

“God’s Own People Living Godly Lives”

August 21, 2011
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Scriptural Foundation: 1 Peter 2:9-12, ESV

A Living Stone and a Holy People

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

My wife works very hard to keep me eating healthy foods. I am thankful for her encouragement to me in this and I benefit greatly from them. Lately, Kimberly has been making me some great smoothies. They have been so fantastic, in fact, I have decided to give you a demonstration, from “Pastor Emeril” and I want to demonstrate how Kimberly makes these great smoothies for me.

First, we add a cup of ice and then we add a cup of fresh, Michigan blueberries. Isn’t that awesome? This is going to be a great smoothie. Next, she adds Greek yogurt and it is very good and healthy for you. Then she will add Truvia, a zero-calorie sweetener. To kick this up a notch, “Bam!”, (laughter), she adds flax seed oil. To add some additional liquid to this, she adds about a cup of low-fat, 1% milk. After adding the ingredients, she turns on the blender and mixes all this together. After it is all blended, we enjoy our smoothie. (The sound of ice crunching and laughter.) I didn’t get the ice all crushed, but that is a quick demonstration but this is very good and very nutritious. It is low in fat, high in fiber and protein, it has anti-oxidants, and other things that are very good for you.

What I have decided to do, however, is add a few more ingredients. The first is some heavy whipping cream that is really rancid and it has sat in the back of our refrigerator way too long and it doesn’t pour. I have to squeeze it out! In addition, I have a tomato which was sitting too long on our counter and it was getting rotten. Last, and certainly not least, Kimberly found in the back of our refrigerator some moldy spaghetti. Waste not, want not! Now I will remix all this and how many would like to come up and taste a drink? I do not ask that question for too long because I know we have some junior-high boys who would come up.

The point of this is: this concoction is no longer a smoothie, but it is a concoction which went from that which is pleasing to that which is putrid. It went from that which is nutritious to that which is absolutely nasty; from that which is tasty to that which is terrible.

Some of you may be upset with me for putting all those horrible ingredients in, thinking, “Pastor, how can you ruin a mixer full of really good-tasting and nutritious, blueberry smoothie. It is a horrible waste!” There is a point to that. I cannot un-mix these tainted ingredients out of the smoothie. Once they are put in they are in there for good. It is forever ruined. I readily acknowledge this demonstration is a waste of good food, but it is a demonstration with a purpose.

Food, by its nature and purpose, is to be nutritious. This demonstration, hopefully, takes on a spiritual value. This blueberry smoothie, mixed in with those vial ingredients, is an illustration of the greater waste which takes place in the life when God fashions us into that which is whole, pure, wonderful, and beautiful and then we take that which God has given us and we toss in ingredients God has told us are vial and will ruin us. We toss those ingredients into the mix, anyway, of our soul and then God calls us to live out the purpose of giving offerings which are acceptable to Him. This prompts the question: How can we?

In the previous study, as we have been studying 1 Peter, we saw God had told us, in Verse 5, we are living stones being build into a spiritual house to come and to be and live out a holy priesthood, and to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In our naturally state, not any part of us is acceptable to God, but He is talking to those of us who have been born again, to those of us who have been redeemed, to those of us who have been renewed, and to those of us who have been caused to be born again into a living hope through the mercy of God. He continues by saying, “Now that God has cleaned us up and He has fashioned us into something we were not – He has taken us out of darkness and into light, out of death and into life – we are called to be God’s priesthood, to serve Him and to worship Him. The very purpose of our life is to enjoy Him and to serve Him by offering Him acceptable sacrifices.”

Those acceptable sacrifices would be our bodies, as Paul reminds us in Romans 12:1, we need to present our bodies as “living sacrifices”. Hebrews 13:15 and 16 will suggest as well there is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving we give to God. We come on Sunday morning and we have words flow out of our voices unto God which would bring praise to Him and lift up His excellencies, His great works, His gracious acts, and His person. These are to be sacrifices made, but notice Peter says, in Verse 5, they are to be “acceptable”.

