

“Thankful For Salvation” Part 1, 1 Peter 1:3-5, Sermon Notes
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Saving Grace Bible Church
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Text: 1 Peter 1:3-5

Title: Thankful For Salvation

Focal Point: For a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

Homiletical Keyword: Thanks

Interrogative: Why? (Why do we show thanks for a salvation which is causing so much earthly difficulty?)

Teaching Aim: To rejoice in our salvation even if it means going through suffering

Introduction

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5 NAU)

- Peter is writing to established churches
- He is writing to believers scattered abroad
- He is writing to believers he has not necessarily lead to the Lord
- He is writing to those who are facing persecution
- Peter is writing to those who are facing increasing hostilities
- There is no mention of great events like the death of Paul or the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
- But there is a sense of increased hostilities

Now, knowing the purpose of the book:

Writing to encourage Christians to persevere through and rejoice in suffering by fixing their eyes on the glory to be revealed at the return of Christ

- Knowing that you had to encourage someone to do what is right in the midst of great suffering
- If you were Peter, how would you begin?

It is insightful to see what Peter is beginning to do

- Now I want you to see by implication here the heart of the Apostle Peter
- This man of God used by God to minister to the church and build the church up

- This man who knows his own weakness as he struggled to follow Christ as boldly as he was willing to proclaim Christ
- This man who Christ commissioned to shepherd His flock

Peter is going to encourage this group of believers who are facing suffering and difficulty

- Now get this, he helps them by taking them through the difficulty not out of it

Now think carefully, when something causes you difficulty what is your first inclination?

- To drop it, right?
- If a bag is too heavy you put it down or you replace the contents
- If work is too hard you find a new job
- If you do not like the circumstances then get out
- This is how we naturally deal with difficulties
- Part of this is how God created us
- He gave us the ability to sense pain, feel temperature
- If something is hot and we touch it we feel the pain and pull away
- It is a form of protection
- Kids are fearless until they feel the pain of falling and getting hurt and they pull away – they now know something hurts so they stop doing it

So naturally within us there is this basic inclination to pull away from something that is causing us harm

- Add to this the sinfulness of the flesh to be lazy
- There is a desire to pull away from something that is too much work
- Too hard to do
- How many have started a new year's resolution and given up?
- How many have given up trying to put together something from Ikea?
 - You just skip the directions and start slapping together your new dresser which doubles as an entertainment center

So if this is the natural inclination of the human heart because of how God created us and because of how the sinful flesh pulls towards pleasure, then what do you say to someone who is suffering because they are a Christian?

“but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” (1 Peter 4:16 NAU)

- You see then the natural temptation of the human heart is to pull away from that thing which is causing you suffering
 - This is why relationships are so hard to keep together
 - If someone is hard of heart they are difficult to deal with so you pull away
- Here the temptation for these Christians is to pull away from following Christ because they are facing great suffering for being in Christ

So how do you start to encourage someone when they are suffering for doing what is right?

- This is where Peter begins in 1 Pet 1:3-5
- He starts by encouraging the church

Now I suppose it is right for us to start with this question: How did we get here?

- By this I mean not how did you get into this building from your house, but rather how did you become a Christian?
- How did you start your spiritual journey?

In his story, “The Pilgrim’s Progress”, John Bunyan describes Christian under the weight of sin and seeking the celestial city so he starts his journey of seeking Christ. But at that same time Christian’s friend Pliable also starts the journey with Christian

- But Pliable leaves not because he saw he lived in the city of destruction
- Pliable left because he was interested in Christian’s journey and he was a friend of Christian
- When difficulties came Pliable left and Christian persevered on the road

We, too, face many of the same difficulties and challenges

- If we do not start the right way we certainly will not complete the walk because the difficulties are just too great

With that being said, how did we being?

- Peter says, first of all, that we got here because we are chosen by God
- Vs 1
- Those who are chosen, elect, called out, pulled out, selected

How were we elected?

- Vs 2
- According to the foreknowledge of God
- This word here πρόγνωσις is a noun used 2x in the NT
- Here in 1 Pet 1:2 and in Acts 2:23

“This *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.” (Acts 2:23 NAU)

- The word can be translated as predetermined or foreknowledge
- The idea is God knows beforehand
- Before it has happened, before it takes place God determines

What is His understanding?

