

Living in the Promised True Grace of the Gospel

1 Peter 1:10-12

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We are in the last three verses of Peter's introduction to his letter to the churches. Here is what Peter covered so far. He told us that Christians are chosen by God, but according to God's plan, we are also exiles in the world.

Then he explained the gospel in great detail. He told us that we must be born again to a living hope. The living hope that we have been given is a gift from God given to us through our faith and repentance in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Then he told us that our faith in Jesus is more precious to God than the finest gold on the planet. He says the genuineness of our faith is made even more precious in the furnace of affliction.

What Peter is saying is that just because you are going through suffering does not mean you do not belong to God. Also, going through suffering does not mean your faith is weak. It actually means the opposite. God designs a furnace of affliction for your life in order to strengthen your faith. He is purifying your faith in Jesus so that you only cling to Jesus and nothing else in this world.

You will not find the Prosperity Gospel in 1 Peter. Peter destroys the false gospels of Prosperity and Joel Olsteen. When those gospels are put through the furnace of affliction, they burn up like paper. So, what we learn is that the furnace of affliction is not bad; it is actually good and even necessary. The idea that Christians do not suffer is entirely foreign to Peter.

The Apostle Peter told us that we do not have to see physical manifestations of Jesus to have faith in Jesus. Instead, we truly see Jesus with the eyes of faith. It is the eyes of faith that give us the desire to look into the word of God and see the riches of the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the eyes of faith that is the tool we use to tap into the riches of our inheritance.

Peter prepared Christians to live in a culture that is working against them, against the church, and against the Son of God. Suffering was coming at the hands of their friends, their families, their neighbors, and the Roman government. Remember, Peter wrote this letter in a Roman prison.

Here is a little historical background about when Peter wrote. He wrote before the Roman Emperor Nero began his severe persecution of Christians. Eventually, Nero fed Christians to the lions in order to entertain the masses, and he also lit the streets of Rome at night by tying Christians to stakes and lighting them on fire. Those days had not happened yet, but they were coming, and Peter wrote to prepare the church for severe persecution.

The book of 1 Peter prepares us to live in a world full of various afflictions. It teaches us how to live in a world where there are pandemics, record unemployment, a divided government, race riots, police brutality, and social injustice. It teaches us how to live lives in light of the gospel even when the gospel is hated by the larger community.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I believe we are on the front end of experiencing the persecution in the West that our brothers and sisters in the east live in on a daily basis. We will not endure if all we hold to is a shallow, seeker-sensitive, theology. We will not endure if we hold to a prosperity gospel or a word of faith kind of gospel. We will not endure with a seeker-sensitive gospel. Our theology must be more than a mile wide and an inch deep. We need a robust theology that anchors our souls and our churches in the turbulent days to come. We need a gospel that sets our eyes of faith on our suffering Savior and is not distracted by the wind and the waves of afflictions.

I know our recent current events are filled with various afflictions. I want to talk about the most important current event that we need to give our attention to this morning. It is the unjust execution of a first-century peasant Jew named Jesus Christ on the cross at the hands of police brutality, a rioting mob, social injustice, and a wicked government 2000 years ago. *This is the most important current event in the world, and it will never change.*

It is the execution of the Son of God and is the death that actually makes a difference in the world. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was put to death for your sin and my sin against our Holy God. The execution and resurrection of Jesus is our only hope in this broken world. The execution and resurrection of the Son of God is the only reason for living. The execution and resurrection of the Son of God is always the central topic and the only solution to our problems. The execution and resurrection of the Son of God is our only hope for life and change in this world. The execution and resurrection of the Son of God will never be reported on in the mainstream media; instead, it will always be ignored and even hated. The only place you will hear the most important news, the best news that makes any real difference in the world, is in churches that faithfully preach the gospel. [AMEN!?] It is my aim to preach it faithfully this morning.

Here is Peter's main point in vv. 10-12: *To live in the promised true grace of the gospel in a culture that is hostile to Christianity, you must be given the eyes of faith that look long and hard into the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's word.* I only have two points this morning.

I. To live in the true grace of the gospel, you must look intently in the word of God. (vv. 10-12a)

Notice what Peter says in v. 10, "*Concerning this salvation.*" This is the second time he has pointed back to our salvation that was accomplished by Jesus Christ. He did it in v. 6, and now he does it again. Why would he do that? It is because the person and work of Jesus or the gospel is foundational to everything he has to say. It is foundational to our lives as believers.

