

February 26, 2023  
Faith in Exile: Rejoicing in Our Salvation  
1 Peter 1:10-12  
Vernon Advent Christian Church

Introduction: Theme – Faith in Exile, How to live as Christians in a hostile world.

[Read 1 Peter 1:10-12]

Peter begins his letter with salvation on his mind as we saw in the passage from last week. He mentions it in vs. 5, “by God’s power [we] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” He mentions it again in vs. 9 which says, “obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” And again in the passage we just read this morning in vs. 10, when Peter says, “Concerning this salvation,” in other words, “let me tell you a little bit more about it.”

Now remember Peter is writing to Christians who have been scattered, persecuted, rejected, hated and despised and who he calls in vs 1 “elect exiles.” From the time shortly after Pentecost, and the birth of the church, until the time Peter is writing this letter, there were different times of intense persecution and which Christians were forced to leave their homes and towns a flee to the areas and provinces named in the beginning of the letter. These Christians were living in a hostile world. And Peter opens his letter by saying no matter how difficult it is, no matter how severe the persecution, how painful the rejection, we, as followers of Jesus, can rejoice in the hope of our salvation.

The Bible teaches that we are all guilty of sin. Because we are guilty of sin, we are face the just wrath of God in judgement. We desperately need to be rescued from God’s wrath. We need to be saved, to be delivered. But we can’t save ourselves. The Bible makes it very clear that by our own works, our own deeds, and by our own effort we cannot save ourselves and we cannot deliver ourselves. But the good news of the Gospel is that while we cannot save ourselves from the just punishment for our sin, God can and will and does save those who put their faith and trust in him and in his provision of salvation, Jesus.

Peter wants to call his readers to remember this great salvation. He has already mentioned in vs. 3-4 [read]. And that should be the greatest source of our joy in the midst of suffering. No matter how bad it gets, vs 8 says that we can, “rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,” because we know we will obtain the salvation of our souls. This is a good reminder. No matter what happens in life we focus on the hope of our salvation. When everything in life isn’t the way we would like it, we go back to this point, the joy of our salvation.

Now let’s look at the three verses we will be covering this morning. In describing the salvation he has already spoken of in vs. 3-9, Peter does so in a very interesting way. He doesn’t look at salvation from our point of view but from the viewpoint of four key figures involved in bringing the message of salvation. Our passage today mentions the Old Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit, the New Testament apostles and the angels. More specifically, concerning salvation, it was the subject of the prophets study, it was the theme of the Spirit’s inspiration, it was the object of the apostles message and it was the focus of the angels interest.

Let’s first look at vs. 10 and the first part of vs. 11 and look into salvation as the subject of the prophet’s study. Remember what Peter is doing here. He wants us to understand the

greatness of our salvation so that no matter what may be falling apart around us, we hold onto the truth that God has redeemed us through the work of Jesus. And he starts by referring to the testimony of the prophets of the Old Testament, “who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, [they] searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time [that was to be revealed]...” They studied the Word of the Lord that had been given to them, meaning they studied their own writings, in order to know all they could about the promised salvation of God. Why did they do this? With all the other things that God spoke to them about, why would they be so fixated with the salvation of God that was to be revealed? Because, just like it is for us, salvation is the most important truth in all the universe, the salvation God provides for sinners.

From Moses to Malachi, they all wanted to understand the promised salvation of God. You may be asking, “As God’s chosen prophets, weren’t they already saved?” Yes, but they never saw it fully accomplished. Hebrews 11:13 says of the saints of the OT, including the prophets, “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” In other words, they received salvation without ever seeing or knowing the Savior, Jesus Christ. It was their faith in the promise of God, that he would one day provide a Savior, that saved them. And in their prophecies, the promise of God was that this salvation was not only for Israel but for all the nations of the earth. They knew that God had revealed a future redemption plan, not only for Israel, but for the whole world, Jew and Gentile, and they fit into that plan by communicating the words of that God gave them and that redemption and deliverance would be brought by the promised Messiah who was to come and they were fascinated by it.

Peter goes on and refers to their focus as the “grace that was to be yours.” Famed pastor John MacArthur, Pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA, when speaking on this passage once said this, “Salvation speaks about the act of saving. Grace speaks about the motive behind God’s saving work.” Grace is God’s undeserved favor and forgiving goodness toward sinners. The prophets were fascinated to know that God had promised a salvation by grace that was for the whole world. That is what we need to understand from this passage. The prophets were writing about a saving grace to come that was far greater than anything they had experienced. They were writing about the Messiah and they knew they were prophesying of the grace that “would come.” They knew they were writing to a future generation. And they were so intrigued by the words God gave them concerning the Messiah, His suffering, His salvation, and about the world coming to God from every nation that they made careful search and inquiry into the matter. And what did they want to know? Verse 11, “searching to understand what person and what time.” Who and when. Now that makes sense, doesn’t it? If you were one of these prophets and you had all this incredible information that God gave you, wouldn’t you be wondering, Who is this Messiah? Who will it be? And when will He come? What person will bring this salvation? Who will be the Savior, judge, king, prophet, and priest? At what point in time would he arrive to rescue us?

