

October 21, 2007 by Steve Brandon



# Motivations to Holiness

## 1 Peter 1:17-19

1. The Holiness of God (verse 16)
2. The Justice of God (verse 17)
3. The Blood of Christ (verses 18-19)

We all need motivation. Proverbs 16:26 says, "A worker's appetite works for him, for his hunger urges him on." The empty belly of a worker urges him on so that he might earn his wage to feed his belly.

Parents understand the role of motivation. As I deal with my children, I find a big difference in their willingness to work when their are consequences to their working or not. If punishment is on the horizon, they are all very eager to work. If a wag is promised, they work even harder.

Businesses understand the role of motivation. There are posters created to inspire workers on to work harder. One poster contains a picture of the earth from outer space. Then it reads, "SERVICE - Treat every customer as if your world revolves around them ... It does." Another poster pictures a canoe ready to launch onto a trip across the lake. Below the picture is the caption, "SUCCESS - Success is a journey, not a destination." On another poster there is a photograph of a soaring eagle with the following caption: "DARE TO SOAR - Your attitude, almost always determines your altitude in life."

God understands motivation as well. In our text this morning, we will see Peter give us three motivations to live a holy life. Consider our text:

### 1 Peter 1:17-19

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

In the context, Peter has been teaching his readers of how they ought to face the difficulties of life. Peter wrote this letter to scattered believers across Asia minor who were suffering for their faith in Christ. In chapter 1, verse 6, we see that they had been "distressed by various trials."

But, rather than focusing upon the trials themselves, Peter focuses his readers beyond the trials. The first twelve verses of this letter give us reason to focus our attention beyond this life. They describe the greatness of the salvation that God has provided for us in Christ Jesus through faith in Him. The prophets of old had a great desire to see and to experience what we now see and experience (verses 10-12). It's through faith in that we will ultimately receive the salvation of our souls (verse 9), when we receive our inheritance. Our inheritance is incredible. It is eternal (imperishable). It is perfect (undefiled). It will never diminish in any way (unfading). It's a guaranteed inheritance (reserved in heaven for you). It is the great hope that we have in heaven that provides for us the fuel to overcome the trials in this life. That's the point of verse 13, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

And as our hope is completely upon Him, it has an effect upon our life. It has a purifying effect. In Peter's second epistle, he writes, "According to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (2 Peter 3:13-14). The anticipation of our glory to come leads us to walk in purity today.

And that's where Peter heads in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 14 and following. In these verses, Peter exhorts us to holy living. The reason for this exhortation is that trials can drag us down into unholy living. There is a way in which the difficulties that we face in life squeeze us and press us and often entice us to sin. But, Peter says, "May this never be." In the midst of your trials, you are to live a holy life. This was Peter's point in verses 14-16.

### 1 Peter 1:14-16

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all [your] behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

The negative command comes in verse 14: Do not be conformed. The positive command comes in verse 15: Be holy. And a reason comes in verse 16, "for I am holy." Last week, we looked at the first motivation to holiness that Peter gives. It is, ...

## 1. The Holiness of God (verse 16)

The holiness and purity and awesomeness of God leads us to live a holy life as well. "You shall be holy, for I am holy." I said enough about this last week, we don't need much this morning to continue here. And so, we come to the second motivation to holiness, ...

## 2. The Justice of God (verse 17)

Look there again at verse 17, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. In this verse, Peter describes God in two ways. First, he describes Him as our Father. Second, Peter describes God as our Judge.

God is the Father of those who believe. In verse 14, Peter called us to act, "as obedient children." To be a child, you need to have a father. And, in this case, our Father is God. As such, we are to address Him as our Father. Literally, the idea is that of calling out to God. When Jesus taught us to pray, He taught us to call out to God as our Father, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name" (Matt. 6:9). Paul even went a step further, describing our intimacy with God, as crying out to God, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). In other words, believers have such a close relationship with God that we call Him our "Daddy" just like a little child. God is our Father.

