

Hope For Us in the Age of Grace! 1st Peter 1:3-12

We continue this morning in our study of Peter's first letter. Last week we saw in the first 2 verses that Peter reminded us of the fact that we are elect by God's foreknowledge, through the sanctification of the Spirit, so we would be obedient to Jesus and keep the covenant agreement we entered into with God. But what does it mean to be saved and why have we been saved. Peter answers those questions and more in verse 3-12 of the first chapter. So let's dig into the text to see what God has for us here.

1 Peter 1:3–5 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter begins with the worship of God the Father. I think that is a pretty good place to start everything, praising God. The word "Blessed" literally means to speak well or to extol. This gives us the sense that Peter was worshiping or praising God.

Peter then states that according to God's great mercy, He has caused us to be born again. Don't skip past this statement to quickly, this is very important. How did we come to be born again? God caused us to be born again! I appreciate the way ESV and NASB translate this verse. They capture the full meaning of the two Greek words that are translated into 6 words in English. ESV and NASB capture the fullness of the original that God did not just give us new life, but He caused us to be born again. I want you to think about that truth for just a moment. God the Father caused us to be born again!

Remember what we saw last week that we are elect according to His foreknowledge through the sanctification by the Holy Spirit for the obedience to Jesus and the keeping of the covenant with God. Now here Peter tells us that God caused it to happen as well as foreknew it would happen. We have been saved by God's Grace through faith that He caused! Wow! That makes my adoption as His child that much more of a blessing. He chose me to be His kid and then He did what needed to be done to make it happen. So what needed to be done to make it happen. Well it begins with creation, making Adam and Eve, and all the people between Adam and Me. He had to take into account where my ancestry would live and what they would believe. But not just that He also had to take into account where LS Bouman's family and ancestors would live and what they would believe. Why LS Bouman? Well he led my Uncle Bernie to the Lord who led me to the Lord. So I guess God also had to

take into account who led LS Bouman to the Lord and on and on it goes. Oh yeah, He also had to deal with the WW1 and WW2, where the bombs fell and who died and who did not. He also had to take care of the fishing camp in Canada where my parents first taken to in Canada by Uncle Bernie and on and on it goes, throughout history. God orchestrated the events for every person at all times to bring them to the point of salvation at the right time in the right place. I am tired just thinking about all that.

That is what it means that God caused us to be born again. Of course, we cannot exclude the part of the plan we normally think of. Tasking Jesus with stepping into the box, becoming part of the created world and suffering and dying on the cross. Being resurrected on the third day and ascending back into heaven. That also is part of God causing us to be born again. It is all of that and so much more.

When Peter begins the paragraph with the worship of God, I am certain he was thinking about the immenseness of what God had to do to cause us to be born again. So, why did God do all of that? What is the purpose of it?

Look what Peter says: to provide us hope, but not just hope, a living Hope. Here is where it is important to know the context of the letter. Why did Peter think the churches begun by Jews who were in Jerusalem on the first day fo the church needed hope? Because of the persecution and struggle that they all faced as enemies of both Rome and Israel. Many of these people had

faced persecution from Paul before he came to know the Lord. Many were thrown out of their families and jobs. They no longer had a way to support themselves. They were in constant fear that someone like Paul would come along and arrest them and or kill them. Thos were difficult circumstances.

So Peter is reminding them that they were saved by God which gives them hope for the future. Hope for eternity. They have something much better to look forward to.

Let's continue on with the verse. We have that hope because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The God that caused us to be born again also raised Jesus from the dead after the cross. Jesus did not remain dead. He was victorious over death and sin. That provides more hope than anything we could ever imagine. Nothing can stop God, not Satan, not sin and not death. Since Jesus was resurrected from the dead, we can have confidence that we will also be raised from the dead as well. That should give you real hope for the future.

Look what he says in verse 4:

1 Peter 1:4 (ESV)

*4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled,
and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

Jesus was raised imperishable. As the first fruits of the resurrection, Jesus set the pattern for us. We will also be raised imperishable, undefiled and unfading. Our eternity is sure in

heaven, it cannot be lost or stolen from us. It won't fade away, it won't go away. God caused us to be born again, and we will be for eternity with Him, nothing can stop that.

But how can we trust that that is true:

1 Peter 1:5 (ESV)

5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Because the God that caused you to be born again, who orchestrated everything to bring you to salvation is also guarding you so that you will be revealed on the last day. Notice what Peter is saying here. God's power is used to keep us saved, not our power. You do not have to worry about holding on to Him because He is holding on to you. He caused you to be born again and is not about to let go of you. That my friends is what our hope is all about. You can have real confidence in the reality that the God that orchestrated all of history to save you remains involved and holds on to you with His power. I feel pretty good about that!

1 Peter 1:6 (ESV)

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

Peter then tells us that we are to rejoice in the fact that God caused us to be born again. Rejoice here tells us that we are to

be overwhelmed with joy and our body and demeanor need to reflect it. In other words, there is no place for an Eeyore attitude within the church.

