

Your Grace – 1 Peter 1:10-12
Sermon – Pastor Joe Davis
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INTRODUCTION

I had just completed my 4th year of training at Moody Bible Institute on a path to becoming a missionary. During that time, I had studied Bible, theology, church history, cultural anthropology, preaching, evangelism, church planting methods, how to adjust to a new culture, how to eat weird foods, and lots of other practical subjects to help me be ready for the mission field. Every term at Moody I had also participated in a different outreach ministry in downtown Chicago – everything from elderly care to street evangelism to kids' clubs to homeless shelters. I had also taken two mission trips to get practical experience: a 2-week trip to an Indian reservation in Louisiana and a longer summer trip to Cairo, Egypt.

In short, I had all the resources and training I needed to get a really good start as a missionary. I had also returned from my mission trip to Egypt amazed at how God had empowered me to build relationships there and share the gospel. I had left there eager to return one day as a full-time missionary. But something troubling had happened during the last year and a half before I graduated. I had begun to focus on my weaknesses and my fears and what I might miss out on in America if I left it all to become a missionary. I had also begun to listen to several people who told me they just couldn't imagine me being a missionary since I was so quiet and didn't have an outgoing personality. And so, by the time I graduated, though I had all the training, though I'd seen God work powerfully through me in my weakness, and though I had just a year and a half earlier been impatient to get back to Egypt, instead I decided to return home to Alaska and figure out something else to do with my life. I let my fears, my weaknesses, my love of American comforts, and the opinions of other people keep me from doing that for which I had been equipped and trained to do.

Fortunately, God's still in control; he's still faithful; he's gracious beyond imagination; and he knew ahead of time this would happen. He stayed with me; he was patient; he still brought lots of good in my life; he kept growing me spiritually; and he continued to accomplish his will on the new path I had chosen.

And little by little he led me back to the calling he had on my life to share the gospel and preach the Word. In fact, now he has me doing the one part of being a missionary that scared me the most: PREACHING. That was one appeal of being a missionary in the Middle East to me, because in most Middle Eastern countries mission work is done under cover through friendship evangelism. So I imagined that I wouldn't have to do traditional preaching in a church setting. But, lo and behold, here I am preaching – more evidence of God's grace being sufficient for even our greatest of needs!

I tell you this story today because it's a good illustration of how we as believers too often don't appreciate the full significance of what we've received in our great salvation through Christ, and we don't live out of the great resources and power and equipping we've been given through that salvation. Instead we allow our fears, our weaknesses, and our love of the world and its approval, to keep us from doing what we've been called and equipped to do as followers of Christ. Let's see what Peter has to say about this great salvation today.

Turn with me in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Peter chapter 1, and we'll read verses 10 to 12 to begin. Picking up in verse 10:

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, 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, 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.

May the Lord bless the reading of his Word. Holy Spirit, guide us as we study this morning.

First off, notice Peter's opening phrase in verse 10: ***Concerning THIS salvation.*** We see that Peter is referring back to something he has just been talking about in the previous verses. And looking at verse 9, we see that Peter had just finished a statement about salvation, saying that by faith proved genuine through trials we obtain faith's certain outcome, which is *the salvation* of our souls. And in fact, not

only verse 9, but really verses 1 through 9 are all concerned with describing this salvation: *where it originates, what God's doing in us through it, and the amazing gifts and benefits it brings to us.* So, we understand as we begin that Peter is about to tell us more about this salvation he has just described for us in the first 9 verses of his letter. And what he's going to share with us is *4 powerful truths about this great salvation that should move us to both live it and speak it to others.*

BOTH PROPHETS AND ANGELS SOUGHT AFTER OUR SALVATION

The first of these truths is this: *Both prophets and angels sought after our salvation.* In other words, the salvation we now have through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross is something that Old Testament prophets agonized to understand and take part in, and something that even angels deeply desired just to catch a tiny glimpse of. Let's think of Old Testament prophets first. As the Holy Spirit spoke through them and predicted the salvation God was going to bring through the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Suffering Servant, the Son of Man, the One whose name would be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace; as they got glimpses over and over of this coming One – who he would be and what he would do – they intensely searched and inquired of God and agonized over the various Scriptures, trying to tie it all together and figure out when it would happen.

