

I came across this quote this week. ... I think it speaks well to the passage of our study this morning.

*"It is a rare person who, when his cup frequently runs over, can thank God instead of complaining about the limited size of his mug!"*

—Bob Russell

The London Times on Oct 4, 2003, reported the following (supposedly) true story. ... Thousands of letters sent each year to God... end up in a sorting office in Jerusalem. ... According to the Associated Press... the letters arrive from all over the world in the city's undeliverable mail department.

"We have hundreds of thousands of letters sent either to God or Jesus Christ... and for some reason they come to Jerusalem"... said post office spokesman Yitzak Rabihiya.

In one letter an Israeli man asked God for 5,000 shekels (which is about \$1,000 US dollars)... to ease his poverty. ...Postal workers were so moved that they sent him 4,300 shekels.

"After a month the same person wrote again to God"... Mr. Rabihiya explained... "but this time he wrote... 'Thank you, God, for the contribution, but next time please don't send it through those postmen. They're thieves; they stole 700 shekels'."

Sometimes, in our disappointment over what we don't have, we fail to appreciate the significance of what God has given us.

Our normal, ordinary view of salvation... is hopelessly and ridiculously inadequate. ... Our trouble is... that we always start with ourselves instead

of starting with God. ... Instead of going to the Bible and looking at its revelation and discovering there what salvation means... I start with myself and certain things that I want and desire... certain benefits that I always want to enjoy in this life and in this world.

I want forgiveness of sins... I want peace of conscience and of mind... I want enjoyment and happiness... I want to be delivered from certain sins... I want guidance... I want this and that; and my whole conception of salvation is reduced to that level. ...

I have to agree with Brennan Manning... a Franciscan priest who is also a prolific author...

*I believe that the real difference in the American church is not between conservatives and liberals, fundamentalists and charismatics, nor between Republicans and Democrats. The real difference is between the aware and the unaware.*

*When somebody is aware of that love—the same love that the Father has for Jesus—that person is just spontaneously grateful. Cries of thankfulness become the dominant characteristic of the interior life, and the byproduct of gratitude is joy. We're not joyful and then become grateful—we're grateful, and that makes us joyful.*

What kind of a professing believer are you...? How consciously aware ... of your blessings are you ...? ... And... Is your awareness of God's love... making you grateful...? *We're not joyful and then become grateful — we're grateful, and that makes us joyful.* [... ..]

The purpose of our passage of study this morning in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter... is to make you and I much more consciously aware... so that we might be thankful... which produces greater joy in our life. Would you like an increase of joy in

your life...? ... My prayer is that our study this morning will help you appreciate the significance of what God has given us. ... MANY of us need some fresh perspective on the very secure blessings that we have.

And by the way... consider this quote that a friend of mine posted on facebook:

*“We have to rescue the word 'blessing' from shallow definitions that involve getting more stuff, experiencing fewer problems, or simply having things turn out our way.” –Gerrit Dawson*

That is exactly what our passage will try to get us to do. The aim of 1 Peter 1:10-12 is to intensify our gratitude... and fill us with joy and worship for the infinite value of this great salvation. ... Peter will do this by telling us five amazing things about our salvation — things that we may have never thought of before. ... How often does your mind contemplate these 4 things about our salvation...?

**#1. Christ Predicted It**

**#2. The Prophets Longed to See It**

**#3. The Prophets Served Us in It**

**#4. The Angels Love to Look into It**

### **1 Peter 1:10-12**

As you probably know... when Jesus came to earth... the Jewish teachers were awaiting a conquering Messiah Who would defeat Israel's enemies... and establish the glorious kingdom promised to David. ...Even Christ's Own disciples... were not clear about the need for His death on the cross. You will remember that in Matthew 16... after Jesus had spoken about His going to Jerusalem to die... Peter rebuked Jesus, saying “*Far be it from You, Lord. This shall never happen to you...*” Jesus looked at Him and

said “*Get behind Me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me...*” ... Then... Jesus’ disciples were still fixated on Jesus restoring David’s earthly kingdom... bringing Israel back into world prominence... even after Jesus’ resurrection... just before Jesus rose through the clouds and went back up into Heaven (Acts 1:1-8). ... If the disciples were not clear about God's program... certainly the Old Testament prophets could be excused!

God told the prophets that they were ministering for a *future* generation. They were given insight about a Messiah Who would suffer greatly... and they were also given prophecies that spoke of the Messiah’s tremendous glory. ... “Suffering? ...or Glory? ... Which one is it... God?” ... But here is what you and I now know. ... Jesus would come TWICE. ... And between the rejection and suffering of the Messiah... and His return in glory... there would at least two thousand years of what we call "the age of the church." ... The Apostle Paul... in Ephesians 3:1-13 describes the church age as a hidden "mystery." ... The Old Testament prophets looked ahead by faith and saw, as it were, two mountain peaks: Mount Calvary, where Messiah suffered and died, and Mount Olivet, where He will return in glory. They could not see the "valley" in between, the present age of the church.