The whole reason for our existence is we can connect to God acceptable and we can offer sacrifices to Him and which He receives with joy and which are pleasing to Him. At great cost to Himself, God has taken our ruined lives and miraculously removed all these bad ingredients which were originally in there from the fall and He has made us, mixing us together by His Spirit, so He creates something nutritious and good tasting and healthy and wholesome. God is the One who places these ingredients. He is the One who purchases these ingredients. He is the One who designs the recipe, who provides the mixer, who puts them in the mixer, and who mixes them up. All we have to do is simply allow ourselves to be poured out. That is what it means to be a priesthood and offering a sacrifice acceptable to God – taking what God has already done, not producing it, and allowing ourselves to be poured out as an acceptable sacrifice to Him.

But, of our own accord, contrary to the design and God’s will, we mix in these ingredients, and we come on Sunday morning desiring to give thanks and praise, but is it acceptable anymore? Again, if I were to offer a fresh glass of this smoothie to you, would it be acceptable and would you say, “Yes, I will take it,” or would you say, “No thanks.”?

That is the question we must ask ourselves as we consider our relationship with God: Am I able, on the basis of the decisions, priorities, the attitude of my heart, to offer God a living sacrifice which is acceptable to Him? Satan is out to ruin us and keep us from this joyful purpose. He will tempt us and he will bring these ingredients which are spoiled, rancid, and rotten and place them in our very hands. God tells us, and He calls us today in our text, to think of our sin as an enemy of soul which will rob us of our wholesomeness, of our ability to be acceptable to God, and to live out the very purpose for which we have been given. Sin will rob us of our ability and our privilege.

Peter issues a plea to us which is so gently, tender, and humble to live godly lives. Then Peter supports this plea with encouragement. It is not left up to ourselves, “Do it on your own,” but he surrounds this plea from the front end to the back end with encouragement from God – we possess the ability and motivation to live godly lives and there are good reasons for us to keep ourselves pure.

The first issue we will take up is the plea to live godly lives in this sin-saturated, passion-drenched world, as we read,

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

We need to make two broad observations. First, Peter affectionately calls the recipients of this message “beloved”. What a tender, awesome word that is. Peter is not speaking harshly to them because he knows many are not abstaining by saying, “Hey, you dummies and you stupid-heads!” No, he is saying, “Beloved...” He is drawing them close to himself as brothers and sisters in Christ. He is so tender. He next will call them “sojourners and exiles”.

This entire letter is written to believers. At the very beginning of this letter, he says,

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles...

He is speaking to people who are born again, the elect, chosen by God for a different purpose and called out of this world and into God's pleasure, and he speaks to them as exiles in this world. He wants them to recognize we are foreigners and strangers here. He is urging us, as believers, and as beloved members of God's family and as exiles, strangers, and foreigners in this world, to abstain from fleshly passions.

This is an important observation for several reasons. First, we, as believers, should expect to wage a war. When we become believers we must not anticipate our problems are over. We should not share the Gospel by telling a person, "If you come to Jesus your life will be pleasant, easy, and beautiful," in the sense of lacking war and conflict. When we become a believer in Jesus Christ, the conflict really begins and the war takes off. We are still fighting against this flesh and pull of sin which is persistent in our lives and which is internal.

Indeed, we have been liberated from the guilt of sin and from the dominion, from the power of sin, and from the future of sin's presence in our life, but now sin is still present and we have a battle to face. If we are not conscious there is a war presently being waged, we will be caught off guard, we will fail, and we will be defeated.

The second reason this observation is so important is it reminds us Christianity is not simply a call to better morals. Peter does not begin his lesson by saying, "Hey, guys, behave better. Be more moral." He is not telling unbelievers how to please God. Rather, he is teaching believers how to live out this new life of salvation we have been given according to God's mercy and grace and how we can make the most of it; how we can take this salvation and live a life which glorifies God, honors the Lord Jesus, and advances His name.

