

Session 2: Joy through Trials...and Joy of Knowing About Our Inheritance

The First Epistle of Peter

1 Peter 1:1-2, *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”*

In this introduction, Peter mentions that:

- The readers are strangers in the world,
- They are spiritually different than the people who surround them, and
- God chose them long ago. They are not an accident, and they can feel secure in knowing that God has a plan for them.

God has foreknowledge of everyone in one sense, but for reasons we do not fully understand (we want to...but our finite minds can’t grasp the meaning of being a chosen one). We think like man...in that man would choose someone by their physical or mental attributes to be on his team...where God chooses people to do His work based on the man’s faith and willingness to obey.

He chooses some for a special relationship (as the Holy Spirit gives or chooses our gifts).

1 Peter 1:3-12, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”*

Peter begins with a doxology: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The reason for this praise? In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (v.3).

God's grace has given us a new start in life—a life with confidence in the future, for the resurrection of Jesus has given us evidence that we will also be resurrected into glory through Him.

Our new birth also give us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade (v. 4).

Because of persecution, the readers could not count on an inheritance in this world, but Peter promises them an even better inheritance—preserved in a safe place:

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time (vv. 4-5).

God protects us, and we will inherit his glory when our salvation comes.

1 Peter 1:6, "In all this you greatly rejoice, Peter says, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials."

- ***When I have trials, do I have joy in the promises of God? (v. 6)***

We have not seen Jesus personally, but we love him and believe in him. This faith fills us with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for [we] are receiving the end result of [our] faith, the salvation of [our] souls (vv. 8-9).

Four Stages in man's apprehension of Christ:

1. ***The Stage of Hope and Desire...****Those who throughout the ages dreamed of the coming of the King (Luke 10:23, 24), "Many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it."*
2. ***The Stage for those who knew Christ in the flesh (What Peter is thinking about here)...****Peter to Cornelius, Acts 10:39, "We are witnesses to all that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem."*
3. ***The Stage of Faith without sight...those in every nation and time who see Jesus with the eye of faith,*** John 20:29, *"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe."*
4. ***The Stage of Beatific Vision...***
*Beatific...bestowing bliss, blessings, happiness, serene peace, comfort, true joy...John said, "We shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).
Paul...1 Corinthians 13:12, "Now...we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face."*

1 Peter 1:10-12..

We are told Two (2) things about the Prophets:

- 1. The searched and enquired about the salvation which was to come...***
- 2. The Spirit of Christ told them about Christ...***

The great truth that inspiration depends on two things:

- 1. The Searching mind of man***
- 2. The Revealing Spirit of God.***

Note: The Spirit (The Holy Spirit)...The Spirit of Christ was always operative in the world.

This passage also tells us that it was the preachers that brought the message of salvation to the readers of Peter's letter.

- Preaching is the announcement of salvation...other preaching topics...but, fundamentally, preaching is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. (Warn, threaten, condemn...judgment and the wrath of God....but, every preacher must present the Good News of Salvation to give a way out of the mess and pig-pen we are in).***
- Preaching is through the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The preacher's message is not his own, it is given to him. (Opinions and even prejudices...but in the end, God's Word will not come back void...and the Holy Spirit will assure us of that).***
- The preacher's message is of things of which the angels long to catch a glimpse. The salvation of God is not even understood by the angels...it is marvelous...it is wonderful...and our songs shall ever be. Marvelous, wonderful, is our Savior's love for me...and you.***

1 Peter 1:13, "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."

Don't be hung up about the future...although it is more than we can imagine, but.... Be challenged by:

- 1. Girding up the loins of our minds...Get ready for a fight...get ready to tighten up our thoughts and actions.***
- 2. Be sober...preserve a balanced judgment. Keeping minds alert, with no trivial thoughts...get ready for the defensive action that will have to take place...but draw your sword of faith when needed.***
- 3. Set your hope on the grace which is going to be given to them when Jesus Christ comes.***

For the Christian the best is always yet to come.