The question then becomes, “If they were so concerned about the promised salvation of God, and so thrilled with it, wanting to dive deep into its truths and fully understanding it, how much more should we? How precious should it be to us? We who have the benefit of living after the life, death and resurrection of Christ, who have experienced this grace of God to the fullest extent. Do you realize that generation after generation, and century after century, these prophets sought to know what you and I take for granted? Do you understand that? God providing salvation through his promised Messiah was the subject of the prophets’ study, and it should be just as important to us. We should find our joy in the fact that God has taken the penalty of our

sin and freely given us the righteousness of Christ so that we can be reconciled with him, the Almighty God! Brothers and Sisters, our prayer should be that of David in Psalm 51, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation.” Oh God, may it be so.

Not only does Peter tell us that God’s salvation was the subject of the prophet’s study but he wants us to know that salvation was the theme of the Spirit’s inspiration. Listen, everything the prophets received they received from whom? The Holy Spirit. For that matter, everything the New Testament writers received they received from the Holy Spirit. Everything we read in scripture was inspired by the Spirit. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, “All scripture is God-breathed,” or literally, “breathed out by God,” through the Spirit. Look back with me at verse 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.”

The majority of Old Testament prophecies had these two elements; the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory, some translations read, “the glory that followed.” Read Psalm 22, it’s all about the suffering of Christ. Psalm 69, the suffering of Christ. Isaiah 52 & 53, all about the sufferings of Christ. In Daniel 9, the Messiah will be cut off. In Zechariah 12, He’ll be pierced, and on and on it goes. Peter wants us to understand that the prophets wrote about the sufferings of Christ under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. How would they have known these things if it were not for the Holy Spirit? They couldn’t even understand what they wrote in real time, let alone try to figure out what God was going to reveal in the future.

Not only did the Holy Spirit inspire the writers of scripture concerning the sufferings of Christ, but also “the glories that followed.” What does Peter mean by this? I think he is speaking here about the resurrection, the ascension and the exaltation of Christ. The prophets wrote about the child who would become the king and the government would be upon His shoulders in Isaiah 9. Daniel and Zechariah both wrote about a King and a Kingdom that were to come and that would have no end. This Messiah would bring salvation through his sufferings and purchase redemption for all who believe by faith in the one who was sent. And we, as true children of God, now get to experience the “subsequent glories” Peter is speaking about in our passage, and much more so, when Jesus comes again and we share fully in the glory of God.

Jesus said it best in Luke 24 when he was on the road to Emmaus after and his resurrection and speaking to two followers of his who didn’t realize who they were talking to, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” And what did the prophets speak of? “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and to enter in to His glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Suffering and glory, always the theme.

Notice the little phrase “in them” in vs 11 in reference once again to the prophets. The Spirit was “within” the writers of the Old Testament. That’s why 2 Peter 1:21 says, “No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,” and listen to this, “but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” The word “moved,” or “carried along” by the Holy Spirit is the same word used when describing wind in a sail, giving us the idea of how the Holy Spirit operated when inspiring scripture. Notice that vs. 12 also affirms this. Down toward the end of the verse, it says that the New Testament apostles preached the gospel to you “by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” So, the Holy Spirit inspired not only the Old Testament writers, but the New Testament apostles, as well. Meaning the Holy Spirit revealed God’s plan of salvation through the prophets of the OT to the NT apostles.

Verse 12 says “it was revealed to them,” that is to the Old Testament prophets, “that they were not serving themselves,” that the reality of God’s salvation was not going to occur in their

generation, but they were to walk in faith, trusting God would send the rescuer to save them, and be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit and what he was inspiring them to write knowing it was to the benefit of those who would come after them. There is definitely an aspect of paying it forward here, or what we may describe as a legacy of faith. Living out the Gospel as an example to those that follow behind us so that when we are no longer here, should the Lord tarry, they can pick up the mantle of faith and continue on with the desire to walk in obedience to the Scriptures and pass it on to the next generation. The prophets saw the Messiah, they saw the grace to come, they saw God's salvation, but they didn't know who, and they didn't know when, but it was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit that it wasn't going to be in their generation. So how were these questions answered and how has it been revealed to us?

