

1 Peter 1:8-12 "The Outcome Of Your Faith? The Salvation of Your Souls!"

1 Peter 1:8-12 ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

Peter has addressed the faith of these believers as a focal point of God's concern. And the concern is that their faith should remain strong so as to better follow their Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we view life and its trials as the instrument to destroy our faith, whereas God assures us that it is precisely the trials of life which are designed to refine and strengthen our faith in Him.

And the point Peter has been making is that the reason we can still hope in the midst of life is a knowledge that there is a reason to go on and to look forward to the reward in store for us, both in a temporal sense and an eternal sense.

The temporal sense takes into account that the testing of my faith today will produce endurance for my future so that when the next test comes along I'll have been made stronger to stand in that day as I stand on the power and grace of God.

In the eternal sense we know that as we endure we will be better equipped to do those things which will glorify God and those are the things which will last into eternity as we anticipate the final chapter of our salvation when Christ returns and ushers us into His Kingdom as He sets up the new heavens and new earth.

And in our text Peter is encouraging the saints to keep their eyes on things above and walk in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh.

And as we seek Him and walk after Him the proof of our faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though

tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as Peter says in 1Pet.1:7.

But now Peter introduces a truth in verse 8 which is really at the crux of the matter and that has to do with trusting God despite the fact that we can't see Him.

1Pe 1:8 "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,..."

Peter says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him.." You might notice here that Peter uses the pronoun "you" instead of "us", which would include himself. In fact, he does use the words "our and us", when he says in 1Pe 1:3 "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,"

But in verse 8 Peter makes it clear that he did see Jesus in the flesh, unlike the readers of his letter, and because of that he believed. You'll remember that on the day of Pentecost, which was after Christ's resurrection, Peter was declaring the Good news of Christ's redemptive work to the people of Jerusalem and he told them about this Jesus being the fulfillment of the O.T. prophecies which spoke of a coming Messiah.

And he said this Jesus is that Messiah sent from the Father in whom they must believe for the forgiveness of their sins. And then in Act 2:32 "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact."

Peter had the privilege of personally seeing Jesus both before His death on the cross and after as He rose from the dead. Peter's faith rested in the fact that Jesus was who He said He was; God who took on flesh and came into this world to save us from our sin.

He saw with his very eyes. But does this mean that Peter had an advantage over you and me? I suppose we could say, yes and no. You'll remember that when Jesus rose from the dead not all of the disciples saw Him at the same time. Thomas was one who did not see Him.

And when the rest of the disciples told Thomas they saw the risen Lord Thomas refused to believe. And the reason he refused to believe was because; well I'll let him tell you. Joh 20:25
....."Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger

where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

In Thomas' case only seeing is believing. Of course we know that Thomas did see and this is recorded in Joh 20:26-28 "A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas most certainly believed after he saw. But in the next verse Jesus said, Joh 20:29 ... "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus Himself tells us that we who have never seen Jesus are blessed of Him as we believe on Him and love Him. This is what Peter conveys in 1Pe 1:8 "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,"

How is this possible? It is possible because the Holy Spirit of God is able to open the eyes of the blind in the sense that we who have not personally seen Jesus may see Him with eyes of faith based on the objective truth that He did exist in this world and did accomplish our salvation some 2,000 years ago.

Jesus calls you blessed precisely because you have not personally seen Him and yet believed. But with the believing comes a love for Christ. Notice what Peter doesn't initially say. He doesn't say, "Though you have not seen him, you believe in him..." No he says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him."

And then he says, "though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him." God Himself is the One who takes the heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh that yearns for the God of love who first loved us. This results in a faith that He imparts in us to respond to His love. And of course a love for Christ has tangible results in our lives.

Part of that tangible result is seen in the way we obey and follow Christ. And we are "filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,". Where does this joy come from? Why are we able to continue in this sin-filled world when the trials of life want to drag us down?

1Pe 1:9 "for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Do we have faith in Christ for the sake of having faith? No, we have faith in Christ because Jesus has given us a goal to look forward to. He has opened our eyes to eternity. And He has given us life so that we may share in His eternity.

You know as well as I do that if you have nothing to look forward to at the end of the road you will not persevere, you won't continue to walk that path. Why? Because there's no hope to keep you going.

