's a solid hope for us. It's not a vague optimism that we worship on the first day of the week, don't we?

Because that's a gentle reminder to us, the resurrection morning. We don't really need to wait until Easter time to celebrate and praise God for the resurrection. Every Lord's Day morning is the first day of the week.

[21 : 00] It's a resurrection morning. And it gives us more than a vague optimism, I hope, today. So we are like God by being rebels against evil, by living to worship, but also in the third place, loving like God. Like God because we're to love like Him. Now in verse 22 that you've been purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have a sincere love for the brother. Love one another deeply from the heart. Now that is said again and again throughout even this epistle that we love one, we love like God. Foundation of God.

So therefore we love like God. We don't just love like people. We love like God. God's love is our motivation. So we're brought today into a family. Once you are not a people, now you are a people. So you love that family. And that family that you've been brought into isn't genetically your family.

Isn't your family by natural descent. Now that could be hard enough. Although we love our families. It could be much harder with people that are not your natural family.

Who are absolutely different from you. And you can gravity in a church and think, well I need some people that are like me. So I can just relate to them. And that's good and important. And we know that Jesus even had those that he was particularly close to. But it doesn't mean that we can just ignore the rest. It doesn't mean that we just love like we would naturally love. It means that we love the brothers and sisters in Christ whoever they are. We don't fossilize grace in our lives. Nor are we selective and sparing. We're to love each other. We're to love those that we find it difficult to love. And others are to love us when we are difficult.

And we don't really have the option just not to do it. We don't have the option just to be and to go on our own. And say the church is rubbish. I hate church. But great if it was just me and Christ. Not like that. We'll see that again tonight very significantly. The way that the church dealt with trouble.

[23 : 16] But Christ is this great Trinitarian family father, son and Holy Spirit. I know it's perfect. But he asks us by his grace and by his favor to be open and honest and loving with one another. Long-suffering, patient and kind.

City groups are good for helping to express that. We're to be factionless. We're not to be party-spirited. We're to love like God.

We're to love the brothers and the sisters deeply from the heart. Deeply. From the heart. Not superficially.

Not just when it's easy. But we're to love deeply. That's what makes us like God. Rebels against evil, living for worship, loving like God.

And walking with the Word. Verses 23 and 24. You've been born again not of perishable seed but imperishable through the living and enduring Word of God. All men are like grass.

[24 : 20] All their glories like the flowers of the field. The grass withers the flowers fall. But the Word of the Lord stands forever. That Word which is in the solubility linked with the person of Jesus in the beginning was the Word John 1.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. So it's really not an encouragement just to have some kind of knowledge of a book. An ancient book or otherwise.

But it's an encouragement to walk with the person of the Word. Jesus Christ who is the Word incarnate. A relationship. A communicative in other words.

Why is Jesus called the Word in John 1? Because he communicates himself to us. Yes, through the Bible but through his own character. His own person that is given to us in Scripture.

He reveals himself in written propositional terms. Enduring Words. Living Words. Words breathed into by his own spirit. Because it's a reflection of him.

[25 : 24] What we have in Scripture is all we have of Jesus. It's a revelation of who he is. And the challenges for us to be moved by him. And as Christians to walk with him.

To walk with him. The truth of his Word matters. As we said before it's a reflection of him. What we believe. And what we believe will affect how we live. Will it not?

Every single person here lives as a reflection of what they believe. Isn't that true? Every single one of us. The people who are not here live as a reflection of what they believe or don't believe. I was speaking to some of the guys in the gas works this week. They came in and they were looking around.

You don't believe in all that rubbish do you? Oh yeah, yeah. What do you? All that stuff about heaven and hell and everything. I'm pointing them to Jesus. Talking about Jesus very briefly.

Insufficiently failed in many ways. But their lives reflect what they don't believe. Or what they do believe. Or maybe have never really thought about believing.

[26 : 36] And we pray that something will be triggered in their minds and thoughts. Even to meet someone who believes in Jesus Christ. It matters what we believe. Because we live in this relationship with a God who stands forever as does his Word. His Word and this person stands forever. And so we soak ourselves in the knowledge of his Word. Do we not? Not as academics.

Not as intellectuals. Not as middle class people who like books. But because it's the living and enduring Word of God. That's why. Because it reveals God to us. Because we recognize that it stands forever. The Word that it's preached to us. It stands forever. It's very encouraging.

Then the church will come back on a Sunday evening to study God's Word. It's very encouraging that our city groups have doubled in the last year to study God's Word and to pray and to think and apply.

They're encouraging that young Christians here are spontaneously meeting together to study God's Word. Doing it in their own time, in their own way. I hope seeking guidance from those who are leaders.

It's a miracle isn't it? That's the case. That doesn't happen naturally. But as we take God's Word and his grace and his peace, we link that living Word to our lives and we look like the Christ. We love like the Christ and we are like the Christ and seek to be like the Christ who is spoken of in his Word.

[28 : 28] It may that be the case for all of us that we are those who go out with the Gospel and to live the Gospel and who see lives as we will see today. A life hugely transformed by the power of Jesus Christ in the Gospel.

Amen. Let's bow our heads, pray Father God, take your Word and apply it. We pray to our hearts and consciences and go before us as a people as we seek to be equipped to live our lives, to be built into that building which is a reflection of Christ himself brick by brick as we are part of that building founded on the Word of the Apostles and the prophets. That great deposit, that truth that is ours is gifted to us through Scripture. We thank you for the Word of God. We know and appreciate how much it is under attack today and how much the Christ of the Word is molded and changed to suit ourselves rather than sometimes us being molded by him.

So Lord God give us reverence as we worship and bless us as we continue to enjoy the outworking of the Great Commission with the baptism today. For we ask in Jesus' precious name, amen.