

I Peter 1:10-13
January 15, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When someone experiences salvation through their profession of faith in Christ, do you expect to see changes in that person over time? [Yes]

Q: If yes, what do those changes look like? What do you expect to see? [Let people engage]

If you're like me, it's probably hard to hear these questions without drifting toward our own stories. For all the years I have been a Christian, have there been positive changes in my life that others can see? It reminds me of the rhetorical question, "If you were in a court of law because you were accused of being a Christian, would there be evidence to convict you?"

We hope so! But we're still imperfect. I bet we can tag areas of our life where we feel stuck, or wish we have made more improvements by now, or wonder "why can't I be more (fill in the blank)?" But we should never lose hope. We cling to the fact that upon our salvation, we became a "new creation" in Christ Jesus. The "old is gone, the new has come." We have the Holy Spirit sealed within us to guide us and direct us. We have His power within us to accomplish His Will.

Transition: Peter is going to continue to encourage us in our journey. He wrote to all these scattered Christians in northern Asia Minor, and he focused on the significance of their salvation. This was not some plan thrown together at the last minute by God when He was frustrated by His creation! Rather, it was a plan that was formulated before creation. God created the salvation plan that included His Son, who would be the perfect provision for their salvation. This salvation was a gift and was the foundation of their faith relationship to God.

We will pick up where we left off last week by reading I Peter 1:10-12 to hear him out on how significant this salvation is. Then for the most of this hour, I want us to consider that **all of us can successfully work out our salvation BY fulfilling the RESPONSIBILITIES God expects of us.** Let's find the responsibilities that come with salvation, but then wrestle with HOW to actually fulfill these responsibilities. That will be our challenge. Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.10:

- Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

V.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 Christ and the glories that would follow.

V.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.

Process Observations/Questions:

Background: I stated last week that we should more deeply appreciate our salvation because our Triune God went to significant lengths to make it available to us. In this section of Scripture, we see more evidence of that.

Q v.10: Who did God use to communicate His great plan of salvation? [The Prophets]

Q v.11: And who was guiding each prophet as they “searched intently and with the greatest care?” [The Spirit of Christ]

Q: What were these prophets trying to figure out? [They were trying to find out the time and circumstances, through the Spirit of Christ in them, when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.]

Point of Interest: These prophets, as you could imagine, were trying to “connect the dots” between a suffering Messiah and a Messiah who would come in His glory. This was (and is) a point of confusion for God’s people in the OT times and the Jewish people today. They expected the glory of their Messiah to be *soon after the suffering* and then see the Messiah rule with peace. So there’s this huge gap of time, which we have come to understand as the “church age,” that the prophets didn’t really catch. Paul describes the church as part of the “mystery of Christ” in Eph 3:1-13.

Q v.12: According to v.12, how did these scattered Christians hear the gospel to experience salvation? [Through people like Peter and Paul who shared the gospel *by the Holy Spirit*. The author is helping his readers understand that the message of salvation has been proclaimed for a long time, but through different people throughout history.]

Observation: God speaking through different people is a key point by itself! Can you see that Peter expresses straightforwardly that the Scripture is God-breathed and that prophets only wrote what the Spirit of Christ revealed to them? It’s important that we affirm that the Word of God was Spirit-inspired and that no man ever wrote a thing that He didn’t hear from God directly! Remember that even Jesus didn’t speak apart from what He heard from His Father. John 8:26 says, “He who has sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from Him I tell the world.”

Read I Peter 1:13

V.13:

- Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: We see the word “therefore.” What is it there for? [He is saying, “If you have this glorious gift of salvation, then live like you have it!”]

Q v.13: There are three responsibilities in this verse alone. What is the first one you see? [Prepare your minds for action]

Q: How do we fulfill that responsibility? [Spend time with God in His Word and in prayer. We want to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit guide our heart and mind. Pull your thoughts together, especially during times of grief and suffering when we feel weakened. Peter wants them to have a mindset such that their present actions and decisions are governed by this “living hope” and their future.]

Q: What do you think Peter meant by “actions?” [We need to be obedient. We need to make the decision through the preparation of our minds to do what He tells us to do. Without the right mindset, it is hard to meet the challenges of obedience.]

