

## EASTER 2024: UNSHAKABLE: Unshakable Walk<sup>i</sup> 1 Peter 1:13-21

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is so very good to see you this morning. I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to the New Testament to 1 Peter this morning.

Last week, Easter Sunday, we launched a new teaching series called Unshakable. As we study 1 Peter, we are going to learn components to developing an unshakable faith in what is often a chaotic world. Last week we discovered how we have an unshakable hope rooted in the resurrection of Jesus. Today, we are going to be looking at an unshakable walk.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Walking in the Dark**

Have you ever had to get up in the middle of the night? You know, when it is pitch dark. Maybe you were awakened by a noise, or your kids were crying down the hall or maybe you had to go to the restroom. It is hard navigating in the dark, isn't it?

But, you know, it never fails, when you have to walk in the dark that your toe finds the corner of your bed. Anyone know what I'm talking about? Or you trip over clothes or shoes. Or, when you have young kids, you step barefoot on that missing lego piece that you've been looking for for weeks. Anyone ever done that?!

My mom has a saying when things frustrate you so bad, or something that went haywire, she says, "Now that will make a preacher want to cuss." Well, there is nothing like stepping on a lego in the middle of the night that fits in that category. Am I right? It is a challenge to walk, to navigate the darkness.

The same is true when it comes to our Christian walk. The New Testament often refers to our journey as a Christian as a race or a walk with Christ. And remember who Peter is writing to in 1 Peter; people that were scattered because of a dark time. They were being persecuted for their faith, discriminated against, insulted, and mistreated. It was a dark time in their lives.

And when it comes to the darkness of our world, we often find ourselves having to navigate the dark, to walk in dark times. Maybe it's a challenge you are

facing that you would describe as a time of darkness, or a season in your life that is filled with disappointments. Those are seasons of darkness. How do we navigate those times and seasons in our lives? How can we as Christians walk in the darkness that often surrounds us?

I believe in our passage this morning that we are going to see 5 ways to walk in the dark. Peter is going to challenge us to focus our minds, our eyes, to focus forward, focus our steps and fifthly our hearts. That is where we are headed this morning as we examine 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 13 through 21. I encourage you to follow along in your copy of God's Word.

### MESSAGE:

Let's begin in verse 13. *<sup>13</sup>Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

The first step in walking in the dark is to...

#### 1) **Focus your mind.**

In verse 13, Peter says to prepare your minds for action. In the original language the word "prepare" means to "gird up, to brace oneself."<sup>ii</sup>

The picture was based on the way men dressed 2,000 years ago. They would wear long, flowing tunics, or robes. It may have looked stylish in those days, but if you had to run or do serious or hard work, it would often get in the way. So, to do those things, they would have to gird up their robes. They would lift the bottom of the robe and tuck it into their belt. And when doing that, they were preparing themselves for the activity they were going to be participating in.

If we were going to use a modern-day phrase to describe this same idea it would be, "Roll up your sleeves." Get ready, get mentally prepared. Roll up the sleeves of your mind, focus your mind.<sup>iii</sup>

I think this is a very important first step when talking about walking in dark times. Because what often happens in our lives is we are surprised by darkness, we're caught off guard. Reality is, we live in a broken world we all encounter the darkness. And when we are unprepared, our minds tell us all kinds of lies. I think we are often not prepared to deal with the darkness we encounter because we haven't rolled up the sleeves of our minds.

We tend to be lazy in our approach to Scripture, we have anemic prayer lives, and we flirt with temptation. I'm preaching to myself. You just happen to be in the room. Peter is saying that we need to prepare, focus, our minds to be able to navigate darkness. And he tells us to do that in two ways.

First, he says to be prepared for, "action." In other words, we are to be decisive. And here Peter is alluding to the fact of deciding beforehand. We are to take the initiative in preparing our minds to walk in the ways of Christ.<sup>iv</sup>

The second way we prepare our minds is to be "sober-minded." The idea here is to think clearly, to think Christianly, to think from a godly perspective. So, pair that with being called to action, Peter says that we are to focus our minds by being clear and morally minded.<sup>v</sup>

Why would the first step to walk in the dark be to prepare our minds? Well, the Christian battle is won or lost in our minds. Proverbs 23:7 tells us that, "as we calculate in our soul, or as we think in our minds, so are we." In other words, how we think is how we behave. As a result, it is vital that we protect our minds, our thinking. And we do that by focusing on the Word of God and taking initiative to live a life of holiness.

There are things that we ought to avoid, websites we should keep away from, and situations we should steer clear of. And by doing those things, we are taking a morally decisive path to walk straight even though we are surrounded by darkness.

