

2. LIVING HOPE

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When I was a kid, I was not the first one to be chosen by any team to play sports. I was one of those left over. The team captains didn't care to include me in their teams. Because they knew that either I was going to struck out or didn't know how to catch the ball well. But I was hoping that someone to choose me and include me in their teams. Just being a part of the team would have made me happy.

We all can understand wanting to be a part of some groups. Acceptance by someone, or some group makes a big difference in our lives. That is the precise reason why kids, teenagers and grown-ups work so hard to be a part of the organizations they want to be in, whether it is a street gang, or country club, or elite Green Beret Special Forces.

However, to top all those groups, we those who are in Christ Jesus are selected by God into His wonderful plan. Because of Jesus, we can face unknown tomorrow and have a living hope in Christ. This is the main theme of 1 Peter.

A. HANDPICKED BY GOD

1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (1) elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (2) in sanctification of the Spirit, (3) for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

We learned that we were elected, *eklektos* [ek-lek-tos'] in Greek, chosen by God. It is good to be chosen by a certain fancy organization or elite group, because they see your potentials. But it goes beyond our comprehension for God to choose us while we were still sinners and living against His will.

An essential result of election is sanctification and obedience. While some would like to think that election has only to do with going to heaven or hell, Peter reminds us that it touches the life on earth as well. A person's claim to election is doubtful if there is no evidence of sanctification and obedience.

B. THE CLEANSING AGENT

However, since all the elect fall short of perfect sanctification and obedience, there is cleansing from sin provided for them through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

There were only three circumstances in the Old Testament where blood was sprinkled on people:

- 1) At the establishing of a covenant (Exodus 24:5-8)
- 2) At the ordination of Aaron and his sons (Exodus 29:21) as priests
- 3) In the purification ceremony for a cleansed leper (Leviticus 14:6-7).

The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus on us accomplishes the same things:

- 1) A covenant is formed between God and mankind through the blood of Christ,
- 2) We are ordained to a priesthood in the step of
- 3) We are cleansed from our corruption and sin - all through the work of Jesus on the cross.

Within these two verses, Peter summed up the roles of the Trinity so well. The Father chooses whom to be saved with His omniscience foreknowledge, and cleanse us by the blood of Jesus Christ and sanctification work by the Holy Spirit, so that we may live in obedience in Christ Jesus.

This fancy \$60,000 word, "Sanctification" is not a kind of word that you use every day. Yes, we have heard from many preachers' lips. But it is one of those words we think we know the meaning, but not really understand. Sanctification comes from a Greek word, *hagiasmos* [hag-ee-as-mos'], means "consecration, purification of heart and life for God." Sanctification is the ongoing process whereby the Holy Spirit works in believers, making their lives holy, separated from their old ways and to God in order to be more like Jesus.

So who are these people that Peter is giving such a high compliment? They were displaced believers who were being singled out by the flames of persecution. They didn't know if they were going to see another day. Peter understood their suffering because of his own by denying Jesus for three times. Peter was showing them to focus beyond their circumstances to their heavenly home.

C. HOPE, INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION FROM GOD

1) Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3 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,

If He was not resurrected, we wouldn't have that living hope. What good is it for God to tell us that there is hope, but He couldn't raise His own Son from dead? That's why we have this living hope in Jesus.

If God brought Jesus through the most painful of trials and from the pit of death itself, certainly He can bring us through whatever we face.

It has been said that mercy is God's ministry for the miserable and pitiful mankind who don't have the foggiest idea about their future without the Savior.

2) Permanent Inheritance

1 Peter 1:4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Our ultimate home is heaven. It is God's home. We get to stay there without paying anything, because it is already paid for by Jesus.

Rev. 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

3) Divine Protection

1 Peter 1:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Many people's homes and companies have security alarm systems to protect themselves and their properties. But their systems cannot be compare with our God's protection system, His omnipotent power. Nobody broke into it and nobody will ever.

We cannot have these living hope, permanent inheritance and divine protection, unless we are born-again in Christ Jesus. They are available only to His children.

1 Peter 1:6-9 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

Are you at the brink of despair, thinking that you cannot bear another day of heartache? As difficult as it may be for you to believe this today, our Master knows what he's doing. Our Savior knows our breaking points. The bruising and crushing and melting process is designed to reshape us, not ruin us. Our spiritual value increase the longer He lingers over us.

The "Joy" is unconditional and does not depend on the circumstances surrounding us. And this joy comes in spite of our suffering.

Jesus told His disciples about us:

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Not many of Christians had an opportunity to walk and talk with the Savior on this earth. However, we have Him in our hearts everyday, everywhere we go.

The final passage of our faith is the deliverance of our souls, which includes not only a deliverance from present sin, but also a glorification of our physical bodies.

E. INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

1 Peter 1:10-12 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.

I am not very good at Word puzzle. Up and down, left and right or even diagonal, I have to think a lot. When I say to people, "I have to think." Then they ask if it hurts me to think. Nice people, huh? The reason I am not good at word puzzle is that I have to think not only the very word I am trying to solve, but also I have to consider how the part of the word can integrate with another word that crosses. Too much for my brain!

Like that the Old Testaments prophets spoke their prophecies according what God gave to them without knowing what is going to happen about the Suffering Messiah. The OT is full of Messianic prophecies. Wonder what Isaiah would have done if he had a chance to read the Gospel of John? Wonder what king David would say about his prophecy about Jesus in Psalm 22, if he stood at the Cross of Jesus?

We often don't realize that the only reason we can understand the Bible as the Word of God while non-believers mocks at it, is because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us who reveal the secrets of the Word of God to us.

F. APPLICATIONS

Why do we need trials?

- 1) Trials are often necessary, proving the genuineness of our faith and teaching us humility.
- 2) They are distressing, teaching us compassion so that we never make light of another's tests.
- 3) Through the trials we face, God refines our faith to shine Himself in us.