But, Peter also tells us that God is our Judge as well. That is, He's the one who is constantly evaluating our lives, bringing discipline when appropriate. Furthermore, He's the one to whom we will give an account at the end of our lives. God is the one to whom we will ultimately give an account for our entire lives. "God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (Ecc. 12:14; see also Matt. 10:29; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5).

Each and every one of us will stand before Him individually someday as He carries out His sentence upon us for our lives. The individuality of this judgment is clear in verse 17, as Peter writes about "each one's work." That means that the Lord will look upon your life individually before His throne. Each of us will be brought before the great high court, when the evidence of our lives will be brought before the Lord, who will look upon the evidence of the things that we did and the things that we didn't do and will judge us accordingly.

In verse 17, Peter is telling us that God is both our Father and our Judge at the same time. The fact that God is our Father, is no reason for us to dismiss God as being our Judge. The fact that God is our Judge, is no reason for us to dismiss God as being our Father. God is both of these things. In singing this morning, we sang, "You're my friend and you are my brother, even though you are a king." That's expressing the same thing. God is our Fatherly friend. But, he is also our sovereign ruler to whom we need to absolutely submit in everything. Paul put forth these sides of God in Romans 11:22 when he wrote, "Behold then the kindness and severity of God."

God is both of these things at the same time. We ought not to be surprised that this is the case. We know of examples of this thing. Here is a man in our congregation who owns his own business. His son works for him. This makes him a boss and a father at the same time. Certainly, I can imagine the times at work where these roles are stretched, especially when your son doesn't perform as well as he ought to perform at work. As the boss, you need to come down on him and apply some pressure to him. But, as his father, you do so with care.

This is the case with God. As His children through faith, He is our Father. As His created being, He is our Judge. God is both at the same time. We ought not to take one of these to the extreme in neglect of the other. That's often how false doctrine and false religions are created.

People can take the view that God is our righteous judge and filter everything through that understanding of God. From that standpoint, then, everything is under God's watchful inspection. He is merely waiting to pounce someday on the wrong done. If that was the case, we would live our lives walking on eggshells, fearful of anything that we did, knowing that God was out to get us for every wrong that we did. The Muslim religion has tendencies toward this direction. The error of this view is that it doesn't take into account the Fatherhood of God and His love toward those who wait for Him.

And, you can swing the other way as well. You can take the view that God is our loving father and filter everything through that understanding of God, without understanding anything of His justice. From that standpoint, God's chief motive of operation is His kindness. Never will He inflict any harm upon His children. Everything, then, that He does is motivated by His great kindness for us. He does nothing but good for us. And when we go astray, it really doesn't matter much, because God will never do anything to hurt us in anyway. Some of Christianity has tendencies toward this direction. Some are guilty of "turning the grace of our God into licentiousness" (Jude 4). The error of this view is that it doesn't take into account the Justice of God. Peter even addresses this issue later in this epistle saying "Do not use your freedom [as having God as your Father] as a covering for evil" (1 Peter 2:16).

And it is this last error that Peter is seeking to address in our text this morning. Peter's message is that we ought not to let our understanding of God as our Father overshadow our understanding of God as our judge. Look again at verse 17, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." You rightly address Him as Father, but don't forget that He is also your Judge.

There is one command in this verse 17. It is this: conduct yourselves in fear. Why? Because your heavenly Father is also your heavenly Judge. And, the fact that God is your Father won't negate His role as Judge in your life. In fact, Peter makes this very clear here when He describes God as the one who "impartially judges." In other words, God doesn't look at the color of our skin to determine how it is that He will act. God doesn't pay attention to our financial status in judging our work. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28) in God's judging work. God judges without partiality. So, as Peter says, "don't slack in your obedience to Him, thinking that you have a trump card back at the station."

A former member of our congregation had a father who was sheriff of DeKalb County. It would be foolish thing for him to think that he can disobey the traffic laws, because his father would always bail him out of any trouble that he found himself in. So likewise, it is equally as

foolish for us to think that we can willfully regard the commands of God, in thinking that He is our Father, who will forgive us of all things. Now, to be sure, should this man ever be caught on the radar going 90 and is jailed for the night for reckless driving, his father will come to him with love. But, this will come only after his father came to him as the sheriff, bringing the law to bear in his case.