Q: What is the second responsibility you see? [Be self-controlled (some versions say “sober-minded”)]

Q: How do we fulfill that responsibility? [We can’t be easily carried away by the world. We need to exercise calm, steadiness, and control in our thinking. Choose to weigh matters. The Greek word behind sober-minded actually means the opposite of intoxication. When you apply it in this verse, the figurative meaning is to not be “spiritually intoxicated.” Perhaps the scattered Christians got intoxicated with the idea that they shouldn’t be experiencing “trials of many kinds.” Perhaps they weren’t mentally prepared for the sufferings they would experience for the cause of Christ.]

Q: What is the third responsibility you see? [Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed]

Q: How do we fulfill that responsibility? [In a simplistic way, think of our current trials and sufferings under the mantra “this too shall pass.” Peter said in v.6 that our trials are “for a little while.” Paul tells us in Rom 8:18 that our “present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” But the overarching idea is that we should have an *optimistic mind*. We should always have a hopeful outlook and look forward to the “grace that will be given to us when Christ is revealed (referring to second coming).” We always have something to look forward to!

Observation: These first three responsibilities have much to do with our mindset. Share my daily prayer that the “Lord, be in my head and in my understanding:”

- Generous portions of wisdom [James 1:5]
- Keen insight into patient’s physical and emotional reality, the Word [Eph 1:17 “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.]
- Accurate diagnoses and treatment plans [Prov 3:5-6]
- Grow our knowledge and skillsets to increase our effectiveness in our respective roles [Ps 119:66a “Teach me knowledge and good judgment;” Prov 10:14a “Wise men store up knowledge”]

Q: Do any of you have a favorite prayer that fits with “preparing the mind for action; be self-controlled; and/or set your hope fully on the grace that will be revealed when Christ comes again? [Let people offer their own prayers.]

LOOK:

Salvation is a gift from the Lord, and it comes with responsibilities. It would be easy to walk away from this lesson after reviewing three responsibilities and thinking, “There is no way I can do all of this! I’m sure I’ll miss the mark on many of these.” I want to encourage you not to feel defeated in this. We’re not obeying in our own strength. The Spirit is always leading and guiding us to right thinking and proper behavior. Let’s agree that we will submit our hearts and minds daily to Christ and ask the Spirit to prick our hearts if we are thinking ungodly thoughts or getting ready to misstep. That will be our invitation to obey. If you’re not hearing from the Spirit, then rest with the idea that you’re already in a state of obedience.

If we fulfill our responsibilities with the Spirit’s help, then people will see the change that salvation should bring to God’s children. May people see change in us to God’s glory!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 394-396). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Receive from Christ (vv. 9–12). “Believing ... receiving” is God’s way of meeting our needs. If we love Him, trust Him, and rejoice in Him, then we can receive from Him all that we need to turn trials into triumphs. First Peter 1:9 can be translated, “For you are receiving the consummation of your faith, that is, the final salvation of your souls.” In other words, we can experience *today* some of that future glory. Charles Spurgeon used to say, “Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul.” It is not enough that we long for heaven during times of suffering, for anybody can do that. What Peter urged his readers to do was exercise love, faith, and rejoicing, so that they might experience some of the glory of heaven in the midst of suffering *now*.

The amazing thing is that this “salvation” we are awaiting—the return of Christ—was a part of God’s great plan for us from eternity. The Old Testament prophets wrote about this salvation and studied closely what God revealed to them. They saw the sufferings of the Messiah, and also the glory that would follow; but they could not fully understand the connection between the two. In fact, in some of the prophecies, the Messiah’s sufferings and glory are blended in one verse or paragraph.

When Jesus came to earth, the Jewish teachers were awaiting a conquering Messiah who would defeat Israel’s enemies and establish the glorious kingdom promised to David. Even His own disciples were not clear about the need for His death on the cross (Matt. 16:13–28). They were still inquiring about the Jewish kingdom even after His resurrection (Acts 1:1–8). If the *disciples* were not clear about God’s program, certainly the Old Testament *prophets* could be excused!