If you have not submitted your life to the Lordship of Jesus, you have not embraced Him as your Savior. The Bible does not call you to try harder to live less sinfully. That is not the message of the Bible for you: The answer to your problems is you sin too much so sin a little bit less. The message of Scripture is to come to an awareness your sin is so deep and so rooted inside you cannot un-mix it, and it would take a supernatural act of God. Thank God He is willing to do that and He has done that, and He provided for that in His Son Jesus when He came to this earth, took on human flesh, died upon a cross, took our sins in His body, and bore our sins for us so our sins could be supernaturally removed from and separated from us so we could become pure again. Jesus rose that third day to declare life to all who would come to Him.

God calls you not to simply live a more moral life and abstain from flesh and passion, but He calls you to repent of your sin, turn from the direction of your life, and turn toward Christ embrace Him as your own. He will provide you with salvation and He alone can you free. Have you come to Jesus to receive God's new life and to accept His grace?

Notice, also, Peter issues one command which pertains to the invisible world of our desires and then he follows it with another command which pertains to the visible world of our conduct. First, he says in Verse 11, "abstain from the passions of the flesh". That is the internal, invisible world in which no one can see those passions except God and your own heart and conscience. Then he follows it up in Verse 12, by saying, "keep your conduct and your behavior and the way you live among the Gentiles as honorable", and this is the external world.

This dual focus is a key theme in Peter's writing. In Chapter 1, Peter writes,

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...

In Verse 14 he is talking about the internal world, but notice the call to a godly life does not begin with our conduct and the externals, but rather it begins with a call to an attention to our inner world, that which is private and one no one else can see – the realm of our desires and our passions.

The life of integrity, purity, and holiness is not, first, about actions. It is, first, about heart-desire. Fleshly passions and lusts always precede sin and are a part of sin in our life. This is the principle Peter is presenting to us. Let no one say, “This wrong is really only in the realm of my mind and my heart. It is not hurting anyone because it is not acting out yet. These lusts and desires are no danger as long as I do not act upon them. They are really small things.” Peter says, “No, they are not! Understand what God has told you about sin, in that it begins always in the heart and then it finds expression through the hands.”

Eve, when she was first tempted, was tempted in her heart to begin to look at the fruit and she saw it was good to the eyes and it was favorable to the taste.¹ It all began in the heart of Eve before she finally reached out, grabbed it, and ate it.

David first saw Bathsheba and lusted after her long before he committed the act of adultery and the murder of Uriah.² Listen to James in this manner, in James 1,

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James uses the language of a trap which is set and the snare which is sprung when he speaks of our fleshly desires. The only thing separating lust from conduct is simply a few moments of time and when we open the gate to lust, foolishly believing, “I am able to control this and keep it from breaking out into conduct,” then we act so foolishly and contrary to what God says is true.

We must understand several truths Peter is presenting to us by looking at the internal world and the external world of action. First, God finds both fleshly passions and fleshly actions unacceptable. Even if we could contain it, it will still be unacceptable. It is still mixed in and when we try to offer whatever we are offering to God, He says, “It is not acceptable because I see the heart and I see what you are doing with your heart.” It is still like the rancid whipping cream placed in the smoothie.

The actions of sin reveal the depth of a sin problem in our lives. Sinful conduct is only a reflection of what is happening internally and below the surface. It is like the tip of the iceberg. We see the little part which is the action, but the real sin is much greater, much broader, much deeper, and of greater seriousness. It lies in the internal world. Let us be aware of misunderstanding the depth of our problem. Our problem is not just with our actions and the way we behave, but it is the invisible world of our soul.

The second truth is we cannot control sinful conduct when we let fleshly desires and passions take hold. Our battle against sin, if we are serious about it, rests in our heart and in our mind and not merely in our hands and feet. Proverbs 6 will say to us,

²⁷ Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

What do you believe? Is it possible to take logs off of a thriving camp fire, hold them close, and not have the clothes burn? Of course not and that is the point. So it is foolish for a person to believe they can carry fleshly passions in their soul without finding the expression in our conduct.

Peter addresses this inner world of our passions first. He tells us, in our text,

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

What are these “passions of the flesh” he is talking about? This refers to any desire which satisfies the cravings of our fallen nature, and any longing which resists God’s holiness and pursues sin and this world which runs away from God and His holiness. These passions certainly include sexual sin such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality,

¹ Genesis 3:6

² 2 Samuel 11

pornography, sensuality, and course jesting. Often times we believe of passions as only being sexual in nature, but the passions of the flesh also include such sins as anger, bitterness toward another person, drunkenness, addictions to drugs or alcohol, gluttony, sloth and laziness, murder, slander, and a host of other sins.