Even in the midsts of trials and persecution, we are to rejoicing over our eternal security. Peter here reminds the readers that the trials and persecution they go through in this life is but a fraction of what eternal life will be. Rejoice in eternal life, knowing that what you go through here in this world is but a little while. We can get through anything for a little while, especially knowing that in the end we have eternity with God as adopted kids of the king of the universe.

1 Peter 1:7 (ESV)

7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So, I guess we have to ask the question here why does the God that has caused us to be saved, orchestrated all of human history to bring us to our new birth, also cause suffering to occur? Well, one purpose is to be a crucible for our faith. A crucible is a container that gold is melted in, where it is subjected to extreme heat to drive out impurities resulting in pure gold.

God uses our sufferings to purify us and demonstrate the genuineness of our faith. It is times of struggle that it becomes clear who has genuine faith and who does not. God tests us and

reveals that our faith is genuine and true. Then when our faith is revealed to be genuine, we receive the inheritance of a new immortal body and the presence of Jesus for eternity. When God has revealed our faith as genuine, we can be assured that when Jesus returns we will be there. That is what Peter is telling us here in this verse.

1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

*8 Though you have not seen him, you love him.
Though you do not now see him, you believe in him
and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled
with glory,*

Most of Peter's first readers had not witnessed Jesus in the flesh. Remember he is writing at least 15 years after Jesus's death. The majority of the people in these churches did not see Jesus during His earthly ministry. Yet they still love Jesus.

The people also are not presently seeing Jesus, yet they believe in Him and rejoice in their relationship with Him. They like us have no physical apprehension of Jesus. We have never seen Him physically and are not now able to look at Him. Yet we believe and trust Him for salvation. For the Greco-Roman world that is a big deal. The Greco-Roman world was focused on the tangible. That is why they had statues to their gods and claimed they could see their gods and their work. But there were no statues of Jesus or the father. There was nothing tangible they

could see or experience. Yet they believed. I think Peter intends this to be another proof of the reality of their salvation.

In fact, because we have real, genuine faith in someone we cannot see should fill us with joy. We should be excited that we have real genuine faith, which is the hope for things not seen. Look at what the author of the book of Hebrews says:

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

We should have true joy in our faith because it proves the truth of who we believe in.

1 Peter 1:9 (ESV)

9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Our genuine faith in who is not seen during our times of suffering and struggle provides the assurance of our salvation which is the outcome of faith in Jesus Christ to save you. The culmination of your faith, which by the way God caused you to have, is eternal life in a new glorified immortal body suitable for eternity. We have that to look forward to. Our faith in suffering proves that all to be true.

1 Peter 1:10–11 (ESV)

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

If the reality of eternal, immortal bodies in the presence of Jesus for eternity was not enough, Peter goes on in these verses to increase our appreciation for the reality of our salvation. Peter tells his readers that the prophets of the Old Testament searched for the spiritual blessing that we now share, but could not find it. The prophets wrote about what would be coming, and they longed to participate in the grace of God in the way that we do, but they never experienced it. The prophets longed to be living in the age when the Holy Spirit would indwell people, and God would write directly on their hearts. They wrote about when the Messiah would come, and everything would change, but they did not get to live in the time period.

Peter uses the searching by the Old Testament Prophets for the time of God's grace being poured out as another reason for those of us who are living during the age of grace to remain true during our struggle. The OT prophets wanted to be living during Grace but could not, so we should remain strong through it in honor of God during it.

1 Peter 1:12 (ESV)

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Peter then drives home the point in verse 12.

The OT Prophets did not see clearly God's calendar and timing, but they did know that what they wrote would have an impact in the future. The Prophets realized that what they wrote was not for themselves but for those who would follow the Messiah. Prophet after Prophet faithfully recorded the message given to them by God concerning the Messiah that they would not see in their lifetimes. All the while the OT writers were searching for meaning and for the Messiah.

Peter even says the angels long for the coming of the Messiah. We are privileged to have a relationship with the Messiah which is made even greater by the reality that we have not physically seen Him either.

We are blessed beyond anything we can even dream by being caused by God to be born again. To be made joint heirs with Jesus, for the eternal hope of our salvation. It is truly hard to comprehend of the blessings that we have as followers of Jesus during this age of grace. We have the truth of the Old Testament, combined with the truth of the New Testament,

along with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to live in a relationship with the Messiah, the creator/sustainer of the universe. We have been so blessed.

Conclusion

So what is the point of these 10 verses we have worked through this morning? What are we to learn here? The first thing I think is that we have been given a living hope as a result of the resurrection of Jesus. The early church lost track of when Jesus was born because it was not near as important to them as His resurrection. Easter became the most important memorial day for the early church. Without the resurrection everything else is meaningless. With a victorious Jesus standing triumphantly over sin and death we would have no salvation. It is that resurrection that gives us our living hope.

We also see that we have been chosen by God, we remain objects of His care and love and are therefore never out of His plan, even in the struggles we endure. That truth should provide us comfort. He chose you, loves you, and cares for you.

We also saw that our eternal life is secured in heaven by God Himself. You can't beat that guarantee.

Finally, we also saw that our obedience and holiness are the mark of the believer's life. We demonstrate to the world we are chosen followers of Jesus by how we act before the world.

Let's Pray!