God told the prophets that they were ministering for a *future* generation. Between the suffering of Messiah and His return in glory comes what we call “the age of the church.” The truth about the church was a hidden “mystery” in the Old Testament period (Eph. 3:1–13). The Old Testament believers looked ahead by faith and saw, as it were, two mountain peaks: Mount Calvary, where Messiah suffered and died (Isa. 53), and Mount Olivet, where He will return in glory (Zech. 14:4). They could not see the “valley” in between, the present age of the church.

Even the angels are interested in what God is doing in and through His church! Read 1 Corinthians 4:9 and Ephesians 3:10 for further information on how God is “educating” the angels through the church.

If the Old Testament prophets searched so diligently into the truths of salvation, and yet had so little to go on, how much more ought we to search into this subject, now that we have a complete Word from God! The same Holy Spirit who taught the prophets and, through them, wrote the Word of God, can teach us the truths in it (John 16:12–15).

Furthermore, we can learn these truths from the Old Testament as well as from the New Testament. You can find Christ in every part of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:25–27). What a delight it is to meet Christ in the Old Testament Law, the types, the Psalms, and the writings of the prophets. In times of trial, you can turn to the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, and find all that you need for encouragement and enlightenment.

Yes, for Christians, it is glory all the way! When we trusted Christ, we were born for glory. We are being kept for glory. As we obey Him and experience trials, we are being prepared for glory. When we love Him, trust Him, and rejoice in Him, we experience the glory here and now.

Joy unspeakable and full of glory!

STAYING CLEAN IN A POLLUTED WORLD

1 Peter 1:13

In the first section of this chapter, Peter emphasized *walking in hope*; but now his emphasis is *walking in holiness*. The two go together, for “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

The root meaning of the word translated *holy* is “different.” A holy person is not an odd person, but a different person. His life has a quality about it that is different. His present “lifestyle” is not only different from his past way of life, but it is different from the “lifestyles” of the unbelievers around him. A Christian’s life of holiness appears strange to the lost (1 Peter 4:4), but it is not strange to other believers.

However, it is not easy to live in this world and maintain a holy walk. The anti-God atmosphere around us that the Bible calls “the world” is always pressing against us, trying to force us to conform. In this paragraph, Peter presented to his readers five spiritual incentives to encourage them (and us) to maintain a different lifestyle, a holy walk in a polluted world.

The Glory of God (1 Peter 1:13)

“The revelation of Jesus Christ” is another expression for the “living hope” and “the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Christians live in the future tense; their present actions and decisions are governed by this future hope. Just as an engaged couple makes all their plans in the light of that future wedding, so Christians today live with the expectation of seeing Jesus Christ.

“Gird up the loins of your mind” simply means, “Pull your thoughts together! Have a disciplined mind!” The image is that of a robed man, tucking his skirts under the belt, so he can be free to run. When you center your thoughts on the return of Christ, and live accordingly, you escape the many worldly things that would encumber your mind and hinder your spiritual progress. Peter may have borrowed the idea from the Passover supper, because later in this section he identifies Christ as the Lamb (1 Peter 1:19). The Jews at Passover were supposed to eat the meal in haste, ready to move (Ex. 12:11).

Outlook determines outcome; attitude determines action. A Christian who is looking for the glory of God has a greater motivation for present obedience than a Christian who ignores the Lord’s return. The contrast is illustrated in the lives of Abraham and Lot (Gen. 12–13; Heb. 11:8–16). Abraham had his eyes of faith on that heavenly city, so he had no interest in the world’s real estate. But Lot, who had tasted the pleasures of the world in Egypt, gradually moved toward Sodom. Abraham brought blessing to his home, but Lot brought judgment. Outlook determined outcome.

Not only should we have a disciplined mind, but we should also have a *sober* mind. The word means “to be calm, steady, controlled; to weigh matters.” Unfortunately some people get “carried away” with prophetic studies and lose their spiritual balance. The fact that Christ is coming should encourage us to be calm and collected (1 Peter 4:7). The fact that Satan is on the prowl is another reason to be sober-minded (1 Peter 5:8). Anyone whose mind becomes undisciplined, and whose life “falls apart” because of prophetic studies, is giving evidence that he does not really understand Bible prophecy.