Galatians 5 gives us a list, which is not an exhaustive list, and Paul says,

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

“Things like these” is sort of that “Divine Etcetera”, just keep going on your own list and whatever you can think of which relates and pertains to these kinds of sins. It is important for us to understand these passions are defined always in reference to God and not in reference to us. These passions are anything our flesh finds enjoyable, but which God does not and which separates us ultimately from our intimacy in relationship with Him.

Many of these passions, and this is important to understand, are completely accepted by the world around us. In fact, they may be accepted by the Christian world around us; such as course jesting and sensuality of various kinds. Much of the Christian world may say, “That is okay. There is nothing wrong with that. That is the way we are and that is just being fun.” Fleshly passions are always defined by God and not by other people so we do not look to other people to be our measure of whether we are abstaining from fleshly passions or not and from this internal world of desire.

Peter says, “Abstain!” Paul also uses this word in his call for us to live holy lives in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5,

^{4:3} For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality...

^{5:22} Abstain from every form of evil.

He is telling us to abstain from whatever we see as evil and contrary to God. We are to reject it and not take even a little bite. Abstinence means we have no part, as though we can drink just a tiny bit or put in a tiny bit of moldy spaghetti or rotten tomato or rancid whipping cream. No, Peter tells us to abstain and keep it out of the mix altogether and have nothing to do with it.

Sanctification, our becoming like Jesus, is about the sins we avoid as well as about the righteous acts we practice and that is important because sometimes, I believe, we become confused on this. We sometimes become confused into thinking growing into Christ’s likeness means we simply add more good works into our lives. If, for instance, I do more to help the poor I am becoming more like Jesus. If, for instance, I become more patient or more loving toward others, or if I begin to serve or teach Sunday school or do various acts which would contribute to the cause of Jesus’ church, sanctification is more than simply adding righteousness. It is part of it, but it also means we abstain and we cannot believe these acts move us toward Christ-likeness if we are also, at the same time, not negating these passions God tells us to voluntarily hold ourselves from.

We do not live in a neutral world. This world is going to take initiatives to bring sin toward us and that is why we should abstain. The word “abstain” implies something is brought to us and we must say, “No!” to it. It is not as though we are not going to think about it.

I do not ride motorcycles, for instance, not because I really want to ride a motorcycle because I can, but I do not think about it that often. No one brings me a motorcycle and says, “Ritch, do you want to ride a motorcycle?” I would have to abstain out of honor to my wife. She does not want me to ride a motorcycle. Abstain means something is brought to you and you say, “No!” to it. We would expect in this world sin would be brought right to us without our pursuit of it and in this we become confused. Some people believe, “If God did not want me to do that, have this relationship, or participate in this action, He would not have brought it to me.” That is not true! We live in a fallen world and sin is a part of the fallenness of the environment in which we are placed. God tells us there will be many things come to us and we should not believe they are from Him, and we must abstain from those passions of the flesh.

What are the passions you are wrestling with today? Everyone has them. I do not know what they are in your life, but I know the world around you, Satan himself, and your own flesh is bringing to your doorstep, and knocking on your door, these passions and asking you to open the door. Have you identified them? Do you know your soul? It is important for us to know our own soul.

What are you doing when these passions knock on your door? Do you open up a little crack and say, “I will take in just a little bit in moderation, not so much to be wholly ruined, but just enough so as to satisfy my thirst.” Or, do we say, “I am going to abstain and the door is going to remain shut.”

Notice the last phrase in Verse 11, “...which wage war against your soul.” This is military term meaning to carry out a military campaign. It is not a single battle, but it is a prolonged war and we should expect it. The principle Peter is presenting is: If our lusts win this war, a war they are waging against our own soul, then our life will be ruined and our soul will be destroyed. Am I saying a person could lose their salvation? No, I believe the Bible teaches us when God begins a good work inside of us, He carries it on to the day of completion. I am saying, once we have been given this salvation, we must not presume, but rather protect it and prove this salvation.