When I played football, I can remember suiting up for practice everyday after school. And I remember the sick feeling in the pit of my stomach knowing full well what I'd have to endure that hot afternoon; running sprints, hitting the sled, tackling and blocking practice, running the ball and being tackled.

It seemed to be an endless chore of abusing myself from 2-5 every day. And you might ask me the question; why did you keep doing it? Were you some kind of masochist? No! The reason I kept doing it was the goal that was set before me.

The goal was to get out on that field on a Friday night in front of a stadium full of people and do my best so that all eyes would be on me, and at the end of the game it could be said that I played a part in representing my school and that I received a reward which only a select few in that school could attain.

I liked seeing my name in the paper Saturday morning. Worthen scores 70 yard touchdown after completing 15 yard pass from quarterback John Hackett. But, it was Monday morning when I came to school that I looked forward to when my friends would come up to me and say, great game Drew.

I hated practice, but I loved the results. That was the goal, as selfish as it may have been, but it was worth every hard practice I put in during the week when no one but my coaches took notice. There are no fans on a practice field, no public notice in the papers for a scrimmage Monday through Thursday.

The goal, the reward, drove me forward, and so I looked beyond the pain and the hardship. And Peter wants us to realize the goal set before us in Christ. Don't lose hope he says, don't get sidetracked with the trial, don't give up because you haven't attained the goal yet.

The goal lies ahead and it's the goal we keep our eyes on. The goal is the salvation of our souls and to be with Jesus forever. That's the reason we greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. We touched on this a few weeks ago when we were looking at our eternal inheritance that will never fade, that which is imperishable, reserved in heaven for us.

What Peter was speaking of there was the return of Christ at the consummation of all things when He finally ushers in the Kingdom of God in its fullness as it will be expressed in the new heavens and new earth. This is the goal, the end game as God finally brings us home to be with Christ in the new creation that He will prepare for us in that day as we are resurrected to a new life with Him.

But if this goal is not set before you, and you don't have an understanding of this goal, rejoicing can be very difficult. The enemy would love to take our focus off of this goal and to put on our situation in this world with all its trials, temptations and tribulations.

But Peter says, you may not see Jesus now, but there will be a day in which you will and you'll know that it's all been worth the wait. Don't lose hope, stick close to the Lord by faith and trust that He will give you the strength you need as you obtain the outcome of your faith.

The word obtain in the Greek isn't limited only to the future. The idea is that you are presently obtaining the salvation of your souls. In other words, there is a sense in which your salvation is progressive.

We grow more and more in our faith in Christ. We are more and more growing in grace. We are drawing closer and closer to our Lord each day. But it will finally reach its climax in glory.

Now, Peter shifts gears a bit and talks about when this hope, this salvation, was spoken about and how it affected the lives of people in the past.

1Pe 1:10-11 "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 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."

This salvation which you and I have in Christ is the same salvation which the prophets of the O.T. looked to; salvation by grace

through faith in the God who is faithful to fulfill His promises to send the Messiah first promised to Adam and Eve.

This doesn't mean that they fully understood all of the details of this salvation, but they knew they were being used by God to reveal certain aspects of this salvation.

In fact they weren't content to just get information from God, they tried to understand it more fully for themselves. Peter says that they searched intently and with the greatest care, "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." (1Pe 1:11)

That phrase, "searched intently and with the greatest care," shows us that despite their limited understanding of what God revealed to them the prophets wanted to discover what they could so that they could be more effective servants to Israel.

Dr. Kistemaker in his commentary on Peter says, "The prophets received God's revelation but did not always understand what their prophecies meant. However, they did not shrug their shoulders when they failed to understand the significance of their words; instead, they searched diligently and carefully to determine the meaning of God's word. The prophets took their task seriously, for their words concerned the salvation of man."

Did the prophets always understand all of what God revealed to them? No! Did that stop the prophets from wanting to understand? Not at all. It should be the same with you and me. We may not understand everything God has revealed in His word, but we should diligently search and inquire in His word, as we ask the Holy Spirit to illumine our hearts and minds.

In today's language we might say study the word of God and meditate upon the truths our Lord has given us regarding our salvation. Now, obviously we have an advantage over the prophets of the O.T.