We should also have an *optimistic* mind. “Hope to the end” means “set your hope fully.” Have a hopeful outlook! A friend of mine sent me a note one day that read: “When the *outlook* is gloomy, try the *uplook*!” Good advice, indeed! It has to be dark for the stars to appear.

The result of this spiritual mind-set is that a believer experiences the grace of God in his life. To be sure, we will experience grace when we see Jesus Christ; but we can also experience grace today as we look for Him to return. We have been saved by grace and we depend moment by moment on God’s grace (1 Peter 1:10). Looking for Christ to return strengthens our faith and hope in difficult days, and this imparts to us more of the grace of God. Titus 2:10–13 is another passage that shows the relationship between grace and the coming of Jesus Christ.

Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 842-843). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. THE PAST REVELATION (1:10–12)

1:10–12. The living hope of the new birth springs not only from believers’ future inheritance and present experience but also from their faith in God’s written Word (v. 11). Peter iterated that faith is not based on the mere writings of men but on the Word of God. **Concerning this salvation** (cf. “salvation” in vv. 5, 9) **the prophets ... searched intently and with the greatest care** their own Spirit-guided writings. They longed to participate in this salvation and coming period of grace and tried to discover the appointed **time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing**. They pondered how the glorious Messiah could be involved in suffering. Again Peter echoed the teachings of Christ (cf. Matt. 13:17).

In 1 Peter 1:10–12 the apostle gave a practical illustration of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture he clearly stated in 2 Peter 1:20–21. The prophets did not fully understand all that the Holy Spirit had authored through them. It was the Spirit who predicted **the sufferings of Christ** (Isa. 53) **and the glories that would follow** (Isa. 11). Peter’s readers would be encouraged by this reminder that Christ’s suffering was followed by glory. They too would experience glory after their suffering (cf. 1 Peter 5:10).

Peter gave further encouragement (1:12), stating that the prophets understood they were not writing for themselves but for those who would live later, those who would hear **the gospel proclaimed by the Holy Spirit** (cf. “the Spirit of Christ,” v. 11), and consequently follow Christ. In the ultimate stage of believers’ salvation they will experience glory, not suffering. The writer of Hebrews also referred to this “ultimate” salvation (Heb. 1:14; 2:3).

The reality of the Christian’s living hope was held in awe and wonder by the angelic hosts of heaven. Prophets and angels alike wondered about “this salvation” in **the grace that was to come** (v. 10).

B. The new birth’s holiness (1:13–2:10)

The believers’ living hope based on their new birth should lead to a lifestyle of holiness. Those chosen for new birth are also called to be holy. Peter exhorted his readers to prepare to meet the challenge of obedience by adopting a new mind-set. The price paid for a believer’s redemption calls for reverence and obedience. Obedience involves purifying oneself and practicing holy living, while offering spiritual sacrifices as a royal priest.

1. THE PREPARATION (1:13)

1:13. Peter now gave three pointed exhortations: **prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope....** Actually in the Greek the first and second are participles, which are subordinate to *two* commands: “have hope” and “be holy.” The participles support the commands (i.e., have hope, with a prepared mind and self-control.)

(1) “Prepare your minds for action” (v. 13). Obedience is a conscious act of the will. Christians in conflict need a tough-minded holiness that is ready for action.

(2) “Be self-controlled” (v. 13; cf. 4:7; 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:6, 8). This word *nēphontes*, from the verb *nēphō* (“be sober”) is used only figuratively in the New Testament. It means to be free from every form of mental and spiritual “drunkenness” or excess. Rather than being controlled by outside circumstances, believers should be directed from within.

(3) “Set your hope fully” (1 Peter 1:13). Holy living demands determination. A believer’s hope is to be set perfectly (*teleiōs*, completely or unchangeably), and without reserve **on the grace** (cf. v. 10) to be bestowed **when Jesus Christ is revealed** (lit., “in the revelation [*apokalypsei*] of Jesus Christ”; cf. the same phrase in v. 7; also cf. the verb “be revealed” [*apokalyphthēnai*] in v. 5). Four times Peter has already spoken of the Savior’s return and the accompanying ultimate stage of salvation (vv. 5, 7, 9, 13).