

GOD'S V.I.P.'s 1 Peter 2:10-25

The initials V.I.P. are well known, meaning, Very Important Person. According to the dictionary, V.I.P. means: "A Very Important Person, or VIP is a person who is accorded special privileges due to his or her status or importance."

That is what 1 Peter 2:9-10 says that Christians are. We are "His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

Therefore, we are God's V.I.P.'s—His Very Important People! We have not coined that phrase for ourselves; God has so designated us. We have been "accorded special privileges" due to our status. And our status is what? We have been called "out of darkness into His marvelous light" and placed firmly upon Jesus Christ our Foundation Stone and Cornerstone.

There is a popular Christian song titled, *We Are God's People*. Some of the lyrics are:

"We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord,
Born of His Spirit, established by His Word;
Our Cornerstone is Christ alone,
And strong in Him we stand:
O let us live transparently
And walk heart to heart and hand in hand."

- Fred Bock Music Co.

Indeed, we are God's V.I.P.'s because Christ Jesus is our Cornerstone. Therefore, "let us live transparently and walk heart to heart and hand in hand." That is what the Bible passage before us is saying.

In our previous study of verse 9, we saw that we are:

- > a chosen generation,
- > a royal priesthood,
- > a holy nation,
- > a special people.

These are rights bestowed upon us sovereignly by our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. With every right we enjoy, there is a corresponding responsibility. That is what we see in the verses before us in this message.

There are four divisions in verses 10-25 that we will explore as follows:

**The Calling we Have Experienced
The Community That is Exclusive
The Conduct That we Are to Exhibit
The Christ Who is Our Example**

As citizens of the heavenly kingdom, we are aliens and transients here on earth. (Hebrews 11:16) We take our identity and our mission from that celestial country. (Hebrews 11:16) How then, should we live our lives while on earth? As God's VIP's, our lives are to be governed by:

THE CALLING WE HAVE EXPERIENCED

“...that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...”
(1 Peter 2:9)

A. The predicament out of which we were called. “darkness.”

We must never be unmindful of where God found us—“you were once darkness...” (Ephesians 5:8a). Darkness refers to the condition of sinners who are estranged from God. When Jesus came into the world He came to deliver those who were in a state of darkness: “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16).

The darkness of sinners is the spiritual state of distance from God and consequent depravity and disobedience. Sinners are described as being:

1. Born in darkness.

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5).

2. Living in darkness.

“They grope in the dark without light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man” (Job 12:25) *and* “Their works are in the dark; they say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?” (Isaiah 29:15)

3. Destiny of darkness.

“...cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13).

The sinner has a dark past, a dark present and a dark future. Jesus came as the Light of the world. The Gospel appeal is: “

“Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see:
The Light of the world is Jesus!

B. The position into which we have been called. “...who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...” (1 Peter 2:9).

1. The deliverance that we have experienced.

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13).

2. The distinction that is exceptional.

“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness” (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

3. The deportment that is expected.

“Walk as children of light...and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Ephesians 5:8, 11).

Jesus set the example for all His followers when He reached out to us, delivering us from the dark dungeon of sinnerhood. It is our duty to reach out to those who are sitting in the shadow of death and get the gospel to them.

C. The purpose for which we were called. “that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you...”

1. Praising the Savior is proof that we are children of Light.

“He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see *it* and fear, and will trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:2, 3).

2. Praising the Savior is the response of a grateful soul.

“He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen” (Deuteronomy 10:21).

3. Praising the Savior is the pastime of heaven.

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” (Revelation 5:11-13)

Our Savior is praiseworthy. Let us practice praising Him often while we are upon the earth! We hear much talk these days about the high cost of living. This sort of talk pertains to the material. In the realm of the spiritual, our calling is a holy and high calling. There is a tremendous cost to be paid for low living—living below our Christian calling. Let us live up to the calling of “Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

THE COMMUNITY THAT IS EXCLUSIVE

“...who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...” (1 Peter 2:10-11)

The exclusivity of God’s V.I.P.’s is seen in the following designations: “people of God”, “beloved”, “sojourners” and “pilgrims.” Let us examine each term.