All of which they spoke about, which was to come, did in fact take place as Jesus came into the world to fulfill everything. But this same Jesus is eternal and this is why Peter can say that the Spirit of Christ within them was revealing these things to them about Himself.

Jesus, the Son of God, wasn't created, He simply entered into time as He took on flesh to redeem us with His life, death and resurrection. He's always been. That's why He refers to Himself in the book of Revelation as the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the end.

But you can imagine how excited these prophets were when the Lord revealed things like we see in Num24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."

Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." [Immanuel means God with us.]

Mic 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from days of eternity".

These prophets were going, 'Alright, the promised One is going to rise out of Israel, He'll be born of a virgin and will be called Immanuel, and He will rule over Israel forever. Now, when will all of this take place? Will He come during our lifetime?' And they would search.

But, their searching wasn't just in regard to times and places. They also tried to understand the dichotomy of a Messiah who would have to suffer and yet who would have glories to follow such suffering.

That's what Peter means in verse 11. Isaiah for example must have been a bit perplexed when he recorded these words given to him from God in Isa 53:4 "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

This promised Messiah must suffer and die? Yes, He must die for the penalty of our sins. But what about Isa 53:10-11 "Yet it was the LORD'S will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring

and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."

Keep in mind that God gave this information to Isaiah over 600 years before Christ would come into the world to fulfill this. I'm sure Isaiah scratched his head wondering how these things could be. And yet he too must have diligently searched former prophecies as well as the ones God gave him, as one searching for diamonds in the ground, trying to determine when these things would be.

But, here's what's interesting about the prophets of the O.T. period and their understanding of their role in the revelation of our redemption in Christ.

1Pe 1:12 "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."

Now it must be inferred that the Holy Spirit played a role in this revelation to help these prophets understand that their work was far reaching; not just to Israel, but to all the world.

And then Peter brings the past into the present for his listeners. "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."

The things that were clouded in mystery in the past have now been revealed in Christ and those who have embraced this truth have proclaimed it to you. And this proclamation, as Peter says, is directed by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

This is a heavenly message about a heavenly destination. And this heavenly message is given to you and me by the Holy Spirit who recorded it in the book we have before us; the book which points us to Christ found in both the O.T. and the N.T.

But more than that the Holy Spirit sent from heaven was sent to indwell every believer and to seal us for the day of redemption and to always be with us to encourage us in this salvation.

And as a side note Peter gives us a little insight into how angels look at this salvation. "Even angels long to look into these things."

The prophets searched diligently to determine the times when the Messiah would come and what would be involved in His coming. But even angels are curious about this salvation. You see, their understanding has been curtailed, partly because they have never personally partaken of such a salvation which is designed for human beings, not angels.

They don't know what it's like to have been separated from God and then reunited by a sacrifice on their behalf. The Greek verb, to look into, actually means, "to gaze at with outstretched necks." The idea is to crane your neck to get a good look.

This is the activity of the angels. They desire to know how Jesus is working in our lives. In fact our Lord uses the angels to participate in our salvation to the extent that they help us as we walk with Christ.

Heb1:14 "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

And in Luke 15:10 we see that the angels in heaven rejoice over every person who comes to Christ, and they will actually be the ones to gather the elect as we see in Mat 24:31 "And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

The angels marvel at what Jesus has done for us and they long to look into the things of salvation. And it is actually Christ's plan to use the church, which is made up of people like you and me, to show the world and the heavenly host the wisdom of God found in our salvation.

Eph 3:10 "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The question that came to my mind was, what can the angels glean from my life as I love and serve Christ? What can they glean from your lives as you love and serve Christ? They look to you and me to know more about this amazing grace found in Jesus Christ.

Are we giving them the kind of lesson we would be proud of or are we giving them a lesson on not how to serve our Lord. If we're

honest, we're giving them both. But may we desire to glorify Christ in all of life as we rely on him and his power.

This salvation should cause us to greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible. And during those times when trials seem to steal that joy look up and seek the One who is able to renew your strength.

Isaiah put it well as the Spirit of God inspired him to write in Isa 40:30 "Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

He is able. He's given us eternal life and He desires for us to grow in that life. Keep seeking and trusting Him.