Peter is going to talk about this in his second letter, when he says, in 2 Peter 1,

¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure...

We do that by abstaining from sin and pursuing righteousness; that is how we make our election “sure”. How do we prove our faith is genuine? We prove that by the power of God working within us to abstain from sin and to pursue God’s righteousness.

Peter continues,

¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Peter is now talking about our conduct and the world of physical action. Righteousness in the heart becomes visible externally. God calls us not only to take care of the purity of our inner life, but to practice righteousness.

Conformity to Christ-likeness is all about intimacy with God. That is what the life of God does; it brings us into proper relationship with Him. What Peter is teaching us here is: Our behavior reveals and promotes a right relationship with the Living God. That is why it is so important for us to keep our conduct honorable. Our behavior never creates a right relationship with the Living God. It is completely the work of God on our behalf, but our behavior reveals the rightness of our relationship with God. If we allow this conduct and these passions to consume us then they will corrupt our relationship with the Living God and rob us of our joy in Him, for intimacy with Christ which does not conform our conduct so we would not honor God in our conduct is a false intimacy. I would urge you, do not let your own mind and heart deceive you.

Many times, as I have talked with believers, at least with those who testify to being believers, they have decided upon some course of conduct which is contrary to the Word. They will say, “I know it is wrong, but this is what I am going to do anyway.” They will tell me, as they are walking down this path of a conduct which dishonors God, “You know, my relationship with Jesus has never been better. My relationship with God is great.” I believe they believe that because this is the way Satan works. When we detach ourselves from the light of Scripture and from the authority of God, there is no end to the deception we can sink into.

Peter is saying, when we have a right, intimate relationship with the Living God, it changes our internal life and it changes our actions as well. When we think of our battle with sin, it is easy to become discouraged. Seneca would write, “O, that a hand would come down from Heaven and deliver me from my besetting sins.” Have you ever been there and wished a hand from Heaven would come down? You ask the question, “That is what I want to be, but how do I do it?”

That is the second part of this study: How can we overcome sin habits? There are three principle encouragements Peter presents to us. He, first, tells us to know our new identity and be able to answer the question: Who are we? Second, Peter tells us to yield to our new owner and answer the question: Whose are we? Finally, Peter tells us to pursue our new purpose and answer the question: Why are we?

First, we must know our new identity. Peter presents to us three specific changes in our identity which occur when we become believers and receive the life of God by God's grace and they are all written in the following, which precedes his commandment to us because he wants us to be encouraged before we even engage with the command to abstain and conduct ourselves,

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

"The chosen race" is the first change in identity. "A royal priesthood" is the second change in identity. "A holy nation" is the third change in identity, and he sums it all up by saying, "You are a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Each of these titles Peter attaches to us as believers are directly from the Old Testament. Peter is a man who immersed his life in the Scriptures. I believe the only way we will truly know our identity, one we will grab onto and embrace, is if we become "Scripture-saturated people" because it is Scripture which continues to bring us back to remind us of who we are.

When Peter says, "You are a chosen race", I believe the emphasis is on the word "chosen". All of our privileges flow out of our being chosen by God and being God's elect. Each advantage we possess in Christ flows out of God's unmerited favor to us and which He set upon us through the election of His own. Jesus would say, "You did not choose me, but I chose you". In calling us a chosen race he is identifying for us our corporate identity, and the basis of our identity is not upon the color of our skin, our country of origin or the country of our citizenship, or our culture, but it is upon the basis of the effectual calling of God, our chosenness.

Peter tells us we are a "royal priesthood" and I believe the emphasis is upon our royalty in that we are going to rule and reign with Christ, but we serve the King of kings.

He tells us we are a "holy nation" and we are set apart by God. We are no longer a part of the mix, but we are set apart by God for God and we are no longer owned by Satan, enslaved to sin, or separated from God, but rather we are set in a unique relationship with the Living God for God forever and ever. When we know our new identity it will change the way we think about ourselves if we continually set into our minds who we are.

