

“Having a Heavenly Perspective”

This will be the first of a series teaching through the book of 1 Peter verse by verse. Today I will be going through the first 5 verses of chapter 1.

1 Peter 1:1–12 (NKJV) — 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

*This letter was addressed to Christian exiles whom Peter describes as the pilgrims of the dispersion. Now a Pilgrim is one **who is looking for a home.. one who is living as a temporary resident in a foreign land. This is true of us as believers.***

*No matter how great the abundance of blessing are that we experience living here in America today, we should always remember that **this is not our final home.** Our longing should be for what awaits us in heaven, not for the temporary pleasures of now.*

In Vs. 2 we see the unified work of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) with in the believers election to salvation.

2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

1st We are chosen by God according to His foreknowledge: Meaning simply that God knew all along that He would choose us. But being chosen involves not only knowledge but also God’s sovereignty . Simply put, God not only knew that we would choose Him, but in His sovereignty God first chose us.

The Philips translation reads “**whom God the Father knew and chose long ago...**”

It is hard to wrap our mind around because election incorporates both man’s free will and God’s sovereignty. I think of my personal experience of coming to salvation.

- *I received my call from God at age 17. **I can remember the exact conversation and circumstance that took place when I was called.** On that day it was as if a **light switch was turned on inside of my heart**, drawing me to seek to know God. **So in God’s sovereignty, He called me...***
- *But receiving the call **in and of itself did not save me.** I still had to personally respond to the Gospel, putting my faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. This was my free will.....*
 - *Yet I know that **I would have never responded without God first calling me** and drawing me to Himself. So we see both sovereignty and free will working together.*

So 1st we were called..

2nd – We are Sanctified by the Spirit. Sanctification is inseparable from the call to salvation as it is the transforming work done in the life of the believer, by the Holy Spirit. Setting us apart to be used by God and transforming us into the image of Christ.

- As David Guzik noted: “While some would like to think that election has only to do with going to heaven or hell, **Peter reminds us that it also touches earth.** A claim to be among the **called** is doubtful **if there is no evidence** of **sanctification** and **obedience.**”
- **1 Thessalonians 4:7 (NKJV) — 7** For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

Now the 3rd aspect of our salvation is:

3rd - The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Speaking of the perfect cleansing work accomplished by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

- In the OT there were prescribed methods of being cleansed from defilement and sin through the washing of water and the sprinkling of blood from animal sacrifices. **Heb 9:22 says that there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood.**
 - **But the redemptive death of Christ, has cleansed the believer from defilement and sin once and for all.**

We don't have to repeatedly go back for cleansing every time we fail. Because the blood of Christ cleanses us from all our sin. Past, present, and future. We are **eternally and perfected by the blood of Christ**. Because of this fact, we are continually invited to enter into the Holy of Holies into the presence of a Holy God.

*Now **being called, being sanctified by the Spirit, and being cleansed by the Blood** are all based on **God's Grace**. His unmerited favor towards us. Therefore Peter reminds us that it is only out of this grace that we have peace with God by ending his **salutation in verse 2** with: “**Grace to you and peace be multiplied**”.*

- Reminding us that without God's grace, **there would be no peace.**

As far as the purpose of this letter:

Skip Heitzig noted that “**Peter wrote this book to essentially be a handbook for conduct for Christ's ambassadors in a hostile world.**” The recipients of the letter were experiencing a growing sense of hostility and persecution from the Roman government because they followed Jesus.

As far as having application for us today:

Though we have really lived **under the absence of religious persecution** in America for some time, it is becoming very apparent that **things are changing**. Some are already starting to feel the weight of persecution here in America. We have all recently witnessed the government's overreach displayed in an efforts to control the churches and take away the religious freedoms ensured by the constitution.

But we should not be caught off guard or surprised by these changes. **Instead, as believers we should be all the more determined to live in a manner that glorifies and represents Jesus Christ.**

But this requires that we **have a correct perspective** as we face whatever lies ahead.

Having the correct perspective is essential....When Jesus came during the first advent. The Jews were looking for their Messiah. **But they had the wrong perspective.**

Their perspective was from a worldly point of view. **They were looking for an earthly king.** One who would overthrow Rome and restore their freedoms here on earth now.

But they failed to understand that their Messiah **wasn't going to come** to bring heaven to earth. But instead He was going to draw mankind to His heavenly kingdom, by rescuing us from the **tyranny of sin and death.** Not just the tyranny of the Roman government.

In order for us to have the correct perspective, we too must look **beyond the horizon** of the troubles and trials that experience in this life, and focus on God's eternal Kingdom. **In other words, we need to be heavenly minded.**

Now Peter has a lot to say in this letter about living as Christ's ambassadors in the **here and now.** But **first he helps us to get the correct perspective** by placing our **focus on the Living Hope** that we have in Jesus Christ.

