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The Mission

October 7, 2026

1 Peter 1.10-25

So turn with me if you would back to I Peter chapter 1.

Last week, we talked again about how the people to whom Peter was writing had been more or less run out of their homeland and scattered to different regions of the country, but how God was using that trouble and those trials to spread the Gospel and to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

And how they should be joyful even in the midst of all this persecution and be thankful that God was using them and that He had not only provided to them salvation from their sins, but that He was also able to keep them. And of course we call that eternal security. And as Christians, we can always be confident in the fact that God will never leave us or forsake us and that He will never let anything happen to us that won't eventually turn out for our good.

And then we ended with verses 6-9 where Peter emphasized again that even though as Christians we would face many troubles and trials during our lifetime, that we should rejoice in the fact

that those troubles and trials were molding and making us into what God wants us to be. And just like gold is refined in the fire, we too are changed for the better by the fiery trials we go through in life.

And also he reminds us that one day we're going to see Jesus face to face, and whether it's when He returns for His bride the church, or whether it's when we go to Him when we take our last breath here on this earth, one day we're all going to stand before Him and receive our due reward. And what a day that will be!

So that brings us to verse 10, so let me read for us the rest of the chapter and we'll come back and break it down.

1 Peter 1:10, Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 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.

12 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.

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

24 because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,

25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Let’s pray.

Okay, so go back to verse 10 and let me read verses 10-12 again.

10, Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 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.

12 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.

So what is Peter talking about here?

Well, first off, who were the prophets?

Well, they were the Old Testament writers who wrote down what God through His Spirit revealed to them. And truth is, they didn't always understand what they were writing. They weren't always able to make sense out of what they saw because they were looking many times well into the future. And they were seeing things that hadn't happened yet.

I mean imagine your granddaddy or your great granddaddy, having a vision of the screen on your smart phone or iPad or computer. They wouldn't have any idea what they were looking at. And of course the opposite is also true.

Most kids today have never seen a dial phone. I remember just after we were married I gave Trish an old timey looking dial phone that wasn't antique but it looked antique and it was designed to sit on a table or a desk. And it would really work if you ran a line to it. But of course, over time, phones in homes mostly faded away to be replaced by mobile phones.

Well, that phone still today sits on her desk in our library. And one day one of the grandkids came in and stared at it for a long time and then asked, “What is that?”

She also has an old typewriter on that same desk and I can guarantee you that most kids nowadays don’t know what that is. And so we don’t have to use very much of our imagination to understand the dilemma that the prophets faced when they looked into the future.

But now when we consider what they saw in human terms only, then we’re forgetting that there was someone greater, who was not only revealing to them all these visual sights, but that greater power, which was of course the Spirit of God, also had the ability to reveal to them the meaning of what they saw. And so they were no doubt given supernatural insight sometimes to understand at least some of what they saw.

Now, that would happen differently with different prophets, and on different levels with each prophet, but they weren’t always left totally in the blind.

Now, that said, even then, they were at a disadvantage.

And so that’s Peter’s basic point here in these first three verses. He’s telling these scattered believers how much greater their advantage was, over the Old Testament prophets.

The prophets didn't have the New Testament and of course they lived before Jesus came and before the cross and before His resurrection and ascension.

Now, they were given information about a coming age of grace; and they knew from the scriptures that it was prophesied that a large number of Gentiles would be saved; and of course they had a concept of Calvary, and salvation, and the atonement.

But there were many other things they didn't understand. For instance, the significance or the symbolisms of the annual Jewish feasts, like the Passover and Pentecost. They didn't understand how those feasts or celebrations related to the death of Jesus or to the creation of the church.

On top of that, the truth about the church was a hidden mystery in the Old Testament. Paul wrote, in Ephesians 3, that the Old Testament prophets looked forward by faith to a sacrifice on Mount Calvary where the Messiah would suffer and die, and then they could also see just beyond Calvary to when the Messiah would return in all His glory. But they couldn't see the period of time in between those events, which we know to be the church age. And so there was this great gap of over two thousand years that was missing.

And so who's better off?

The Old Testament prophet who waited on a voice or vision from God and who had only a partial revelation about the future and knew nothing of the church?

Or the believer who has been given the complete revelation?

Well, the answer is obvious. Those of us who have been born during the church age have a much greater advantage over the Old Testament prophets. And we who live today have the greatest advantage, because we have **all** of the New Testament, and we also have over two thousand years of church history to go along with it.

So it was like a puzzle with half the pieces missing to the prophets! And as Christians today, we should be very thankful for the privilege to have the whole story at our fingertips. And that's why it's such a shame that more Christians don't have the desire to learn and know and experience the whole story.

And so Peter is reminding these New Testament believers as well as us, what an advantage we have, to live in the church age and to have all this information available to us. And even in the midst of all these troubles and trials and difficulties we face, we have it so much better than the prophets of old and those who lived before Christ.

And then in verses 13-15. Peter reminds us that it's not enough to just have all this information available to us; it's not enough to

just believe; we have to also be willing to take this information that we have available and apply it to our everyday living.

In verse 13 Peter says,

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

Now, what does it mean to gird up the loins of your mind?

Well, to gird up your loins was a reference to someone in the ancient world, pulling up the hem of their outer garments. The hem of their garments would normally reached almost all the way to the ground, which was fine for normal walking or sitting, but if somebody wanted to move fast or run, they would pull their garment up between their legs, and they would tuck the excess fabric into their belts; and that would free up their legs to move faster.

It's also the picture of a soldier just before he went into battle. He would lift up his garment and tighten his belt so as to eliminate any restrictions.

And so Peter here in this verse is applying that same idea to our minds. But instead of tightening up your clothing, he's talking about tightening up our thinking.

