

Homily for Tuesday 8th Week of Ordinary Time
1 Peter 1:10–16
Psalm 98:1–4
Mark 10:28–31

Throughout this week we are going to be reading our way through 1 Peter. We began yesterday with the opening blessing and proclamation of the hope that awaits us in heaven. Peter speaks of an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. This inheritance said Peter is our future hope even though in the present we have to undergo various kinds of trials that both test our faith and refine us, thus making us ready for heaven.

Present suffering and future glory is the theme that runs through this letter. Peter had first heard this from our Lord who in today's Gospel brings together present suffering and future glory when he predicts persecution in the present and eternal life in the future.

If in yesterday's passage the relationship between suffering and glory is related to our lives, in today's reading St. Peter shows how this was so in relation to Jesus' life. The Apostle speaks about the Spirit of Christ who was at work in the prophets hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Listen to how Peter describes their work:

the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry,¹¹ inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory¹

Here Peter says that the prophets were looking forward to the grace that would be made present at the time of Jesus and during the age of grace, in which we know live. This age of grace is described as a time where the sufferings of Christ – that were destined for him – would give way to the subsequent glory of the Resurrection. To live in the age of grace, as we do, is to hold in tension the sufferings and the glory. Because we know of the future glory, it gives a context to our present sufferings. This is the theme Peter now picks up in the rest of the letter.

¹³ *Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves;*

By using the transition word therefore, Peter signals that he is turning his attention to our response to what God has done. Because of our new birth in Christ, we are to prepare our minds for action; discipline ourselves. The Greek of this passage implies we are to “roll up your sleeves.” and get down to right thinking. It is a vivid way of saying “get your minds ready for

¹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.* (1993). (1 Pe 1:10–11). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

action.” To live soberly is to be spiritually awake, alert, and self-controlled. Peter will renew the call to sobriety twice more in the letter (4:7; 5:8).

Peter completes this thought by adding:

set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed .

Some interpret “grace” as referring to the help we receive from God in the present time, but more likely it refers here to the second coming of Christ. Simply put, we are to live now in the present energized by our hope of what is yet to come.

Peter then goes on to say:

Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.

The meaning of this obedience is filled out by means of a contrast. Negatively, they are no longer to **act in compliance with the desires of their former ignorance**. Peter’s reference to their “former ignorance” gives strong indication that the audience is largely composed of †Gentiles who have come to faith in Christ.

Positively, they are to **be holy in every aspect of their conduct**. The term “conduct” is a key word for Peter (1:18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16).

It “implies not merely behavior but also the values, norms, and commitments that constitute an entire ‘way of life.’ ” Strikingly, Peter says that they are to be like the Holy One **who called** them. God himself—the Holy One—is their model. Just as the Father is holy, so the children should be. By quoting the well-known phrase from the book of Leviticus (19:2), **Be holy because I [am] holy**, Peter unmistakably ties the call to holiness here to the covenant God made with the people of Israel. This means that “holy conduct” is not merely virtuous behavior as defined by an impersonal ethical system. Rather, it is rooted in the character of the Father and his own holiness. Because he is holy and acts in a holy way, so we should as well (see Matt 5:48).²

It is as we attend to lives marked by holiness in the present that we will be able to grow through the present sufferings and so anticipate the future glory.

² Keating, D. (2011). *First and Second Peter, Jude* (pp. 40–41). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.