A. “People of God.”

The community called “the people of God” is exclusive in that, while we are citizens of earth, we are also citizens of heaven as well. We, who were at one time not God’s people, are now the people of God because we have obtained mercy!

Peter had written earlier “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope...” (1 Peter 1:3). We obtained God’s abundant mercy, not because we did anything to merit it, but because of the marvelous grace of God. The reason God chooses those who are His is locked up in the great heart of God.

B. “Beloved.”

The word “beloved” means dearly loved or dear to the heart. Peter refers to his readers as “beloved.” Better yet, Paul reminds us that we are “beloved of God” (Romans 1:7).

When you feel down; when you are having one of those depressing days; when you feel unloved—just remember that you are loved by the Greatest Lover in the universe—Jesus! And then sing: “Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly.”

C. “Sojourners.”

Peter addresses believers as “sojourners.” A sojourner is a person who is just staying in a place temporarily.

We are in good company with other sojourners. Abraham was a sojourner: “‘I am a foreigner and a visitor among you” (Genesis 23:4). David said, “I am a stranger with You, a sojourner, as all my fathers were” (Psalm 39:12).

Like Abraham, we are looking for that city, “which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

D. “Pilgrims.”

A pilgrim is someone who is a traveler, someone on a spiritual journey. Peter is telling us that as believers we are here temporarily—the place we are in presently is just a pause in our spiritual journey with God.

If our “citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20) then we are aliens and pilgrims while on earth. Therefore, we ought to have the distinguishing marks of a foreigner. Our speech, our conduct, our interests and involvements should proclaim to others that we are citizens of another country.

The world of mankind around us should be able to recognize us as “spiritual tourists” who are deeply conscious of the fact that this world is not our home. A pilgrim does not lay permanent foundations in the land through which he is sojourning for when his life’s journey is over, he will depart for his permanent home!

Napoleon was leading his troops forward and at end of day, after a long march in inclement weather, called a halt for the night. As he moved about among his troops he noticed that some of the soldiers were driving their tent pegs down into the earth as deeply as they could. He said, “Men, do not drive your tent pegs down too deeply. We are moving on up in the morning!”

One of the most obvious missing traits of many modern-day Christians, is the evidence of pilgrim characteristics. Let us remember that this world is not our home. We are pilgrims on a journey to our eternal home. We must not become attached to this world for we are moving on up some glad morning!

“I am a stranger here, within a foreign land,
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea—
I’m here on business for my King.”

- E. Cassel

THE CONDUCT THAT WE ARE TO EXHIBIT

“...having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

A. The Christian’s Conduct Relative to the Worldly at Large.

1. We are to exemplify honorable conduct.

“...having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles...” The word “Gentiles” refers to the pagans around us. Christians are to be show-cases displaying God’s grace. Peter mentions four segments of society and our relationship to them in verse 17— “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”

Paul writes to the Thessalonians that they should “walk properly toward those who are outside” (1 Thessalonians 4:12).

We must be winsome if we are to win some! We are to remember that we are God’s witnesses and therefore we are to demonstrate before a watching world Christlike characteristics. If we live the Gospel first, people will listen better later!

2. We can expect dishonorable criticism.

“when they speak against you as evildoers...” We are being watched daily by unbelievers who are looking for any reason to doubt our profession of faith so that they can criticize us. Therefore, we should “Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Ephesians 5:15).

3. We should exhibit good works.

“...by your good works which they observe...” “Evil works” are so prevalent that when one produces “good works” the unsaved persons around us sit up and take notice. We are to:

- Bear good fruit. Matthew 3:10; 7:17.
- Do good works. Matthew 5:16
- Be of good cheer. John 16:33
- Be good salt. Luke 14:34
- Have a good conscience. Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:5 & 19
- Spread good tidings. Romans 10:15
- Cleave to the good. Romans 12:9
- Have good speech. Ephesians 4:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:17
- Perform good services. Ephesians 6:7
- Have a good report. Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 3:7
- Fight a good warfare. 1 Timothy 1:18
- Display good behavior. 1 Timothy 3:2
- Have a good profession. 1 Timothy 6:12
- Be a good soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3
- Teach good things. Titus 2:3
- Be good stewards. 1 Peter 4:10

“The Lord is good” (Nahum 1:7). Therefore, it should follow that His children partake of His nature and exhibit good works in their lives. To Titus, Paul wrote: “...those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men” (Titus 3:8).