He says, **Gird up the loins of your mind.**

In other words, he's talking about our thought processes. He's saying, we need to get a grip on what we think or what we allow to invade our mind and our heart. And he's talking about the things we read, the things we watch on the TV or listen to on the radio, or the things we look at on the Internet, or on our smart phones, or wherever.

And this is no doubt a constant battle that we all face. And this is a battle in our mind. I remember my dad used to tell me all the time. You need to use your head for something other than to keep your ears apart; or you need to use your head for something other than a hat rack! In other words, you need to think!

And so it's a constant battle to keep things from penetrating our minds that shouldn't be there. And it's also a battle to make time for the things of God that should be there. And in both those situations, it comes down to a choice.

And the choice we make comes down to how we answer the next question. Do we allow the word of God and the Holy Spirit to guide our choice, or do we allow our old nature and our flesh and the magnetism of this world guide our choice?

And then next, Peter tells us that we need to keep a reign on our emotions. He uses the phrase **to be sober**.

But now, he's not talking about getting drunk, or not getting drunk, though that wouldn't be a good choice either. But he's rather talking about learning how to control our emotions. Like not losing our temper. Not getting over anxious or unnecessarily excited over things. Things are going to happen, and we need to remember that God's not only got us, He's also got all these things that are going to come our way as well, if we'll just be willing to turn them over to Him.

And then he mentions obedience, and holiness, and not slipping back into your old lifestyle. He's talking really about backsliding here, which any of us are capable of doing if we're not mindful of this battle; and if we're not doing the things necessary to win the battle.

And I'm not going to harp on this again, you know what those things are; we talk about them every time we come together. Things like studying God's word, and praying, and serving, and fellowshiping with other believers. It takes all of these things together on a consistent basis to keep us in the center of God's will.

And then verse 17

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

What's he talking about here?

Well, he's referring mainly to holiness!

Now, when most of us hear the word holy, we think it's describing something that we have to strive to be, and most people believe it's also something they will never accomplish as long as they're here on this earth.

But the definition of "holy", at least when applied to us as humans, is not talking about sinless perfection. The Biblical definition for the word "holy" means to be set apart or to be separated. And of course that happens to a Christian at the time of salvation. When we're saved, we are made holy by God by being set apart or separated from the world.

And though our goal should also be to live a sinless life, and be as much like Jesus as possible, the truth is, we'll not reach that mark this side of heaven.

But that shouldn't keep us from trying. And knowing what we know about God, and how God sent Jesus to this earth to make our salvation possible, then that in itself should give us the motivation to do our best to live a life free and clear of sin. The love that God had for us to provide for us salvation is the greatest

gift we could ever receive. And that alone should motivate us to love God back and to live our best life for Him.

And then Peter in verses 18 & 19, expands on that truth. He says,

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Peter reminds us that we weren't bought with money or precious metals that can be had by hard work, or by becoming rich, here on this earth. In fact, the most precious metal there is, which is gold, we'll be walking on it when we get to heaven. It'll be used like asphalt to pave the streets in heaven.

And so even the most precious or valuable metal we could ever own here on this earth, could never compare to the value of the blood of Jesus.

Because only the blood of Jesus, can wash away our sins!

I don't care how much money you make, or accumulate while you're here on this earth, or how many possessions you acquire, or how much human knowledge or wisdom you gain, there's nothing in this world that can compare to the value of the blood of

Jesus, which He shed on the cross of Calvary, to pay a sin debt you and I could never pay.

Nothing in this world; not even the entire world itself, could ever provide for you or me eternal life in heaven.

And then in verse 20, we're told that even before the foundation of the world, this was God's plan. Verse 20 says,

20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Jesus coming to this earth and dying on the cross and being resurrected to life, that was all part of God's plan to save sinners, even before man was ever created by God. Even before Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God had a plan to redeem lost sinners.

Verse 22,

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

Now, you might want to underline those three words toward the end of verse 22. That phrase, **“love one another”**. This is not a request. This is a command. And of course this is not the only place in the Bible where we read this command.

In John 15:12, Jesus says, This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

And then in John 13:34, and this is on the night just before His crucifixion, when Jesus was in the upper room with His disciples and He says this.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Now, keep in mind, when Jesus said that on that particular night, He wasn't talking to a large crowd of people. If Jesus had given this command to three or four thousand people at one of His rallies, then it might not have appeared to be such a hard command, because it wouldn't have been so personable.

But here He wasn't speaking to five or ten thousand people, He was speaking to eleven. He was talking to Peter, and He was telling Peter to love Matthew, who used to be a hated tax collector. And He was talking to John and He was saying, John I know that you and Peter have very different personalities, and that sometimes you both get very passionate about things, He said, but

I want you to put aside all those petty differences and I want you to truly love one another.

You see, Jesus knew that in just a few hours things were going to change very dramatically. He knew they would all abandon Him, and He knew there would be the tendency to point fingers at each other, and accuse each other, and He knew Peter was going to deny Him three times, and that Thomas was going to doubt Him altogether, and Jesus knew that there would times of trouble, and turmoil ahead, and that emotions would be very high at times.

And so Jesus reminds them, that no matter what lies ahead, no matter what happens between them, they're to love each other, just like He loved them.

And they were about to find out just how much that love would cost.

And you know as we do life together and as we do church together, our love for each other is going to be tested. And things are going to happen and trials are going to come, and because we're imperfect people, we're going to say things and do things that we shouldn't and the future of this local church and the ministries that go forth from it are going to depend on how we handle those things. And so I pray that we'll always choose love

over criticism and that we'll always choose grace over
condemnation. And that we'll always choose Jesus over the world.