



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Matthew 1–13 Sermon Series

Supports Session 4: True Righteousness

Sermon Title: “Three Truths to Remember for Righteous Living” (1 Peter 2:9-12)

Connection to Session 4

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus provided a clear path for righteous living. In 1 Peter, the clear path for righteous living was getting more difficult to see as real persecution for the faith set in, and God’s people were beginning to lose hope.

Introduction/Opening

Have you ever been lost in the woods? It can be a pretty scary experience. What starts out as a short hike and light adventure becomes more serious when you lose the path. Most experienced hikers have a few ways to keep them from veering too far off course. One of the main ways they do this is to have landmarks. These are usually significant places along or near the path that remind them that they are going in the right direction. Those landmarks are behind them and in front of them. The one behind shows them where they started, while the one in front guides them to where they need to go. In the moments when the tree cover gets too thick, it also helps to have a compass, which provides the correct bearings.

The letter of 1 Peter addressed the church that had been exiled from their homes. Persecution for their faith had become so intense that they scattered. They were persecuted for righteousness’ sake. They suffered for the sake of Christ (Matt. 5:10-11). Living a righteous life cost the early church dearly. Peter wrote to encourage and strengthen the church to remain in the faith. His letter spurred them to remain on the righteous path.

When it comes to righteous living, the path can become unclear. We can veer way off course. We can find ourselves lost on our journey of faith. First Peter 2:9-12 provides three reminders for us in righteous living. These reminders serve as landmarks and a compass that can get us back to, and keep us on, the righteous path.

Outline

1. Remember who you are and how far you’ve come (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

- a) Peter, first and foremost, reminded the church of their identity in Christ.
- b) When we lose our way, the enemy brings shame, which attacks our identity.
- c) We have to remember who we are (1 Pet. 2:9).
 - i) We are not alone. Peter used the terms *race*, *priesthood*, *nation*, and *a people*. These all indicate a corporate identity. There are no lone wolf Christians. We are a part of something that is greater than ourselves.

- ii) We are His. Peter reminded them that they were chosen by God to be His possession. Remembering who you are is remembering Whose you are.
- d) We have to remember how far we have come (1 Pet. 2:9b-10).
 - i) Peter reminded the church that they were once in darkness but are now in light. Once they were not a people, but now they are God's people; and, once they had not received mercy, but now they have received mercy.
 - ii) To gain the strength to move forward in our faith, we have to take time to look back and see how far God has brought us.
 - iii) Peter hoped that truth would encourage the church at that time. It should encourage us, the church, today.

2. Remember your destination (1 Pet. 2:11).

- a) It is easy to lose our way when we have veered off the path. It is even easier to lose our way when we forget what our destination is.
- b) Peter again appealed to their identity in verse 11 but in a different way. He reminded them of their destination.
- c) Peter's use of the terms *strangers and exiles* was very intentional.
- d) These terms reminded the church of their destination—heaven. It reminded them this life is temporary. It reminded them this world, with its hardships, was not their home. They were just passing through on their way to eternity with God.
- e) Peter used this truth to provide the motivation for them to remain on the righteous path and resist the temptations of this world.
- f) We must not forget our final destination. It is a key truth in our daily battle to remain on the path of righteousness. Remember that we are just passing through this world. We are exiles here because this is not our home.

3. Remember you have an audience (1 Pet. 2:12).

- a) It is easy to believe that our wayward living from the righteous path only affects us. It doesn't. Our righteous living has the power to influence and change other peoples' lives.
- b) Peter reminded these believers that ungodly people were all around them. They were being watched.
- c) He reminded them that their righteous living, especially under unjust circumstances, could persuade and influence unbelievers to one day give God glory. He reminded them that their conduct had the potential to win souls to Christ.
- d) Our faith journey doesn't happen in a vacuum. You have an audience of unbelievers watching you. They are skeptics. They are observing you to see if your faith is real. They are examining how you handle hardship and temptation. Some of them are wondering if your faith is worth following.
- e) Don't forget the power of living righteously. Remember you have an audience.

Conclusion

There are many reasons, circumstances, and ways in which we can find ourselves off the path of righteous living. No matter what temptations, hardships, or trials come our way, God's Word provides us with the truths that keep us going in the right direction. This passage in 1 Peter gives

us those important landmark truths that help us regain our bearings when we lose our way. Remember these truths. Be encouraged. Be strengthened. Maintain your heading.

Ben Neiser was a church planter and one of the founding pastors of Mosaic Church in Provo, UT. Ben, along with his wife, Lindsey, and his two daughters now live in Arkansas. Ben currently serves as the Discipleship Pastor of Highland Drive Baptist Church in Jonesboro, AR.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.