- Of what? What did God know before hand?
- Some say God knew how we would respond so that he determined what to do based on our response
- But this is an assumption
- Some say the idea here is, foreknow means to fore love. A euphemism for God setting His love on someone. He determined to love the elect. He chose them because He loved them before the foundation of the World

- These are wonderful ideas but they both are speculative in regards to this text before us. Since they develop not from the context of this passage but rather from one's theological vantage point
 - If man is in control – then God looks and sees man's activity and God affirms it
 - This idea that God knows certain facts and therefore makes a decision seems to be the teaching of certain passages like:
- “Since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.” (Acts 26:5 NAU)
- “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness.” (2 Peter 3:17 NAU)
 - Here are facts that they knew beforehand therefore they are to be on guard
 - So foreknowledge is God's knowing certain facts and acting
 - BTW this is the verbal form of foreknow used 5x in the NT

On the other hand, if God is in control, then God determines who He will love and sets His love upon them by foreknowing them

This certainly appears to be the implication of a few verses like:

- “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29 NAU)
- “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.” (1 Peter 1:20 NAU)

So textually you can demonstrate that foreknowledge is the result of understanding or knowing before

And you can make the case that foreknowledge is setting your love and affection on before

- So then the obvious question is, how does it work here?
- What can be said about this text and what it is trying to teach?

So let me point out that while both ideas of foreknowledge are accurate there is more to this context than simply God's foreknowledge

The context of this passage is about salvation

- Our salvation and how we got here
- This passage is not teaching us what foreknowledge is
- This passage is teaching us how we were saved
- This passage is teaching us about God's work in salvation
- Part of His work in salvation
 - Part of His saving work is to foreknow those He is choosing
 - Now this still begs the question: In what way is He foreknowing?
 - Does the scripture answer this question? Yes it does in Eph 1

Here Paul explains God's eternal work. He explains how we got here

- How we arrived in the church as part of the church
- How we believed and why we believed

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” (Ephesians 1:3-4 NAU)

- This is just like Peter’s exhortation and encouragement in verse 1
- You who are “chosen”

“In love⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.” (Ephesians 1:5 NAU)

- Now this is an important phrase and it directly relates to our context in 1 Pet 1
- Both context are talking about salvation
- Both talking about God’s election
- Paul adds more, he adds the idea of adoption but the idea is still the same: salvation
- Here Paul says we are elected and adopted “according to the kind intention of His will”
- Peter says we are chosen “according to the foreknowledge of God”
- So what is it?
- Continue He will answer this in a min

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:6-7 NAU)

- He did all of this to pour out His grace

“Which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him.” (Ephesians 1:8-9 NAU)

- Now there is so much here: God poured out His grace and made known the Mystery of His Will
- That is, He determined before the foundation of the World what He was going to do and He unfolded that mystery to us
- First in OT in revealing the need, the law, the prophets who predicted the Messiah
- Then in Jesus who came and lived among mankind
- Then in the NT as the Apostle’s explained the message of Christ to the church
- God revealed His kind “intention” purposed in Christ

“With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.” (Ephesians 1:10-11 NAU)

- God works all of His works according to the kind intention of His will
- He predetermines
- He predestines
- He determines His work after the counsel of His will

“To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our

inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:3-14 NAU)

God choosing us “according to His will” vs5 and His choosing us according to His foreknowledge (1 Pet 1:2) are the same thing.

- In the context of salvation, God’s foreknowledge is knowing what He wills to be accomplished
- Paul says plainly in verse 11 God accomplishes His will
- What God foreknew is what He had determined to accomplish according to the kind attention of His will
- Basically Peter is saying you are chosen according to God’s plan which He has known
 - Not how you would respond
 - But what He would accomplish

Therefore, the idea of setting His love on someone before is correct here. And you will note that is what I said last week. But there is so much more. God foreknowing is God knowing what He wants to accomplish, His will, and why He wants to accomplish it, to demonstrate His love.

- Or to say it another way – God’s foreknowledge is God knowing beforehand what He is going to accomplish
- This best explains the idea of foreknowledge in 1 Pet 1:2 – The knowing of facts beforehand is God knowing what He wants to accomplish according to His will
- The knowing of affection beforehand – is God knowing who He is going to pour His love upon
- Foreknowledge then is God knowing His will and His people before anything has occurred or taken place

So what does this mean for 1 Pet 1:1-2?