How do you walk in the dark? Focus your mind. Secondly, ...

## 2) Focus your eyes.

We focus our minds and we focus our eyes, our sights. In the second part of verse 13, Peter says to, "**set your hope** [set your gaze] **fully** [completely<sup>vi</sup>] **on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**"

You know, when you wake up in the middle of the night, it takes a minute to get your bearings, to focus your eyes. Usually, I have to rub my eyes and squint to focus. And I'll look in a direction where I could see any glimmer of light.

Peter is telling us here that when we are walking through dark times, we need to focus our eyes in the right direction. And we do that, he says, by setting our

hope. Where are we to set our hope? On God's promise. What has God promised? The revelation of Jesus Christ, Peter says.

See, for these early believers that Peter is writing to, the promise of Christ's working and His second coming filled them with hope. Why? Because it gave them a glimmer of light to eternal life that they could focus on. And that same truth should fill us with hope as well. No matter what darkness we face, we know that we will see Christ, be like Christ, and be with Christ. That's what heaven is. A place where there is no darkness, no pain, and no sadness. No matter how dark this world gets, our eyes are set on a greater hope.

And I like what Peter says. We are to set our hope, "fully," on that truth. That means completely, without wavering.<sup>vii</sup> But realistically, we are tempted to set our hopes on other things, too. Don't you feel that? Yeah, we acknowledge that our hope is in Christ, but we also hope for things that make us happy. We hope for good health, good kids, a great marriage, and a lucrative career. It's not that those things are bad, you see, but they should not be objects of our hope. Peter says to place our full hope, our complete hope, beyond those things, in the revelation of Christ.

Why is that so important? Well, if and when our health takes a turn for the worse, or our kids venture off the path, or our marriage falls on rocky times, or bills pile up, if our hope is in those things then we are shaken. But if our hope lies beyond those things, and is rooted in that which is absolutely certain, in the person and work of Jesus, then we cannot be shaken when life's ups and downs come our way.

Peter is saying that in order to walk in the dark, we need to focus our eyes, our hope, on what we know to be true. We focus our minds and our eyes. Thirdly, ...

## 3) Focus forward.

Looking backward doesn't help you to navigate through the dark. Look at verse 14 with me. ***14As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.***

I like that word, "former." B.C. days, before Christ. Do you remember where you were before Jesus changed your life? For some of you, you're like, "I was 9 when I got saved. It's not like I was a crazy person." Others of you are like, "Oh

yeah. I was in a bad place.” But in either case, you’ve experience what it was like for Jesus to pull you off the wrong road and set you on His road. Both in your salvation and in the conviction of sin in our lives. And you also know what it feels like to be pulled back to those old days. Peter is saying, don’t look back. Don’t focus on those old ways, old habits, old sins, and old passions. Instead, focus forward in obedience to The Lord.

I believe what Peter is driving at is that character is vital to navigating the darkness. He is saying in verse 14 that Christian character is rooted in obedience to God. And when we are obedient in following The Lord, we find the source of truth and life and are not stuck in the passions of our former ignorance.

An unshakable walk requires that we focus our mind, focus our eyes, and focus forward. Fourthly, ...

#### 4) Focus your steps.

Look with me at verses 15-17. *<sup>15</sup>but as he who called you is holy, you also **be holy in all your conduct**, <sup>16</sup>since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” <sup>17</sup>And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear** throughout the time of your exile.”*

Peter is saying that to focus our steps means that we give attention to our conduct. As believers in Jesus, we are to be holy like our Father is holy. What does it mean to be holy?

The word translated as “holy” in the original language literally means, “otherness.”<sup>viii</sup> There is only One who is fully holy. It is impossible for us to be holy to the extent that God the Father is holy. But I believe what Peter is driving at is the pursuit of holiness in our lives. We are to become more and more like our Lord, and we are to live as He lives. God’s character in our lives should increasingly replace the sinful character of our former lives.<sup>x</sup>

The Bible uses a word for this process of becoming like Christ, sanctification. That is a million-dollar word that means the process of becoming more Christlike in our thinking and our behavior. Sanctification begins when we come to faith in Jesus as Lord. We embark on a journey where we are being spiritually transformed. This transformation results in our sin being displaced by God’s character.<sup>x</sup>

Here’s the key here. While this transformation is a work of the Holy Spirit, we are to be willing participants in that process. This is why Peter says to conduct yourselves with fear. Focus on the steps you take and do so with fear.

Now, fear here does not mean that we are terrified. It’s a different kind of fear, a healthy fear. It means to be reverent, in awe, in the way we live in the presence of God.<sup>xi</sup> Knowing that we will be judged. Not for our salvation, but for how we lived our lives. Our salvation is secure in Christ. The judgment Christians face is a judgment that correlates to our actions here on earth.