And you KNOW they longed to take part in it as well...to receive the amazing benefits that would come to people through the suffering of this coming One and the glories that would follow. They would imagine the amazing day when what the prophet Ezekiel spoke of would actually come to pass:

²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

A new soft heart toward God to replace the dead and hardened one. And God's Holy Spirit actually dwelling within people to empower them to live God's Word. What an amazing day this would be!

These Old Testament prophets would search the Scriptures carefully and diligently, and they would ask the Spirit for guidance over and over, trying to understand who this coming One would be and how his incredible suffering – described in great detail in Isaiah 53 – would come about...suffering that would be followed by great glories and great benefits for God's people. But do you know what these godly and diligent prophets were told as they tried with all their hearts to understand all of this and get clarity from the Lord? They were told that they were not serving themselves, but YOU. They were serving each one of you here today. These coming realities that the Spirit in them was predicting would be for future generations, not for them. Though they were catching glimpses of them from afar, they would not experience these things themselves.

But, my friends, you and I are part of those future generations who would get to experience and benefit from this great salvation. Oh how these prophets would have loved to be where we are now. What they longed for and agonized to understand, we now possess in Jesus Christ. This is a great salvation, one that even angels longed to catch just a tiny glimpse of. You and I have been given something that many generations deeply desired, but did not get to possess...something that is so profound and mysterious and powerful that even angels were hungry to figure it out and understand what God was up to. Let's not take it lightly or squander this great salvation we've been given!

CHRIST'S INTENSE SUFFERING IS WHAT PURCHASED OUR SALVATION

And this brings us to the second truth that should move us to both live and speak what we've been given: *Christ's intense suffering is what purchased our salvation.* Peter describes prophets searching and inquiring carefully into what person or time the Spirit was describing when he predicted the SUFFERINGS of Christ and the subsequent glories. Great sufferings followed by great glories. The great salvation we now possess through Christ came at the highest of costs.

You see, Jesus didn't just save up a pile of money or do some great fundraising to amass a huge fortune that would buy us back from slavery to the devil and sin. No amount of money would be enough to pay that price. Only one thing could reverse the damage done by the first Adam, and continued on by every human being since then. Only the innocent blood of a perfectly obedient human being could pay the price on our behalf...could absorb the righteous wrath of a holy God

as our substitute, in our place...allowing us to go free with our shame removed and our debt paid forever.

As Peter will share with us just a few verses later in this letter, verses 18 and 19: **¹⁸ ...you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.** The price that brought us our great salvation...that set us free from slavery and started our new life with God...was the precious blood of our suffering Savior. A price he was more than willing to pay for you, so you could have this great salvation.

Images of *The Passion of the Christ* movie come to mind for me. Unimaginable suffering, pain, abuse, mocking, spitting, beating, and then hands and feet nailed to boards of wood and a crown of thorns pressed into his head – all of which had been predicted hundreds of years ahead of time through the Old Testament prophets. Listen to how the prophet, David, in Psalm 22, described how Jesus would feel as he paid the price for our salvation:

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?... ⁶ 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!”... ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 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.

This is just a small glimpse of the suffering Jesus was willing to endure in order to bring us salvation and new life at peace with our God. Peter says he did it **for the sake of you who through him are believers in God** (1 Peter 1:20b-21a). May we live to the fullest this new life he’s purchased for us at such a great cost.

What kind of life does Jesus have in mind for those he’s purchased with his own blood and caused to be born again and indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit? Well, it’s one

that's radically different from the world around us. As so well expressed in some recent verses we memorized:

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

That's one picture of the kind of life Jesus has in mind for us as his followers.