Our third point this morning is that salvation was the object of the apostle's message. We've already briefly mentioned the apostles but let's look at verse 12 again, "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." And that statement simply describes for us the New Testament apostles or those that preached the good news of the Gospel after the birth of the Church. "These things," that is God's salvation and the grace which was to come, the sufferings and glory of Christ, and everything the Spirit inspired in the Old Testament writers, everything that we have talked about this morning, these things, "now have been announced, or revealed, to you (readers of Peter's letter) through those who preach the gospel to you." And the apostles, in teaching the Gospel they had received from Christ, gave the answers to the "who" and the "when" of the promise of salvation God made in the OT. They came along and said, "Jesus is the Messiah, the promised one of God." They proclaimed Jesus as the one that fulfills every promise of the OT. He is the root of Jesse, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Holy One of Israel and the Prince of peace. So, Jesus is the "who," but the apostles also proclaimed the "when," and that time is now?" Paul says in 2 Cor. 6:2, "Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The day of salvation has come and it is now here. Now, there is nothing standing in the way of our salvation, the way to God has now been opened up to us through Jesus and we can now find full forgiveness and acceptance and peace with God. And how devoted were the apostles to the preaching of Christ and his Gospel of salvation? So much that they died for it. 11 of the 12 disciples (including Peter), the Apostle Paul and many others after them were killed for standing on and proclaiming the saving message of Christ. That's how valuable salvation was to them and how valuable it should be to us.

Finally, a peculiar point, but one Peter makes none the less. Salvation is the focus of the angel's interest. Look at the very end of verse 12, "...things into which angels long to look." Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be an angel? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to see what angels see in that dimension that we can't comprehend, things that are not visible to us? That invisible world that's just as real as ours, only not able to be seen with the physical eye? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a part of that angelic world and to experience what only the angels can?

Well, I've got something to tell you this morning. The angels are saying the same thing about you and me. They're asking questions like, "I wonder what it's like to experience salvation?" Or, "I wonder what it's like to receive grace." And, "I wonder what it's like to be forgiven," fascinating is it? Back to the end of verse 12, what does Peter mean by "things?" I think he is referring to everything he has said so far regarding salvation, and it's this salvation into which angels long to look. Those words, "long to look," are loaded with meaning. You know what it means to "long for" something? The original word means, "an impulse that's not

satisfied, or a desire that's not fulfilled." The angels have this unsatisfied desire to look into the things of salvation.

"To look," literally means, "To stretch forward your head, or to bend down." It's used to describe what Peter and John did at the tomb. You remember when they ran and stooped down and looked in? The angels want to stoop down, get down here, and look into this thing called salvation. They have a driving passion to understand it. Why? Because they will never experience it. The angels have been observers of salvation and only involved in announcing it. The angels announced Christ's birth. They ministered to Jesus in His temptation. They were there at the resurrection and the ascension, but they have and will never experience the salvation of God for themselves.

However, there's an interesting thing that we glimpse of in Revelation ch. 5:11-12 [quote]. The angels are joining in on the redemption song even though they haven't experienced it. We're the ones that really know what we're singing. We're the ones that experience God's forgiveness and salvation. The angels have only seen it as observers but they long to look into it so that they might join in the redemption song and give God the glory he deserves.

Isn't that a beautiful thought? What a salvation God has given us. Peter says to his readers and to us, "Look, no matter what your trials are, no matter what your difficulties are, remember the joy of your salvation." A salvation so wonderful it became the subject of the prophet's study as they looked forward to the promises of God being fulfilled. A salvation the Holy Spirit revealed to both the OT prophets and the NT apostles, and now reveals to us through the inspired Word of God. A salvation which was the object of the apostle's message, so valuable, they were willing to give up their lives for it. And a salvation so amazing that the angels themselves are in awe of it.

I'll close this morning by asking a question. Is your salvation precious to you? Or have you left your first love? It was precious to you at first, wasn't it? Your first love, when you first were saved. How is it now? Have you lost sight of it? Ask God to let that be rekindled in your heart. Again pray the prayer of David I mentioned earlier, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me. And restore to me the joy of your salvation." Maybe you're here today, and you're not sure where you stand with God. Maybe you have never experienced the joy of the salvation that God provides. Know this, God has done everything necessary for you to experience his forgiveness through his son Jesus and all you have to do is accept his free gift of grace and embrace him by faith and this immeasurable joy can be yours. If you would like to talk more about that, Pastor Bruce and I are always available, so please come and talk to one of us.

If we are going to live as Christians in a hostile world then we must know the truth of where we stand in relationship to God. If we are indeed his children, then we can rejoice in our salvation no matter what may come our way in this life. Whether it be persecution, rejection, the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, a health crisis, no matter what we face, we can, and should rejoice in our salvation. It is the only hope we have. But this requires faith, faith in exile.