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.” (1 Peter 1:1-2 NAU)

- These believers whom Peter has written to are brought together because God has determined by His will to bring them together because He from eternity past put His love upon them according to the kind intention of His will
- He has determined to sanctify them by His Spirit
- He is causing them to obey Jesus Christ and be cleansed from sin

The point is this, we got here because God is at work. God’s will is at work. God has determined what He wants to accomplish and through whom He wants to accomplish it. All of His work starts with first of all, Jesus Christ

- He was the one the Father foreknew
 - Knew in that the Father loved first
 - Knew in setting His will upon Him and sending Him to accomplish His work to redeem the world
 - This is why Jesus is to have first place in everything

- But then from there Jesus chose apostles to come and deliver His message
- This is what Peter is saying in verse 1 – “Peter an Apostle of Jesus Christ”
- He is saying I am here because of Christ
 - How did this happen? According to the foreknowledge of God
 - According to the will of God from eternity past
 - According to the grace of God through Jesus Christ to call Peter
 - According to God’s choosing

Are you getting this? We are here, doing what we are doing, because God willed to pour out His love upon us

This, I am convinced, is what the scriptures teach and is the clearest explanation of what foreknowledge is

- God knows what His will is and what He is going to accomplish – these are the facts
- God knows whom He will pour out His love upon – this is the affections

The other side of this, say the object of God’s knowledge is not His will but is our faith, our response to His message. Assume that God looks into history and sees us respond and on that basis He chooses us, then what can we say about our suffering? Only that is our choice because we believed on God

- So that your answer to suffering is basically, God will make it worth it by giving you eternal life
- I suppose that is one way to look at it and I can understand how people get here and why they are here
- But I am not convinced in the least way this is how God has worked
- God is not reacting to man and blessing him as he does what God wants

Nope, God is in the business of accomplishing His will by taking people against their natural will and causing them supernaturally to will for something that is against their immediate best interest and for their eternal best

The work of salvation is the work of God amongst His elect

- It is the work of the Divinely Sovereign selecting people all around the world
- This is verse 1 to the aliens scattered
- To those who are all over pulled out of this world
- God pulling select people from all around the world together to accomplish His purposes

God is doing this work against our natural wills

- We, before we were in Christ, pushed away from the truth
- We pushed away from righteousness
- We hated the way of godliness
- We wanted nothing to do with God, Rom 3 – None righteous, not even one, there is none who seeks after God

God causes us supernaturally to change our will to follow Him

- This is by regeneration vs 3

- God changes our nature
- The dead nature is replaced with the new nature
- Which is spiritually alive and calls out in faith
- The new nature believes upon God
- The new nature is what reveals God's work in us

Now, get this, this is what many people, even among those who call themselves Christians, don't like about God

- God inserts His will over our lives and interrupts the direction we are heading
- We want to live under a fantasy that we loved God and floated towards Him like a child running through a park into the arms of his father
- When in reality the rescued Christian was in a drunken stupor of self-love where God had to rescue us from the slavery to idolatry. He has to continue to sanctify us so that we do not return there

He did this work in us and in some of us He decides to demonstrate His great work by making us suffer for the name of Christ here on earth

- Some not all
- Might be many more here soon
- Right now we get a lot of friendly fire
- Those who claim to be Christians telling us to stop speaking God's message
- Soon it will be secular society with its moral agenda which will persecute

We will go through this suffering against our natural will because supernaturally we hope in a kingdom to come

This is exactly what we will see in verses 3-5

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5 NAU)

- For now let us just stop at a cursory look at verses 3-5 and next time we will look at more details

What we see here is that Peter encourages the saints abroad, while they are in the midst of suffering, to see the great work of salvation

- When you suffer and are tried or persecuted, the response is to think about your salvation and the work of God

Now get this, if our natural inclination is to pull away from danger, and to avoid hard work then how is that we are saved?

- The work of God
- Peter says by the mercy of God
- He caused us to be born again

- He is at work
- This is how we know salvation is of the Lord because God has us working against our natural will to follow the Lord Jesus Christ

He is causing us to do this work for a future inheritance

- Which is imperishable
- undefiled
- And will not fade away

He is taking us through this suffering to reveal our salvation

- Salvation ready to be revealed to you

Conclusion

Now next time we will go into details about what this means and how it will direct us

- What we have to walk away with is this: God is at work in saving sinners
- He rescues them and draws them to Himself
- He gathers from all around the world, not just the popular and affluent places but from the small and insignificant as well
- He brings them together to demonstrate His great salvation
- We are in the work we are in because God chose us and determined to set His love upon us and determined to accomplish His great work
- Along the way there may be some suffering and difficulty but we should know the salvation to come is what we are setting our attention on, not the sufferings of this world

What is clear in this wonderful text is this: God takes His people through difficult circumstances, which are against their natural will, to demonstrate His supernatural work in them which started before the foundation of this world

- When you are suffering over God's work do you think to yourself – this is what God chose for me?
- Do you think to yourself, God is going to use this to strengthen my faith and demonstrate His saving work in me?
- Do you think through this my salvation will be evident?

You should because God is causing you to do what you naturally do not want to do for HIS glory not your pleasure. To God be the glory!

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