Everything is built on the execution and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not only central event in the Bible, but it is the central event in the history of the world. The gospel truly

changes everything. The gospel is the only thing that can change anything. Any other type of solution is simply a distraction from the work of the gospel.

Is the person and work of Christ the most important event in your life? Is your life always lived in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is the gospel the event in life that you are using to interpret the world around you? If it is not, then you will not be anchored in the gospel. It will not be the foundation event of your life. The gospel is not just a piece of news in the news cycle. The gospel is the most important news in the world.

Next noticed what he says, “. . . *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.* ¹² *It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you.*”

These three verses can be a challenge. Peter begins with his main point, then he qualifies it and then finishes his point. Here is what I want to do. I want to pull together his main point in one sentence. This will make it easier for us to see and work with his main point. Follow along in your Bible or the Service Guide: “*Concerning this salvation: . . . the grace that was to be yours . . . [in] the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories [which is His resurrection from the dead].*”

When Peter says, “*Concerning this salvation,*” he is not just looking back, but he is also looking forward. He is referring to *the grace that was to be yours in the sufferings of Christ and His subsequent glories (He is referring to the glory of Jesus in His resurrection from the dead).*

Here is what we need to understand about Peter’s main point: *the grace of this salvation in Christ*. First, notice what the verse says. It says that the Old Testament prophets did a careful investigation into the promised sufferings of Christ.

The Greek word *searched* means *search diligently*, not like a teenager searching for something to eat in the pantry when it is right there in front of them. This is an intense search, and the word is often used to describe a person seeking after God.

Then Peter uses the word *inquired carefully*. So, it was not enough for him to simply say *searched*. He intensified the process of *searching* by saying the prophets *inquired carefully*. They were like detectives turning a house upside down and inside out looking for clues. They were looking for the fingerprints of the gospel—any kind of evidence that would help them see the Savior. The prophets were on a quest to learn about Jesus and the gospel. They went through the Scriptures that they had available to them with a fine-tooth comb. They wanted to know when the Messiah was going to appear. They wanted to know about His life and ministry. They wanted to know how they would know Him. They wanted to know Jesus more than anything.

Look at what they learned. They learned that their prophecies about the Messiah not only applied to their generation, but they were also for future generations.

What do we learn from the Old Testament prophets? First, they teach us how important it is to study the word of God. We must study God's word looking for Jesus. The more we dig into the person and work of Christ, the more we are changed into the image of Jesus. The more we dig, the more we are encouraged as we learn about God's unfolding plan of redemption.

Brothers and sisters, we live in a privileged time because we see the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises in Jesus. The Old Testament prophets wanted to see our day. John the Baptist wanted to see our day. The end of v. 12 tells us that the very angels in heaven long to understand *the grace that is ours*.

The question you need to ask yourself is: am I intently studying God's word? Am I spending time in it every day, even if it only a little time, seeking to know Jesus better?

Second, we learn that *the Spirit of Christ* or *the Holy Spirit* was in prophets to guide them in their study of the Scriptures. This phrase, *the Spirit of Christ*, is an unusual reference to the *Holy Spirit*. By using this term, Peter is emphasizing the work of the Spirit of God to point to the work of Christ. When we study God's word, we do not study alone. The Holy Spirit is with us and helps us see Jesus.

Think about it this way. In the Old Testament, it is not hard to see some of the person and work of Jesus. Some Old Testament passages are crystal clear, and they are hard to miss. For example, Isaiah 53:2-5 is such a text.

*² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.*

*³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.*

Psalms 22 is another such text. Listen to these selected verses:

*¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?*

⁶ *But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

⁷ *All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*

⁸ *“He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”*

¹⁶ *For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—*

¹⁷ *I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;*

¹⁸ *they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.*

Other Old Testament books are more of a challenge. We just finished Hosea, and in Hosea, we saw the person and work of Christ in themes of Hosea’s prophecies and Hosea’s life as a prophet. Jesus is True and Better Hosea who took an adulterous wife, the church, and yet, He loved her, and after she had left Him and sold herself back into the slavery of sin, He purchased her not with silver and gold but at the cost of His precious, priceless, blood.

What happens is that the Spirit of Christ gives us gospel glasses to see the person and work of Christ. He helps us ask good questions of the text. He helps us find treasures and pleasures evermore. He gives us tools to dig into the word of God and behold Jesus, and then He changes us from one degree of glory to another.