OUR SALVATION BRINGS US INTO POSSESSION OF GRACE

But in case you're still wondering if you should really seek to live this kind of life – to live to its fullest the new life Jesus has purchased for you – consider the third truth about our great salvation: *Our salvation brings us into possession of grace.* Look at verse 10. The prophets prophesied about *the grace that was to be yours.* As they considered what the Spirit was revealing to them about the future, they saw people who received and lived in grace from God.

What do we mean by grace? Well, the Greek word translated grace has a two-fold meaning. The first meaning is the one we're most familiar with, and that is, *unmerited favor.* Vine's Expository Dictionary actually uses the English word, *acceptance,* to capture this first meaning. The word speaks of being accepted by God, at peace with him, totally apart from our performance or any earning of that acceptance. The Old Testament prophets looking into that future revealed by the Spirit, saw people permanently accepted by God and at peace with him – though they didn't deserve it. They saw people who were the undeserving recipients of God's amazing grace.

And this profound coming reality would be made possible only through the sufferings of the coming One, whom Isaiah described as bearing OUR grief, carrying OUR sorrows, being pierced for OUR transgressions, and being crushed for OUR iniquities. This would be what would make this amazing acceptance and peace with God possible, paying for our sins, taking our shame, healing our

wounds, and absorbing the wrath of God we each deserved. ***All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all*** (Isaiah 53:6).

And the result for those who will accept this precious gift from our Savior, is undeserved grace from God – permanent acceptance and peace through the blood of Christ. This is where every person in the world today can live right now through simple repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. And oh, how the prophets longed for what now belongs to us through Jesus Christ. This is now YOUR grace...grace that belongs to you.

But the second meaning of grace is often neglected or overlooked. And yet it's the key to effectively living our new life with God. The second meaning of grace is this: *God providing humble, dependent followers of Christ what they need to become like Christ and powerfully accomplish God's will on earth.* And this grace given to followers of Christ comes through the work of the Holy Spirit within us. This second meaning of grace is tied in with Holy Spirit empowerment and gifting.

The Old Testament prophets also observed this second aspect of grace at work within those people they saw in the future. Remember that Ezekiel prophecy we already mentioned, from Ezekiel 36:26-27?

²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Permanent indwelling of God's Holy Spirit within God's people, bringing first a new heart – what we know as regeneration, or being born again – but then also empowerment to actually obey God's Word and accomplish his will. That's the other aspect of grace that the Old Testament prophets saw unfolding in the future and longed to experience themselves – God's grace being provided to God's people through the indwelling Holy Spirit so they could fully walk in God's ways and accomplish his will. And that's what you and I – those of us in Christ – have today! May we believe it and live our lives in light of this reality.

Now in case you're wondering if I'm off track about this second meaning of grace, I want to quickly run through several New Testament passages that use the word grace in this way...with the meaning of God providing his people the power to walk in his ways and accomplish his will. Here we go:

Acts 20:32

³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

In this verse, Paul was saying a final goodbye to the elders from Ephesus, but he was at peace because he knew God would provide for them and continue leading them even though Paul himself wouldn't be there to oversee it. He entrusted them to God and pointed them to God's grace...the grace that was able to build them up, sanctify them and bring them into their inheritance. God's grace is a powerful thing.

And look at 2 Corinthians 12:9, where grace is directly connected with God's power working in followers of Christ. Paul describes the Lord as saying to him: ***"My GRACE is sufficient for you, for my POWER is made perfect in weakness."*** God' grace given to weak, humble people is sufficient, giving them God's power to make them strong. Paul went on to say: ***Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

Still not convinced? How about later in the book we're currently studying, in 1 Peter 4:10-11, where Peter connects grace with spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. He says:

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Spiritual gifts are grace given to us through the Holy Spirit to enable us to serve one another and accomplish God's will by his power. We are to be good stewards

of this grace, using it for God's glory and not our own. And this grace enables us to speak God's words and serve in the strength he supplies to us.