How do we get this new identity? We get it by coming to Him. Peter would say, in Verse 4, as we come to Him all of this changes and our whole identity changes. Have you come to Christ and received your new identity? God defines us now in terms of the election He sets upon us, in terms of the transformation He works within us, and in terms of the destiny He secures for us.

The second specific principle is we should yield to our new owner; whose are we? Our change of our identity indicates a change of ownership and that is the reason why Peter says, at the end of Verse 9 and 10, "You are a people for His own possession", and "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." God is telling us, "I purchased you. I own you now. You have been bought with a price." Paul will say, in 1 Corinthians 6,

¹⁹ ... You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

That is the application. How can I live a holy life? When I begin to understand I need not live my life as though I own it, but God owns me completely and thoroughly, my mind, my body, my time, my energy, my resources, and all of my relationships are not mine anymore. I am no longer belonging to myself, but I am a purchased person. I have no ownership rights, so I simply yield and I do not attempt to take back what God has purchased. My life is in so much better hands because God owns me rather than I own my own soul.

Finally, pursue your new purpose. Why are we? I am convinced we will not make major changes in our lives unless we pursue the purpose God has given to us and we understand that purpose is greater than the pain. Peter is not telling this group of believers life is going to be easy or God's purpose for them is that they be healthy and wealthy and trouble free. He gives them a purpose much greater than the purpose of being pain free,

⁹ ...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness...

And, that they might advertise and publish how excellent God is in both His person as well as His work. Then Peter says again,

¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

The goal of godly living is upward; it is the glory of God. That is the opportunity we have to live. The single greatest tool to lift up the name of Jesus in an unbelieving world is the tool of a life well lived, authentically lived, and a life honorably lived.

Moms and dads, I want to apply this directly to you, although it applies to everyone, understand there are Gentiles born into your house. Gentile is a word for "unbeliever". Every child born into your house, or who is adopted into your house, is born a Gentile. How might you influence your children so on the day of visitation, the day God visits them? Peter is calling to mind the fact God is personal and God visits people personally. We might share the Gospel with a person today, but God might not be visiting them, and we think, "That was worthless. That did not do any good." That is not their day of visitation, but there will be a day when God visits them and announces His presence and the person will have to make a decision as to what they are going to do when God confronts them.

If I ask you for your testimony, believers, I believe every one of us will be able to say, "On this day God visited me and that is what brought me to Him, when He visited me personally." That is the testimony of a believer.

What happens on the day of visitation? Continue to live your life honorably. Moms and dads, you children are watching. The greatest evangelism tool, to see on the day of visitation they would respond to God and glorify Him, is you would live honorably moment-by-moment your faith before them. As God's own people, let us live godly lives. We are called with a plea to live purely and then we are given this encouragement and power. What a blessing God has given us.

If you are not yet born again I would ask you and urge you not to let the day of visitation pass you by. This may be your day when the Holy Spirit comes, talks to you, and calls you to Himself. Do not let it pass by, but reach out to God and receive from Him His grace and His life.

Here are three practical principles from a ruined smoothie. First, ingredients in a mixer do not remain isolated. They bond together with other ingredients to the point once a bad ingredient is introduced, it cannot be humanly removed. So, similarly, our sins in our soul do not remain isolated from the rest of our person, but they bond together with every other facet of our soul. Sin alters the composition of our inner life.

Second, the presence of good ingredients does not negate the ruinous influence of the bad. We cannot undo the ruin of the bad by adding more nutrients. I cannot add more good yogurt or more flax seed in hope this would ever become "Okay" and acceptable. The bad ingredients will continue to taint the good ingredients as long as the bad are present. More of our own righteous acts will not make up for willful sins. A little sin is a big think.

Third, a tainted smoothie is wholly unacceptable offering. You would not accept it and neither will God. God will not accept the sacrifice of our life if we continue in willful sin.

What this does not illustrate for you is the most important: God's grace and the power of Jesus can conform in our soul what I cannot do for this smoothie. I cannot "unmix" it. I cannot remove the taint, but God, in His grace, is able to. You may say the ingredients are already mixed, "What do I do now?" Fly to Jesus and know He has the power to rescue you and to deliver you. What a Savior we have!