

Our Precious Savior

Text: I Peter 2:1-9

Seven times in I and II Peter we find the word “precious.” This is a great word! My earliest recollection of that word comes from the loving exclamation of ladies in reference to babies and young children. The grandmother looks into the face of her daughter’s newborn. The babe smiles ever so sweetly and the grandmother then looks over to her daughter and says, in a most affectionate tone, one word: precious. The daughter with glistening teary eyes confirms her mother’s pronouncement. So, in my childlike wonderment, my introduction of the word carries a loving definition. Dictionary definitions declare “precious” as something of great value, high price and costly. It is said to be someone or something of great value because of being rare or important. More definitions say it is someone or something highly esteemed or cherished. It is something held in great esteem for admirable qualities especially of an intrinsic nature. It is someone greatly loved and of inestimable worth. No one is more worthy of the title, “Precious,” than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In J.R.R. Tolkien’s famous stories of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* a humble Hobbit named Sméagol took the life of his friend and relative, Déagol to obtain this certain ring of power, granting him the gift of invisibility and extension of life. After obtaining this ring, Sméagol developed a counter personality known as Gollum. He spent 78 years searching for his ring after losing it. He constantly referred to this ring as his “precious.” It possessed him, so much so that there are times in the story that “my precious,” becomes a phrase that is interchangeable with himself. In many ways this unnatural longing for the ring epitomized I John 2:16: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” The only way the ring and its destructive power could be destroyed was to go to Mordor and cast the ring into the fires of Mount Doom. Frodo, the protagonist of the story took one more lustful attempt to hold the ring for himself, but the deceitful Gollum wrestled the ring from Frodo and Tolkien writes the end of Gollum, and the end of the ring and its power: “Precious, precious, precious!’ Gollum cried. ‘My Precious! O my Precious!’ And with that, even as his eyes were lifted up to gloat on his prize, he stepped too far, toppled, wavered for a moment on the brink, and then with a shriek he fell. Out of the depths came his last wail precious, and he was gone.”

Some years ago, I read of a costly prank that was played on an outdoor store like Bass Pro Shop. In the middle of the night someone went throughout the store and switched the price tags. Canoes were marked for the price of an inexpensive fishing rod. A flashlight was marked with the price of a camping tent. A few items had sold incorrectly before the deed was discovered. The store had to be shut down until the right tags were placed on the right items, reflecting the true values of the items. In a very real sense we live in a culture that has switched the proverbial price tags of the values in life. Isaiah 5:20 says: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

The Greek word from which we translate “precious” as found in I Peter 2:7 is τιμή (*timē*); which means a valuing by which the price is fixed. And our precious Lord is not

only of inestimable value, but His value is fixed. The bride of Song of Solomon describes the Bridegroom as, “ the Chiefest among ten thousand” (Song of Solomon 5:10b).

I. THE PRECIOUS TRIAL

I Peter 1:6-8

The temptations or trials are manifold. This is from the Greek word ποικίλος (*poikilos*) meaning motley, variegated, i.e., various in character, colors or sorts. This is what James was talking about with “divers temptations,” in James 1:2. I Peter 1:6 points out that these trials at times are needful, even more precious than gold, whose values have an expiration date. Trials have a unique way of arranging or re-arranging priorities in life. Many a person who hustled through life to make money often comes to the end of life only to wish they had spent more time with family. Trials also remind us of the value beyond this life, since God designates us as pilgrims, not settlers (I Peter 2:11). Even though the believer in this dispensation has not seen the Lord (I Peter 1:8), the joy unspeakable can still be appreciated on this side of eternity as well as our life beyond this realm. Therefore, our precious Lord allows the trials to align us with His Lordship. Colossians 1:18: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.”

II. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

I Peter 1:18, 19

Compared to the incorruptible blood of Christ, the silver and gold of this world is worthless to redeem us and is defined as corruptible. Hebrews 9:22: “...and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Thomas Aquinas wrote that even “one drop” of Christ’s Blood has the spiritual power to save the entire human race. Acts 20:28: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood.”

In I Peter 1:2, the Holy Spirit is comparing the sprinkling of the blood by Moses upon the children of Israel to show forth the covenant nature of our union with Christ (Exodus 24:1-8; Hebrews 12:22-24).

III. THE PRECIOUS FAITH

II Peter 1:1

How very thankful we should be that we have obtained the saving faith of our Lord (Galatians 2:20). Hebrews 10:38, 39: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

We would be remiss not to point out the words of Peter given by the Holy Spirit, “...to them who have obtained like precious faith with us...”(II Peter 1:1). I emphasize the two encouraging words “with us.” We have the same faith as Peter, Paul, James and John! Romans 2:11: “For there is no respect of persons with God.”

III. THE PRECIOUS PROMISES

II Peter 1:4

When the precious promises of Scripture are believed, studied and adhered to, we become partakers of the Divine nature. In the early days of my pastorate, I went to one of our downtown hospitals to visit and pray with one of our church members. Upon arriving I was informed that the church member would be detained in testing for about an hour and a half. I decided to make the most of that time, so I went to the rose garden that was in full bloom and spent an hour with our Lord. At the end of an hour I returned to the hospital and stepped into an elevator. The doctor that was already inside the elevator asked, "Did you enjoy the roses?" I replied with my question, "Did we meet in the rose garden?" He said, "No, I smelled the roses on you when you stepped inside." When we meditate with the Lord in His Word, His Divine nature will transfer. When I was about twenty-six years old, I heard our old friend, Dr. John Moore quote this lovely poem. I was so moved, I soon memorized it:

One day a wanderer found a lump of clay.
So redolent of sweet perfume,
Its odors scented all the room.

'From whence art thou? was his quick demand,
'Art thou some gem from Samarcand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise?'
'Nay: I am but a lump of clay.'

"From whence this sweetness—say?!"

'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose.'

How powerful is God 's Word? Psalm 138:2: "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name." II Peter 1:13-21. Think of it! The written, inspired, inerrant Word of God is "...a more sure word of prophecy...." "Sure": βέβαιος (*bebaios*): stable, firm, of force, stedfast, trusty. The stedfast Word of God will help us remain stedfast. I Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

-Pastor Pope-