As a believer, we are to emulate God’s “otherness.” We are to be set apart from the ways of darkness, the ways of our world. We are to reflect the person whose name we bear. To be called a Christian means to be called a little Christ.

#### ILLUSTRATION: Alexander the Great<sup>xii</sup>

There is a story told about the days of Alexander the Great. One of his soldiers was caught deserting the army during a battle. That soldier was brought before Alexander the emperor. He heard the charges brought and he asked the soldier, “Young man, what is your name?” The soldier looked up at him and said, “My name is Alexander, sir.” The emperor was taken back and was angry. So, Alexander the Great said to him, “Soldier, you either change your behavior or change your name.” In other words, if you are going to bear my name, I want you to be brave.

Holiness is a reflection of who’s name we bear. It’s a family trait. To have an unshakable walk we are to focus our minds, our eyes, focus forward and focus the steps we take. Finally, fifthly, ...

#### 5) Focus your heart.

What I mean by focusing your heart is to direct your worship. Even in the midst of the darkness that we often face, God is still worthy of our worship. Peter reminds us of this in verses 18 through 21. Remember, he is talking to people that are facing difficult, dark times and reminds them that even in those moments, God is worthy of praise. Look at those verses with me. Verse 18.

*<sup>18</sup>knowing that **you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup>He was*

*foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

What's Peter doing here? He's saying, I know things are tough right now. I know you are scattered everywhere. I know you are being persecuted. But God is still good! Remember that God has done an incredible work in your life. He's brought about the ransom of your souls!

Maybe you can relate. The darkness is pressing in all around you, but God is good. He has worked salvation for us. Purchased us, paying our ransom, by way of shedding His precious blood. And what's more, He rose from the dead. And those powerful truths are the basis for our hope, even in the midst of darkness.

You know, the Gospel shows us how God works even in the darkest of times. Jesus entered into the brokenness of our world, shattered and torn by our sin. Reeling from destruction. He experienced the pain of this world. He was rejected and despised. It was by way of that rejection and pain that Jesus endured the cross but by it, He saved us.

And look again at verse 20. <sup>20</sup>He [Jesus] *was **foreknown** before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.* That means that it was always God's plan to enter into the darkness of our world to bring about our redemption. And God still enters the darkness of our lives and reminds us of the hope we have in Christ. And because of that, He is worthy of our worship and praise.

You know, one of the most often repeated phrases by Jesus in the gospels is the phrase, "take heart." Jesus told His disciples over, and over, and over, and over again to "Take heart." He says, "Take heart, it is I." Take heart, I have overcome. Take heart, I am calling you. Take heart, take heart, take heart. Why? Because the going is going to be tough. It is going to be difficult, but take heart because in the end it is worth it all. Stay the course.<sup>xiii</sup> There is hope. Keep your minds focused, set your eyes on hope, focus forward, walk carefully, and keep your heart on Him by way of worship. And by doing those things, we will be able to develop an unshakeable walk.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Are you hurting and broken? Are you overwhelmed by darkness? Have you trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior? Have you been born again into a relationship with Jesus?

If those things apply to you today, we want to come alongside you. In a moment, I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but I want to invite you to listen to the stirring of God in your heart. As we conclude our services, our elders will be here at the front of the room. We want to visit with you about how you can have a relationship with Jesus. We want to pray with you and over you. We want to minister to you and point you to the hope that is found in Jesus.

Let's pray together. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003; Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicators Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Books: Waco, 1984; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2004; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 1 – Living Like You Are Born Again*, Enduring Word, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-1/>; J.D. Greear, *Together We Endure: The Letter of 1 Peter #2: The Exile Commands*, preached at Summit Church, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/the-exile-commands>; Troy Rackliffe, *Stand Firm in Your Faith: Messages 2 & 3*, preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Skip Heitzig, *How to Walk in the Dark*, sermon taught at Calvary Albuquerque, October 20, 2013, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#!/series/129/sermon/1718>; Michael Gossett, *Anchored in Holiness*, message preached at Green Acres Baptist Church, August 28, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.gabc.org/episode/anchored-in-holiness-anchored/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 328, anazónnumi.

<sup>iii</sup> Cedar, p. 123.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Heitzig.

<sup>vi</sup> Strong's Concordance, 5049, teleiós.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 40, hagios.

<sup>ix</sup> Cedar, p. 125.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xi</sup> Strong's Concordance, 5401, phobos.

<sup>xii</sup> Illustration taken from Skip Heitzig.

<sup>xiii</sup> Excerpt taken from Michael Gossett.