The Christian will endure struggles because he knows that the sufferings lead to the joys of tomorrow...the hope of eternity (NO...the assurance of eternity!)

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance (v. 14).

How do we do that? READ THE WORD...DO THE WORD...STAY IN THE WORD!

When we come to trust Christ, our behavior should change. When we have faith in the promises God has given us, the temporary pleasures of sin lose their appeal.

If you do not lose the appetite...the appeal for temporary pleasure, what do you need to do?

As children of God, we imitate our heavenly Father: But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy" (vv. 15-16, quoting Lev. 11:44).

Our ethics are based on the character of God himself.

Jesus exemplified God's character....Who do you exemplify? (Worldly..Godly).

I Peter 1:14-25, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." ¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. ²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

In contrast to being obedient children, Peter picks out three (3) characteristics of the Christless life (understand, there are many more characteristics than these 3):

1. ***It is the life of ignorance (v.14);*** in a world without Christ God was a mystery and power...but never love; there was no one to whom men could raise their hands for help or their eyes for hope. The world does not understand the Spirit world. They are more interested in the "spirit world" than the Spirit led world.
2. ***It is the life dominated by desire (v.14);*** records of the world show the sheer fleshiness of life without God. Desperate poverty at one end and a life of luxury on the other (lives that were always desperately seeking new pleasures and new ways to get a thrill). Writings show women with 10-23 husbands and husbands and wives having affairs with every kind of low-life one could find. Both

in Greece and Rome, homosexual practices were so common that it had come to be looked on as natural. A world mastered by desire whose aim was to find newer and wilder ways of gratifying its lusts.

3. ***It was a life characterized by futility...a life going nowhere.***
There was nothing for which to live and nothing for which to die.
Life must always be futile when there is nothing on the other side of death (in the lost person's opinion).

Is a life without Christ any different today?

Why would anyone not be intrigued by life after death?

Why wouldn't anyone be thinking, "What if there is life after death?"

People like to challenge the unknown....and feel that they can conquer any and all things awaiting them. In reality, their whole reasoning is futile...AND FOOLISH!

What about the Christ-filled life?

Three (3) Characteristics of the Christ-filled life and the reason Peter finds compelling reasons to believe it:

1. ***The Christ-filled life is a life of obedience and of holiness (v. 14-16)***
 - *To be a chosen child of the most...High God...and to accept his offering of salvation, is not only a great privilege, but also a great responsibility.*
 - *In the world the Christian lives in he/she must obey His law and reproduce His life.*
 - *There is laid on the Christian the task of being different.*
2. ***The Christ-filled life is a life of reverence (v. 17-21)***
 - *Note: Reverence is the attitude of mind of the man who is always aware that he is in the presence of God.*
 - *The Christian is a sojourner in this world....life for him is lived in the shadow of eternity (thinking all the time about where he is now, but also of knowing where he is going).*
 - *He is going to God who is the Father and his judge (constantly understanding that there is a day of reckoning).*
 - *The Christian must live a life of reverence because it cost so much...nothing less than the life and death of the Son of God.*
3. ***The Christ-filled life is the life of brotherly love (v. 22)***
 - *The great characteristic of the life of God is love; therefore, the Christian must show that divine love for people.*
 - *The Christian is a person that is reborn; not of mortal, but of immortal seed (the remaking of the man [a Christian] is due to no human agency but to the agency of God).*

John 1:13, "...those who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God."

In this passage, we see Jesus as: (v. 18-21)

- 1. The great emancipator (deliverer of man from death) at the cost of Calvary.***
- 2. The Eternal redeeming purpose of God;***
- 3. The triumphant victor over death and,***
- 4. The glorious Lord of life (the Giver of life) which death cannot touch....***

HE IS THE WORD OF GOD....IN FLESH AND SPIRIT! (v. 23)