4. We are to exalt God by our behavior.

“...they may...glorify God in the day of visitation.” Our Christian conduct is on display every day. We are to live Christianly before an unbelieving world that God may be glorified even if we are vilified! Unfortunately, some who claim to be Christians have brought reproach upon the heavenly Father. May we never besmirch that holy name!

This entire section of scripture is summed up in verse 15—“For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” The best argument for the power of God is a changed life. It is not easy for the ungodly to vilify one who lives a holy life. The best way to bring glory to God is to live a life above reproach, even if we are falsely condemned.

B. The Christian’s Conduct Relative to the World’s Laws.

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake...” (v.13).

The word translated “submit” is from the Greek “hupotasso,” which is a military term used to instruct soldiers to fall in line, to be submissive, to obey. In other words, Peter is saying that we are to obey “every ordinance of man” or, as some translations, “every institution of man.” There is the following qualification in view of the totality of scriptural teaching: unless it is contrary to the Laws of God. “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The principle that Peter articulates is submission, unless that submission causes us to sin against God. The saints in earth’s kingdoms should always be in submission to the heavenly King!

“Christian Freedom does not mean being free to do as we like; it means being free to do as we ought.” – William Barclay

C. The Christian’s Conduct Relative to the World’s Leaders.

1. Submission to magistrates.

“...whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...” (1 Peter 2:13b-15).

We are to hold God is in the highest reverential awe, but we are also instructed to honor earthly authorities who have been placed in their positions by God’s permissive or directive decree. This means that we must be submissive and respectful even when we do not agree with their actions.

2. Submission to masters.

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God” (1 Peter 2:18-20).

Peter is not condoning or condemning slavery here. He is telling us how to live our Christian life, in a godly manner. Sainly submissiveness to all in authority and in every circumstance should characterize the children of God.

Submission is the test of our degree of sanctification. We are to submit, that is, “put ourselves under” leaders and laws when the occasion demands it in order to advance the cause of Jesus Christ. One’s calling determines the expectation of one’s conduct. The holier one’s calling, the holier one’s conduct must be.

A very stressed-out woman was tailgating a man driving down a busy street. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman hit the roof, and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection with him. As she was still ranting, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects. He said, “I’m very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, waving your arms, flipping the guy off in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. Then I noticed the “What Would Jesus Do?” and the “Follow Me to Sunday School” bumper stickers, the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk

of your car and naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car. I am sorry for the inconvenience. You are free to go.”

Have you ever tried to view your behavior as others view it? If we could see ourselves as others see us, would we see evidences that we are Christians who are walking as Jesus walked? Or, as the old question asks: “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

The United States Military awards a Good Conduct Medal for servicemen who have earned it. The Good Conduct Medal is awarded for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity in active Military service. It is awarded on a selective basis to each soldier who distinguishes himself/herself from among his/her fellow soldiers by their exemplary conduct. The back of the Good Conduct Medal has the three words: "Fidelity, Zeal, Obedience" superimposed in a semicircle.

We Christians are not promised a Good Conduct Medal as such. However, our Commander-in-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, has promised rewards for fidelity, zeal and obedience. He will also give His personal “Well done!” to those whose conduct has been exemplary. This will be better than any medal we could receive!

THE CHRIST WHO IS OUR EXAMPLE

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:21-25).

A. The Person Who is our Model. “...the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (v.25)

The last verse in the chapter reminds us of Who our example is: Christ Himself. He is our example for living as pilgrims and aliens in the world. We hear much talk about Jesus Christ being a good teacher and example but comparatively few believe His teachings and follow His example.

All of us who call ourselves the sheep of His fold and claim to be under His oversight should not bring reproach upon to His holy name by living disgracefully. In living the Christian life, an ounce of illustration is worth a ton of talk. A verbal testimony is best when preceded by a visible testimony.

B. The Pathway That we Are to Walk.

“...you should follow His steps” (v.21).