And so, the simple lesson from verse 17 is this: Don't presume upon God's fatherly love. Rather, live in the fear of God during your brief visit here to the earth.

Now, obviously, this fear ought not to be a paralyzing fear, in which you are incapacitated from doing anything. For this reason, many have sought to soften the weight of these words by understanding them as "reverence." I'm sympathetic to those who would attempt to explain things in this way. But, to deviate much from having a healthy fear of God is a deviation from the meaning of this word, translated, "fear." I believe that the NIV does a good job here in saying that we should "live ... in reverent fear." A healthy fear of God will lead you in the path of obedience.

This is a motivation to godliness. I believe that there is a reason why Solomon wrote, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). You want to live a holy life? Then fear the Lord and you will live a holy life. People work harder when they know that the boss is watching. Athletes run faster when they hear the coach screaming. Students study harder when the test is coming. Accountants are more careful when they are being audited. Drivers slow down when they see a policeman tracking them with a radar gun. So also do people live better when they know that God, the judge, is observing.

This, by the way, is why atheism so often leads to unrighteous behavior. With no God, there is no accountability. With no accountability, there is no reason for morality. With no reason for morality, anything goes. In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul is putting forth a compendium of proof for the sinfulness of man. When he finishes his discussion, he concludes with a quote from Psalm 36:1, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Commenting on this verse, John Calvin said it nicely, ...

All wickedness flows from a disregard of God. For as the principal part of wisdom is the fear of God, when we depart from that, there remains in us nothing right or pure. In short, as [the fear of God] is a bridle to restrain our wickedness, so when it is wanting, we feel at liberty to indulge every kind of licentiousness. [\[1\]](#)

So, what is the fear of God? I could give you long-winded definitions of this which others have given, but, let me boil it down to a simple statement. The fear of God means that we live in light of the full reality of God. As you go through 1 Peter, you find that this is a background theme to Peter's thoughts. You can suffer now, because you know that God will ultimately judge your behavior. And so, you live in fear of Him, seeking to please Him and not yourself.

How is it that we can submit ourselves to every human institution? (2:13). Because we are called (in chapter 2, verse 17) to "fear God [and] honor the king." How is it that a servant can be submissive to an unreasonable master? (2:18). Because he knows that such actions ultimately "finds favor with God" (2:20). How is it that Jesus never retaliated all the evil done against Him? (2:22-23). Because He entrusted Himself to Him who judges righteously (2:23). How can a wife of an unbelieving, disobedient husband continue to submit to him in "chaste and respectful behavior"? (3:1-2). Because she knows that such behavior is "precious in the sight of God." How is it that you can endure slander for your good behavior? (3:16). Because you know that those who slander you will ultimately be put to shame (3:16). How is it that you can endure it when others malign you for not joining them in wickedness? (4:4). Because you know that "they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (4:5). How is it that you can suffer for being a Christian without shame? (4:16). Because God's judgment will come upon the household of God first, and then it will turn upon the ungodly (4:17).

This is the message of 1 Peter: "Your life here is short, but your ultimate accountability is to God. Live in light of His full reality in your life. When Peter began this letter, he called these people, "scattered ... aliens" (1:1). In 2:11, Peter calls them "aliens and strangers" to this earth. The idea is that our time here on earth is brief. Oh, it may appear to be a long time, but really, it isn't. It's only a brief "stay." And so, it is only natural for Peter here to exhort the scattered aliens to fear God. Their stay is only a little while, but soon, you will be in your permanent abode.

Here in verse 17, again, we see the concept come up again. Peter writes, "conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay [on earth]." It's like we are spending the night at someone's house, to return home again in the morning. Now, I want for you to think about spending the night at someone else's house. When you spend the night, how do you treat their stuff? How do you treat their things? I know that whenever I have the opportunity to be overnight in someone else's home, I'm always very careful. I don't want to break anything. I don't want to leave a big mess. I'm careful to fold my towels in the bathroom. I'm careful to make my bed. I'm careful to leave everything just as it was. I spend the night mindful of the owner of the house. This is how we need to live. We need to live in light of the owner of the house. We need to live in light of the Creator of the Universe. We are staying at his place. We need to live our lives in light of this fact.

