

THE LORD JESUS IS OUR SALVATION
I Peter 1:10-12

First Presbyterian Church
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

September 4, AD 2022
Whitney Alexander

Good morning church, and it is a joy to be with you this morning to unpack this rich passage from I Peter 1:10-12. Please bow your heads as we ask the Lord to illumine our minds and may the Holy Spirit breathe on each of us this morning.

As you think about your life, what consistently brings you the JOY? Some of us might answer my family; but for others their family is the source of their greatest pain. Some of us may say, my friendships or maybe a new relationship is blooming. A few may answer, my job or my career. Some may not be honest enough to say it, but what brings them joy are their possessions, hobbies, leisure, or some may be brutally honest in saying, I don't have much joy in my life.

For every Christian here in this sanctuary, the true answer should be the thing that brings me the most joy in life is my relationship with the Lord and SALVATION He has provided. The Lord and His salvation ought to be the hub of our lives from which radiates joy in our families, our friendships, our jobs, our possessions, and our other activities. But if you take away this joy, everything else will crumble into ruin. For some families, there is a huge amount of pain and chaos, and no joy.

Yet I fear that many think this way and possibly even Christians think this, salvation is nice, but not necessary. It adds a little fulfillment to our well-rounded lives, but it's not the essential core without which life would disintegrate. (you know what I mean the nuggets we receive every Sunday morning at 7:45, 9, and 11. If we are honest this morning, we should ask with joy what's so great about salvation?

Let me tell you that God has a sure-fire way of getting us to answer that question! He allows us the opportunity to receive the fires of affliction! Can you recall an affliction that was tough? I do not know about your afflictions, but trials have a way of getting us to focus on the essentials of life. I have had five years to think about these questions in my life. What does really matter? What am I living for every day? What gives life meaning and makes it count?

In my case, the more life-threatening the affliction, the more focused I became (May 31, 2017 was one of the most painful trials I have ever experienced). On my way to do premarital counseling for three couples in New Orleans, I fell asleep at the wheel. For a moment, and I awoke and thought, I am going to heaven. I had one second to pray, "PLEASE JESUS HELP ME" But my guardian angel covered my body with his and kept me here on this earth to continue doing the Lord's work. That was truly a GIFT from the Lord.

In our passage this morning, Peter's readers were enduring afflictions and Peter wanted them to look up from their suffering to their salvation and see it's worth, because Peter knew our salvation is so great. I am not sure we believe this. These are some very encouraging words for the believer in Christ. Scripture says in verse one of this chapter and in Ephesians 1:4-5, "we are God's elect, chosen by God, sanctified by the blood of Christ, we have a new birth, a living hope, and an incorruptible inheritance." We are shielded by God's power and this truth is incredible theology for a fisherman that was known to put his foot in his mouth and deny knowing Jesus just to save his skin. You see, I can relate to Peter in so many ways. I have put my foot in my mouth on numerous occasions in my 45 years of ministry.

Peter brings out in this passage how our salvation will sustain us in times of suffering and trials. In Jesus Christ, we are God's elect chosen by the foreknowledge of God.

What I love about this is God knew even before you or I put our faith in Jesus that we would do so. God knew that Whitney Alexander would put his faith in Jesus Christ at a Young Life camp on the side of a mountain sitting on a boulder near the Kachina Lodge asking Jesus into my heart in the summer of 1975. Forty years later in 2015, I went to that same spot at Frontier Ranch, and thanked the Lord for saving this worthless person. I grew up in the church, but I was a mess when I asked Jesus into my heart. Jesus knows all our stories and HE shouts with joy every time one of his creations says yes to him.

This was the introduction to our rich passage. Gerrit has given me permission to preach for the next hour, so let's go see what is in these three verses.

Peter writes to the believers of Northern Turkey who are struggling under various trials that God has allowed to afflict his Church. Peter writes to encourage the

believers to look for the blessed hope of Jesus Christ in their struggles and afflictions. Do you relate to trials and struggles in your life? Thus far in this chapter, in verses 1-2, we are chosen strangers, then Peter described the greater riches of our living hope in verses 3-5 and gave the purposes of trials in verses 6-9. In I Peter 1:10-12, Peter tells the persecuted Christians of his day, suffering though they were, you are privileged to receive the glories that will follow.

One of my theologian friends, our very own pastor Gerrit Dawson, shared in a sermon that “the prophets were writing of a salvation greater and more wondrous than they could understand. They sensed a mighty work of God that was coming, but could not see when it would happen, or who the Christ would be. In other words, the entirety of the Scriptures was pointing toward Jesus.” I love how Gerrit makes this point very clear. This message is about Jesus & salvation.

The prophets were looking ahead trying to find out when and how what the Holy Spirit revealed to them would take place. The Spirit of Christ is called this because Christ sent him from heaven and ministered through him.

As we see in verse 12, even the angels long to investigate these things. We often take far too lightly the great privilege we have. I want you to understand this morning, we have the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We have the privilege of sharing the good news.

But consider the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Abraham, Moses, David, and even angels could only look ahead and long for what we have in Christ. No wonder Peter tells persecuted Christians, you are filled with glorious joy.