And so Peter begins Verse 3.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter begins verse 3 by praising God for the abundant mercy which He has given us through Jesus Christ. Having a heart of gratitude for God's mercy is an essential part of having a correct perspective.

- **Gratitude itself begins by first understanding what we deserve.** The first half of **Romans 6:23** tells us that the wages of sin is death.

Without God's mercy, **what hope would we possibly have?** We would only have the expectation of **eternal condemnation** which **we rightly deserved** as a **result** of our sins.

- **Spurgeon noted that** "No other attribute could have helped us **had mercy been refused**. As we are by nature, justice condemns us, holiness frowns upon us, power crushes us, truth confirms the threatening of the law, and wrath fulfils it. **It is from the mercy of our God** that all our hopes begin."

Because of abundance of God's mercy Roman's 6:23 doesn't just stop with our death. The verse doesn't just end with our condemnation, but instead continues with grace, telling us: "**but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

- Out of the abundance of God's grace, we are **born again into a living hope** instead of **being doomed by a hopeless promise of death**.

Today people are **so desperate for hope** and therefore they end up trying to find that hope in a lot of empty promises. **Into things that really have no merit for hope.**

- Things like climate change and human or political reform. Not that these things are bad in and of themselves. But there is no lasting hope in these things **because we live in a fallen world**. A world polluted by sin and corruption.
 - All the reform and climate change in the world will not change this fact. The answer is not reformation of the old, **but the creation of something new**.

Our living hope is based on the fact that just as Jesus was raised out of the grave, we are **given new life through the working of the Holy Spirit**. Therefore, we are a new creation in Christ. Meaning that we have been given a new nature.

This is what the Bible refers to as being born-again and it is a work **done by the Holy Spirit**. It is not something that we could ever achieve or obtain by our own efforts.

Have you ever been near a dead body? I don't know of a more helpless feeling than looking at a body that has no life, knowing that **there is not a single thing you can** do to restore that life.

But understand, the same rings true in our spiritual life. Sin brought about a separation from God which the **Bible calls a spiritual death**. This is the condition of every person **who has not** been born again.

When we were dead in sin, we were as helpless to change our situation in the exact same manner that we would be **helpless to restore** life to a dead body.

- There is no amount of good works, religious acts, behavior modification, or reform **that could give life to one who is spiritually dead**. Only God could breath new life into our dead spirits.

Eph 2:1 tells us that God made us alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.

But this verse isn't **talking about spiritual resuscitation**. God didn't just restore life back into your old sinful nature. But instead we were begotten into a Living Hope.

- We were spiritually resurrected with a **new nature**.

Eph 4:24 tells us that our new nature has been created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. **This does not mean that we no longer have to battle with the flesh**. But now we have a nature according to God's nature. So even though there is a battle with the flesh, we can now choose to live in righteousness and holiness.

But our **Living Hope** doesn't just end with the fact that we have been given a new nature. But we are also promised an **eternal inheritance that incorruptible and undefiled which is reserved in heaven for us**.

So many people spend their life investing in and looking forward to their retirement. This is done **without even having the certainty that they will live to even enjoy that retirement**, nor are they certain that **it will actually be worth anything** when they do retire.

I am not advocating that you shouldn't be wise in planning for your retirement, but I just think of how many people hold so tightly to something that is uncertain and temporary. **Yet, completely disregard the eternal inheritance promised and guaranteed by God. An inheritance that is eternal.**

- Jesus said that where your treasure is, your heart is also.

But not only is our inheritance certain. It is incorruptible.

The house that my wife and I own is now around 33 years old. We have been blessed to live in it for the past 26 years. But it is starting to show more and more of the wear of existing in a corrupted world.

At this point, **it would take a lot of work and money to restore it back to the same condition as when it was new**.

But I am so thankful that our inheritance waiting in heaven for us **isn't like my house here on earth**. Our inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled. **It doesn't wear out or fade away**. And it is **guarded and reserved** in heaven for us.

But here is one of the greatest blessing that Peter shares in Vs 5 concerning our Living Hope. Not only is our inheritance kept **for us in heaven**. But we ourselves are also kept and reserved for heaven. And this is done by God Himself.

- I think Spurgeon said it best: **"The inheritance is kept for us, and we are kept for the inheritance"**.

So as we see and experience the events in the world around us, as the last days unravel before our eyes. Ask yourself, **Is your perspective fixed on the Living Hope we have in Jesus Christ?** If not, I encourage you, **look above the horizon of the circumstance of this life**, keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus Christ... Our Living Hope.

- And as verse 5 says: **"Looking to the salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time"**.

Close in prayer -