Do you need a motivation to holiness? Remember the justice of God (verse 17). Let's turn to my third point this morning. The third motivation to holiness that Peter gives is ...

### **3. The Blood of Christ (verses 18-19)**

This comes in verses 18 and 19, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

With these words, Peter calls our attention to our salvation. But, in doing so, he doesn't bring up how glorious our salvation will be (like he did in the first half of chapter 1). Rather, he focuses upon how great our salvation **was**! Peter tells us to think about the way in which we have become children of God. We have been redeemed.

When we think of redemption today, we usually think in terms of shopping. I have a "redeemable" coupon. I can present this coupon at the cash register and they will give me my item for free. That's a good way to think about redemption. You should think of the marketplace, where items are bought and sold. But, this word is almost always used in relation to purchasing people. So, you should actually think of the slave market, where slaves are purchased and redeemed. When Israel was in the bondage of slavery in Egypt, God redeemed them (Ex. 6:6). That is, he freed them from slavery.

Throughout the New Testament, we see God still redeeming His people. When Jesus was upon the earth, He said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). When Paul interpreted the life of Jesus, he said that Christ Jesus "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14).

That's what redemption is. It's paying a price to free us. Christ bought us out of slavery and brought us into freedom. We were held deep in the grips of our own sin (Eph. 2:1). Satan had blinded our eyes to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). And then Christ came and purchased our freedom for us. In doing so, He delivered us from our sin and gave us faith to believe. This is the glories of the work of Christ! When Christ Jesus came to earth and lived a sinless and perfect life, He gave it up as a price to deliver us from our sins. Galatians 1:3-4, "Jesus Christ ... gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age."

Now, look carefully now how Peter describes our redemption. He said that we were redeemed "from our futile way of life inherited from our forefathers." He said, "before Christ, your life was futile." That is, it was vain. It was empty. It was useless. It was worthless. Oh, it may have seemed fun-filled and full of meaning. There may have been fancy parties. There may have been praise from men. There may have been exotic trips. There may have been large houses and fun activities. But, in the end, when you evaluate the life of a non-Christian, and you can easily conclude that it's really quite useless. It's like a night on the town, with frolicking fun. But, eventually, you are coming home to face the real reality. And, a night on the town, which may be fun, is ultimately a waste.

When you gaze upon eternity, you can begin to see how such a fun-filled life is really empty. In my office, I have a wall-hanging that says, ...

Only one life, 'twill soon be past.  
Only what's done for CHRIST will last.

It's a simple phrase that many have heard before, but it has a powerful way of focusing our lives on what's most important. A life apart from Christ is futile. But, a life in Christ will count for eternity. And yet, sadly, there are many in this world today who are living "futile" lives. In many ways, it's because it comes from their upbringing. Many don't know any different.

Here in verse 18, Peter says that his readers "inherited" this "futile life" from their forefathers. When you grow up in a home that spends each Sunday at the football stadium, worshiping your favorite sports-team, you will often inherit a similar love. When you grow up in a home, where profanity flows smoothly off the lips of your father, you too will come to profane the name of God with ease. When you grow up in a home where sex and violence is set before your face each night in your home theatre, you cultivate an appetite for these things. When you grow up in a home that has no regard for God, and no regard for His people, or for His word, you will often develop similar anti-God feelings in your own heart. The sinful habits of your parents are easily passed on to you. And it can rightly be said that you "inherited" them. But, Jesus redeemed us from that.

The way we used to live isn't the way that we live now. God has redeemed us out of a futile life into a fulfilling life. And the fulfilled life is the life that looks beyond this life for our joys and happiness. See, it's not the parties or the houses or the vacations or the worldly success that gives us true joy. Nor is it the worldly possession that we might obtain (i.e. televisions, cars, computers, boats, ...) It's not the glitz and glamour of our present life that delights us. It's not tickets to the Super Bowl. Rather, it's knowing that we have a hope awaiting us of a joy that is far greater than the fading happiness we might muster up while upon the earth. This is what makes us willing to "suffer now." Because, we are looking for the "glory later."