Consider Isaiah for a moment: this glorious salvation and grace were foretold long ago in messianic prophecy, over centuries of careful searching and burning curiosity. Isaiah knew God had promised “a Son would be given,” an Immanuel would come, and a Suffering Servant would die for sinners. Through these prophets, God’s Spirit was pointing to a bloody cross and an empty tomb. But who would this Savior be, and when would he come? The prophets saw the bud, but never the blossom.

We are very fortunate we live on the other side of the cross, surrounded by the rich flowering of gospel fulfillment. The Lord Jesus showed these men of old that

they were serving future saints, like you and me. Jesus said in Matthew 13:17, “many prophets and saints longed to see what you now see, yet never saw it; to hear what you hear; yet never heard it.”

Even more in verse 12, Peter says that “angels long to look” into this gospel message. I can imagine the angel Gabriel longs to discover what God has done to redeem sinners, such as Whitney Alexander.

Gerrit mentioned in his message, “Angels serve as his messengers and they appear before the face of the Father, and yet they could not see fully into this mystery of our salvation.” I believe angels desire to see and learn. They have a strong interest and a craving to comprehend. God wants the angels to look in on what he does in the church, and the angels reflect with delight on God’s saving actions. Angels observe our conduct, making it necessary that Christians conduct themselves properly. I can only imagine what my guardian angel told Jesus after my car accidents. Ouch!

Tim Keller in his book, The Gospel-Centered Ministry shares I Pet 1:12, “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, 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.” Keller says “Angels are very smart people! They're like us except they don't die, so they know more. They long to investigate the gospel.”

Keller goes on to say “that gospel ministry is endlessly creative, ever new, never boring. It's not the ABCs of Christianity. It's the A-Z. The gospel drives everything we do. It's the solution to every problem. Every theological category should be about expounding the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Tim Keller continues in his book, The Gospel-Centered Ministry and writes the “gospel is historical, the gospel is doxological (Doxology is the basis of the entire Christian life), the gospel is Christological, the gospel is personal and individual, the gospel is cultural, the gospel is the basis for a worldview; it’s massively transformational, and the gospel is wonderful.”

Sinclair Ferguson shares in his book, Preaching Christ from the Old Testament. “Most people not only don’t preach Christ in the OT, but not in the NT either. The Bible is mainly about JESUS, not about you.”

Hear the words about JESUS from Sinclair Ferguson's Book:

JESUS is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.

JESUS is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.

JESUS is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing wither he went to create a new people of God.

JESUS is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, "Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me," now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, "Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us."

JESUS is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.

JESUS is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.

JESUS is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.

JESUS is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert.

JESUS is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.

JESUS is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

JESUS is the true and better Esther who didn't just risk leaving an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn't just risk his life, but gave his life to save his people.

JESUS is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in.

JESUS is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us.

JESUS is the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.

The Bible's not about you or me - it's about Jesus. Every subject of every sermon should be Jesus and salvation. You gotta get to Jesus. If I don't get there in my sermon about Jesus, I am just wailing on people's wills.

In this salvation, we greatly rejoice as it says in verse 6. Though for a little while, WHITNEY ALEXANDER, you suffer trials. But the suffering is brief in light of eternity we will spend with Christ. Trials, suffering, and hardships are like gold in the refiner's fire becoming purified. Your faith is proved genuine, and this brings praise, honor, and glory to Jesus.

Some of you know a lot about church history and have read volumes. Tradition says that Peter was sentenced to crucifixion. Peter claimed he was not worthy to be crucified as Christ and requested to be crucified upside down. Christians can expect to suffer, but this proves your faith genuine.

Christianity has a strong here and now dimension. I have been here at FPCBR for 24 years and have seen that people face old age and usually the terminally ill have a peace. PLEASE do not wait to put your faith in Christ. TODAY is the day of SALVATION! Jesus is and could be your anchor now and forevermore!

I'm convinced there has never been a time when God's people are drier, thirstier, and more starving for truth than now. People are beginning to return to their churches after two years of covid restrictions. I believe people are searching for answers.

In the days ahead, we'll see the gifts of the Spirit stirred up among God's people, including faith, evangelism, and prophecy, just as Joel prophesied: "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). Even now the river

of his Spirit is beginning to move mightily through his church, a supernatural outpouring of life brought about by grace and mercy alone.

Forty-five years ago, I gave my first message on the LORD JESUS is our SALVATION at a Young Life club at Lee HS, and I was shaking from fear. I personally believe the message of the gospel will shake some people up. But just lost people. Believers in Christ stand unshakeable. You cannot lose your salvation, it never perishes. If you have opened your heart to Jesus, turned to God in repentance and asked his death on the cross to count for your sins, you have a salvation that is eternal and incorruptible. A genuine Christian has a reservation in heaven that can't be cancelled. Your name is written in the Lamb's book of LIFE.

What is so great about SALVATION? A life of eternity with JESUS!

In just a moment, we will have the opportunity to receive the body and the blood of Christ at the Lord's table. This table is for all who have asked Jesus into their hearts. This morning if you desire to be a participant at the Lord's table, and you have never asked Jesus into your heart, would you please bow your heads and repeat after me if you desire to ask Christ into your heart at this moment.

Gracious Heavenly Father,

I am a sinner, and I ask you to forgive me and to cleanse me from all my sins. I want to invite Jesus into my heart, and I will put Jesus at the center of my life. Thank you for dying on the cross for me, and for extending grace and mercy to me. I love you very much.

In Jesus name, Amen.