Persecution, anyone? When Jesus said, “Come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21) did we think He was on His way to a Disneyland? Our Shepherd does not promise a chase lounge or silken slippers on the pathway to glory; He does not promise skies always

blue, flower strewn pathways all our lives through. He said, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). But He does promise His never-ending presence all along the way from earth to heaven. Did He suffer? Yes! He the innocent for the guilty; He the sinless for the sinful. He forfeited His rights for us and now He asks us to be willing to forfeit our rights so that the good news about Him might be heard.

In a church business meeting the discussion became very heated. A man stood and, with clenched fists and fierce anger, demanded to be heard. He said, “I will not allow you to ignore me! I have my rights and I demand that you respect them!” Another saintly man said, “You did not mean what you just said, do you?” The angry man repeated, “Yes! I have my rights!” The other man replied, “If we got our rights we would be in hell wouldn’t we? You are forgetting that Jesus did not come to get His rights; He came to get His wrongs and He got them for you and me!”

Many have suffered persecution and some martyrdom because they took seriously Jesus’ call to cross-bearing. One of these was Bishop Hugh Latimer who was martyred in 1555 after being sentenced to death for his convictions. He wrote a letter in which he appealed to believers to follow in the footsteps of the Savior, Jesus Christ. He urged them to “follow even to the gallows if God’s will be so.” Later, he and his friend Ridley were burned at the stake for their faith. As the flames began to burn around them he called out, “Be of good cheer, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out!”

The pathway we are to walk in following our Savior may result in suffering. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). We may not be called to walk to the martyr’s stake, but we all are called to walk in the Master’s steps!

C. The Pattern That we Are to Imitate.

How did Christ Jesus suffer for us? He suffered:

- Sinlessly - “Who committed no sin.” (While we are not sinless while on the earth, we should sin less!)
- Silently - “when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten”;
- Submissively – “but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously”;
- Sacrificially – “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

Let us never lose sight of the corpse of Christ on the cross! “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree”—that old rugged cross stained with blood so divine. We do not exalt a wooden structure but the wounded Savior, for the cross without the Christ offers no cure. It was while on the cross that Jesus showed us how to respond to vilification, persecution and rejection.

What a Pattern for us Christ was! Let us read the following verses from Isaiah 53 to refresh our minds about the many ways our Savior suffered for us and then examine our lives to see if our attitude when suffering is as was Christ’s:

“He is **despised** and **rejected** by men, a Man of **sorrows** and acquainted with **grief**. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was **despised**, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him **stricken, smitten** by God, and **afflicted**. But He was **wounded** for our transgressions, He was **bruised** for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His **stripes** we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was **oppressed** and He was **afflicted**, yet He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:3-7).

He was the Model of selflessness, submissiveness and suffering. In view of Christ’s Pattern before us, Peter’s word to us is: “When you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God” (1 Peter 2:20).

Summation

We have received a special calling; we belong to a select community; we are to exemplify saintly conduct reflective of the Savior’s standard set before us. Consequently, we are God’s V.I.P.’s! Let us live up to our status.

Conclusion

An ancient legend is told about a monk who found a precious stone, a precious jewel, in fact, and then quietly kept it in his bag. A short time later, however, he met a traveler, who said he was hungry and asked the monk if he would share some of the provisions. When the monk opened his bag, the traveler saw the precious stone and, on an impulse, asked the monk if he could have it. Amazingly, without much thought, the monk gave the traveler the stone.

The traveler departed quickly, overjoyed with his new possession. However, a few days later, he came searching for the monk again. The monk was, of course, curious to see the traveler again, wondering what might have happened to the precious jewel, and wondering what else the traveler would want. Surprisingly, the traveler returned the stone to the monk and asked for something else. The monk gasped and shook his head in disbelief. What else would he have that the traveler would be interested to have? Finally the traveler said, "Please give me that which enabled to you to give me this precious stone!"

We are God’s V.I.P.’s because He has given us that quality of life which was born in heaven, brought to earth by the Lord Jesus Christ and imparted to us by the Holy Spirit at the new birth. It is this life that makes us God’s special emissaries while upon the earth, giving the precious jewel of the Gospel by life and lip to needy souls.

**“In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm”.**

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