And, it's not like we lack joy in the here and now. It's simply that our happiness isn't centered upon the things of this world! Our joy is centered upon Him whom we have never seen. Peter gave a proper perspective, "though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). And of all, people, we ought to be the happiest of all.

Yesterday morning, we had some Jehovah's Witnesses come to our door. Yvonne had seen them coming and buzzed my office saying, "Hey, Steve, I see some people walking toward our house. They look like Jehovah's Witnesses. Do you want to come and talk with them?"

Over the years, I've talked with many of them in the past and used various efforts to speak with them. I've engaged some in conversation over a period of weeks, as they would come back to have theological arguments, each trying to prove our case. Some, I've simply rebuked as being false prophets. One thing that I have learned about Jehovah's Witnesses is that you won't ever convince them that they are in error, no matter how strong your logic is and how compelling are your Biblical arguments. And so, in recent days, I have simply sought to place some doubt in their minds and send them on their way. They need to hear some truth. We might as well be the ones to give it to them.

Anyway, as I engaged them in conversation yesterday, I just talked with them about some of my recent memory work from the basis of my discussion. In recent days I've just started memorizing Jude. And I remembered a phrase from verse 4 that spoke about Jesus being our "only Master and Lord." Now, if you know anything about their theology, you know that they deny that Jesus is God. They would content that Jesus is the first created being and the highest being among creation, but certainly not God. And so, when they were confronted with Jesus being the "only Master and Lord." It caused them to think for a bit. But, they wiggled out of that and then we went to other things. We spent probably 15 minutes talking back and forth.

Throughout my conversation with them, I sought to demonstrate the genuine happiness that I have found in Christ. I sought to demonstrate my love for the Word of God. I sought to demonstrate the preciousness of Christ and His blood, atoning for my sin, how I have been saved by

grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone.

For the most part, Jehovah's Witnesses treat the Bible like a textbook. They study their theology. They study their cross references. They study how to argue against the verses that Christians use to show that Jesus is God. The Bible is a book of facts to be used like bullets in a gun to prove their case. For them, the Bible consists of little segments of words to be used as proof texts in their conversations. They don't view the Bible as a book to be loved and cherished. And so, I wanted to show them what a life looked like that cherished the word of God. I wanted to demonstrate to them the happiness that I have found in Christ, because of all people, that's who we ought to be. God has redeemed us from a futile way of life. God has brought us into a life of joy. But, our joy isn't found in the things of this world. It's found in Christ.

In verses 18 and 19, Peter also talks about the price of our redemption. In verse 18, Peter first gives the negative. In verse 19, Peter gives the positive. We weren't redeemed "with perishable things like silver or gold." Silver and gold are the standard currencies which cultures throughout all time have honored as trading commodities. They are known as "precious metals." Many cultures have made coins of silver and gold and thereby standardized their money system. But, when God purchased our freedom, He didn't use money. It's not because He didn't have enough money to use. Because, in fact, God has all of the money. Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains."

Money can purchase many things. But, it can't purchase everything. In recent years, MasterCard has done a good job in letting the world know this. In fact, it was ten years ago, tomorrow night (Oct. 22, 1997), during the fourth game of the World Series on NBC, MasterCard aired it's first commercial with this theme that money can't purchase everything. That first commercial showed a father and son attending a baseball game together. The lines of that first 30-second commercial went like this...

Two tickets, \$28.  
Two hot dogs, popcorn and two sodas, \$18.  
One autographed baseball, \$45.  
Real conversation with 11-year-old son: Priceless.  
There are some things money can't buy . . . for everything else there's MasterCard. [\[2\]](#)

For the past decade, MasterCard has created many, many commercials that have said essentially the same thing.