God's grace is a precious gift that the prophets longed for and we now possess. It not only brings us to permanent, undeserved peace with God, but also provides us with Holy Spirit power to obey God's word and accomplish his will effectively and in a way that glorifies God and reveals him to others. We have what we need, my friends, to live the new life Jesus purchased for us by his own blood.

OTHERS ARE SAVED AS SPIRIT-EMPOWERED BELIEVERS SPEAK THE GOSPEL

And this brings us to the 4th truth Peter shares with us about our great salvation. Are you ready? This one follows so naturally from what we just learned about the grace we now possess in Christ. Here it is: *Others are saved as Spirit-empowered believers speak the gospel.* Notice in verse 12, how Peter describes the way people come into possession of this great salvation. In this letter to the chosen exiles in modern-day Turkey, he tells them that these intensely-sought-after realities that both the prophets and angels longed to understand ***have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.*** In other words, the great salvation they had received and that had delivered grace to them, came as Christ-followers were willing to announce and preach the good news of Christ with words spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Imagine if no one had been courageous enough to speak the words of the gospel to these people. As Paul said: ***14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ...17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*** (Romans 10:14-15, 17).

My friends, for people to hear and understand and come to new life and receive grace through the great salvation purchased by Jesus Christ, we need to open our mouths. But don't miss what we've been given so we can do this boldly and effectively. Look again at verse 12. We see there that our speaking of the gospel

is undergirded by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the One who must do the work of opening eyes and changing hearts. Our job is simply to speak the words in love as we pray continually for the Holy Spirit to do his work. And he will, as we begin opening our mouths to offer life to the lost.

We have God's grace to give us what we need to do this. Jesus told us the Holy Spirit would give us what we need. In Acts 1:8, as he was about to ascend into heaven after his resurrection, Jesus said: **"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."** This is his calling for us and he's given us the Holy Spirit so we can do it. He will give us boldness and courage as we ask for it and then start opening our mouths.

APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

We have a great, great salvation, my friends. A salvation that prophets agonized to understand and deeply desired to take part in; a salvation that was made possible only through the precious blood of Christ; a salvation that brings us into possession of grace for our every need; and a salvation that needs to be shared with others and can only be shared when we open our mouths and start speaking the words of the good news of Jesus Christ, trusting the Holy Spirit to work as we do. Are you appreciating and fully living the great salvation that so many throughout the ages have longed for and deeply desired to take part in?

Peter has given us a beautiful picture of this salvation and its incredible value in these first 12 verses of his first letter. We truly have a hope that is alive and life-giving. May we live in all its fullness and share it with others at every opportunity. May we comprehend the full significance of the grace we now possess right now in Christ...grace that has brought us permanent peace with God and provided us with everything we need for life and godliness and the powerful accomplishing of God's will. What a sad thing it would be to possess all these things, to be fully equipped and ready to go, but to never use what we've been so graciously given and equipped with.

Let's not be like I was after graduating from Moody. Trained and equipped, but too afraid, too restrained by my weaknesses, and too attached to worldly things to actually do what I'd been prepared and equipped to do. God we so need your

grace, the power of your Spirit, and the full embracing of your purposes for our lives. Please do your work within us. Loosen our tongues. Realign our priorities and our passions to be centered around you and your purposes for us. Holy Spirit give us the boldness and courage you gave those first Christ followers in the book of Acts. Break the chains that keep our mouths from boldly speaking your good news!

Now if you're here today and you haven't yet accepted this great salvation Jesus purchased for us on the cross, may I invite you to do so right now. Here's a simple prayer you can pray to do that and begin your new life at peace with God:

A Prayer to Accept God's Salvation through Christ

God, I've sinned against You and I want to change.
I want your forgiveness and unchanging love.
Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins
And that You rose from the dead.
I receive You as my Lord and Savior.
I invite You to take charge of my life from here.
Teach me to live life with You and like You
By the power of Your Spirit.
Thank you for saving me. Amen.