Finally, I have said this before, but I will say it again: everything in the Old Testament, in some way, points to Jesus’ life, His sufferings, His death on the cross, and the glory of His resurrection from the dead. Everything leads to Jesus.

Likewise, everything in the New Testament points us back to the accomplished work of Christ as the fulfillment of God’s promise. We live in the age of the fulfilled promise of God in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, let’s not be like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who did not get the point of the Old Testament. They completely misunderstood the Old Testament and the coming of the Messiah. When they met Jesus, He has to rebuke them after they explained Jesus’ life, death, and the empty tomb. Listen to what He told them in Luke 24:25-27,

O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Friends, for *this grace to be yours* in its fullness, you must call on the Spirit of Christ to set your heart and mind to study the word of God diligently. Studying God's word is food for the weak malnourished soul. It is strength for the weak heart. It is life for the dead heart. It is water for the thirsty soul. It is heat for the cold heart. It is renewal for the dysfunctional mind. It is new life for the dead prayer life. It is healing for the broken heart. We must be in God's word.

II. To live in the true grace of the gospel, you must love the gospel

[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.

I want to pick up the first part of v. 12 in order to read the whole verse, but I want to focus on the section of the verse we have not covered.

After Peter explains that the prophets searched diligently to understand the coming of the Messiah now, he says that on this side of the cross, we now have preachers, filled with the Holy Spirit, that help us look back at what Christ has done. These preachers "[proclaim] . . . *the grace that [is] to be yours . . . [in] the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories [the resurrection of Jesus Christ].*"

Friends, preachers that love the gospel proclaim the gospel. If you find a preacher who does not proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as the only hope for salvation that is received through faith and repentance, then he is not filled with the Spirit of God. Bottom line: He does not love the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Jesus is good news. It is not good advice. It is not a nice story. Jesus is more than a good teacher and a good example. Jesus Christ is the very Son of God who came in power to set the captives free from their sin. The only way to receive *the grace of this salvation* is by being born again. At that moment, you will repent of your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

This is the calling of a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A preacher of the gospel loves the gospel and desires others to love the gospel of Jesus Christ as well.

A true preacher of the gospel walks in the path of the prophets of old in that he searches and inquires of the word of God to see the person and work of Christ in the Old Testament and New Testament. He works hard to understand that word and proclaim that word to the people of God whom he is called to shepherd.

What this means is that when you are choosing a church, you need to look for a church that faithfully preaches the gospel. It means that as a member of a church, you are responsible for that church continuing to preach the gospel. That is why membership in a local church is so important. Every member has the calling to help that preacher and church stay on the gospel

path. If you are not yet a member of a local church, let me encourage you to pursue that. It is a very important way to make sure the gospel is faithfully preached.

Now, look at the last part of v. 12. It says the gospel *is something in which angels long to look*. The Greek word for “*to look*” means to look with eagerness as one who is not seen. In the Septuagint, this Greek word is used to describe one who peeked over an embattlement.

These God’s heavenly hosts eagerly peek over into our world and marvel at the salvation Jesus brings for the children of Abraham. They had been watching the gospel unfold since the Garden of Eden. Now they behold the glory of the Son of God in the salvation He has accomplished for sinners. They are stunned by the grace given sinners. They behold the glory of the Son of God who had now returned to heaven and had assumed His place with the Father. His glory is like no other. His majesty is beyond comprehension.

They eagerly look into our world and wonder why the Son of God, the very God Himself, would stoop so low as to pay for the sins of the very ones He had created. They must wonder why God would condemn their fellow angels for their rebellion and give them no chance for redemption but save sinners by coming in Jesus to die as their substitute for their sin on the cross. These angels cannot take their eyes off of their God, who had done such an amazing act of grace.

Brothers and sisters, let’s apply what we have learned this way. Concerning this salvation, the prophets looked intently to see the promised Christ. True preachers of the genuine gospel of Jesus Christ look intently into the word to see the Savior and faithfully proclaim salvation. Angels long to look upon this unfolding grace that has been given through their King.

So, we see prophets look, preachers look, and angels look. The question for you today is, do you look into the word of God to see your Savior? Are you spending time in God’s word?

Friends, to live in the true grace of the gospel, you must respond to the good news of Jesus Christ. You must look to Jesus by faith. You must be born again.