A few years ago, at the Hike For Life here in Rockford, T-shirts were designed along the same theme. On the T-shirts was the following message:

Baby Crib: \$139.00  
Car Seat: \$79.00  
Life: Priceless  
Some things money can't buy.

This was the case with our sins. The MasterCard commercial for this text might go something like this:

New Bible: \$40  
CD of sermon: \$1  
Tithe: \$75  
Redemption from our sins: Priceless.  
Some things money can't buy.

That's the message of verse 19, "but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, [the blood of] Christ." We weren't redeemed with "precious metals." Rather, we were redeemed "with precious blood."

This word, "precious" speaks of its value, which far surpasses the value of silver or gold. In other words, when God saved us from our empty lives, He didn't do so with the most valuable things in this world. Rather, God paid the price of redemption with something of greater value. He paid with something of infinite value: the blood of Christ, that is, with the death of Jesus. I'm not sure that we will ever know the full value of the blood that was shed for our sins. But, I do know that the blood of Christ will never be forgotten.

In Revelation 5, the song rises to Jesus, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). Here we see Jesus, purchasing people with His blood. And it's not a transaction that nobody realizes. On the contrary, it is highlighted for all the world to see and hear and know. It is spoken so that all might rejoice in what He has purchased.

A short time later, the echo of myriads and myriads of angels is this chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). These angels are worshiping the slaughtered Lamb -- the lamb that shed His blood. So great is this redemption that those holy angels, who never had need for the blood of Christ for their own redemption, would give praise to Jesus because He was the slaughtered Lamb, who purchased our freedom with his blood.

Do you cherish the blood of Jesus? Can you sing, "O the blood of Jesus"?

O the blood of Jesus.  
O the blood of Jesus.

O the blood of Jesus.  
It washes white as snow. [3]

Can you sing about the fountain?

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains:  
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains.  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. [4]

Can you answer this question?

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
O precious is the flow that makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus. [5]

That's the precious blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus was precious because of (1) who Jesus was and because of (2) what Jesus did. Jesus was God in the flesh, the Lamb of God, "unblemished and spotless." Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life.

The price of a diamond is based upon two main factors: (1) its weight and (2) its purity. The heavier the diamond, the more valuable it is. The purer the diamond, the more valuable it is.

When you think about Jesus, you can easily think about how weighty He was. Throughout the Old Testament, God established the sacrifices that were to be offered for sins. Various animals were to be taken. Most notably a lamb was the main symbol. Now, when you compare animals to people, there is no comparison in their worth. Jesus said, "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" (Matt. 6:26). The same could be said of a lamb. Are you not worth much more than a lamb. This is because God has created people in the image of God, not animals. As such, we are of much more worth than they. But now, consider the worth of Jesus. As we are to animals in worth, so is Jesus to us in worth! That's why the heavenly host are always saying, "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb" (Rev. 5:9, 12). The sacrifice of Jesus is so much weightier than the sacrifice of any animal ever offered upon a Jewish altar.

Jesus was also a perfectly pure sacrifice. Peter writes how Jesus "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth" (2:22). What a remarkable statement! There was no blemish to be found in Him. When you consider what Jesus endured, it becomes even more remarkable! In Hebrews 4:15 we read, "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Have you a temptation coming upon you? Jesus was tempted in those things as well. He came out the backside "unblemished and spotless" (1:19).

Now, what's the effect of these things? What's the effect of our redemption? As we know of the things, it motivates us to holiness. (That's the context of this section of Scripture). Look at how verse 18 begins, "knowing." We conduct ourselves in fear upon the earth because we know of how valuable and precious our redemption is! When your three year old wants to help you clear the table, you take great care to tell your child over and over and over again how careful she needs to be with the dishes.

So valuable is our redemption. We need to value it. We need to be careful with it. We need to view it as precious. And when you do, it will affect the way that you live. It will motivate you to holiness.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 21, 2007 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] John Calvin, commenting on Romans 3:18 in his Romans commentary

[2] See <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E0D9143EF931A15753C1A961958260>.

[3] Author unknown.

[4] Words written by William Cowper.

[5] Words written by Robert Lowry.