About seven years ago... Eric Hall and I... along with some men from our sister church in Prineville... climbed to the summit of South Sister. (I am still thinking that this was the dumbest thing I have ever done in my life. It was a grueling climb that left me sore for weeks afterward.) Anyway from the top of South Sister you gain a perspective of Mt. Bachelor that you would never know... as we look at these two giant mountains from down

here. For instance... I never knew how much smaller Mt. Bachelor is than South Sister. We were looking down on it's peak. And Broken top is even more puny from up there. ... But as we look at these three mountain peaks from down here... they all three look to be about the same. You don't notice how much smaller the other two are by South Sister's standards. ... And from down here... we also do not see the valley's that are between these giant mountains.

The Old Testament prophets saw mountain peaks through their prophesy... the way we see the mountain peaks surrounding us... from here in LaPine. And oh how they wished that they could see them... the way you and I can view their prophecies from our vantage point today. There are at least 5 things that we can distinguish... which was hidden from their view as they looked from a distance.

## **#1. Christ Predicted His Own Death and Resurrection**

Peter points out the amazing fact that Christ Himself... ( verse 11 uses the words "the Spirit of Christ")... hundreds of years before His Own death and resurrection... was predicting His Own death and resurrection. Look at verse 11 again:

### **1 Peter 1:11**

Now... here is something that I think Peter wanted his readers to ponder. ... This is encouraging stuff... if you allow it to sink in. Consider this... Christ has been contemplating His suffering and His death... for you and I... for centuries. ... Wrap your mind around this... think long and hard on this... As far back as the plan of salvation reaches in the mind of God...

that is as far back... as Christ has been willing (and ready)... to give Himself for our sins... because He knew that there was NOTHING you or I could do... to be made right before God. ... You see... You were not loved just in those painful moments of history.... When He endured incomprehensible torture. You have been loved for endless ages in the eternal plan of the Father and the Son to save sinners who trust in Him.

Be grateful. Set your mind on it for a while. **#1. Christ Predicted His Own Death and Resurrection.** I wanted you to see that one first. The next thing to focus your attention on... covers both verse 10 and 11.

## **#2. The Prophets Longed to See What We Can Now See**

### **1 Peter 1:10-11**

As God's men prophesied of the salvation that was to come... they enquired and searched diligently into knowing more about it... As verse 10 indicates... it was grace that they were marveling about. ...They enquired and investigated the matter. These men of God were puzzled to understand this gospel of grace... which must not have made any sense according to their world of religious conviction... *“Grace...? ... No more earning God’s favor through our good works and sin offerings...?”*

Then Peter goes on in verse 11... to say that adding to their confusion about grace... they were wanting to grasp the concept of how suffering and glory fit together. They may have been a little skeptical about their own prophecies they were giving. *“This is a real conflict... am I getting it right...? You cannot have it both ways. Either He comes in suffering or He*

*comes to reign. ... Right...? Of course right!"* ... However... we know now that both are true. ... Jesus comes twice... and there is a valley between called the church age.

Several things baffled them... and they would have given anything to know. They wanted to know more about the person... the circumstances... the time... this matter of grace... and how to resolve the issue of the Messiah's suffering and glory.

That searching... and inquiring... and longing... is an echo of the tremendous worth of our salvation... which existed in the hearts of the men of God who couldn't see it... but desperately wanted to... They valued it so highly. ... How much more should we... as we do see it much more clearly now!

But I think Peter does something else here... besides encourage his readers to value their salvation more highly. His original readers were suffering and Peter tells them that it will intensify. The Old Testament prophets could not understand something that Peter's original audience needed to recognize. Suffering comes first... and then comes glory. For the Messiah suffering would come first... then glory... and for these readers of Peter's letter – suffering comes first,,, but glory will come!

Are you facing particular hardship in your life right now...? This is a great truth for you to keep in mind, as well. Suffering comes first – but glory will come!

Peter wanted his readers to elevate their gratitude for their salvation. He has them ponder:

- #1. Christ Predicted It**
- #2. The Prophets Longed to See It, and**
- #3. The Prophets Served Us in It**

The Lord's answer to that yearning cry of the prophets is given in verse 12

### **1 Peter 1:12a&b**

The Spirit of Christ said to Isaiah... Daniel... Amos... Micah... Zechariah... and all the others, "Now listen up... all of you! ... Be patient! You're not serving yourself... this isn't for you... or even your own generation. You are serving saints of Living Water church in LaPine Oregon hundreds of years from now. ... They will see in your prophecy of Me the proof that I am who I say I am. And its truth will make its infinite value unshakable in their lives.

Don't you love this...!!!??? ... This fact should fill us with all sorts of wonder and worship.

When my daughter, Katie, first met her husband-to-be (Shawn)... my wife and I... of course wanted to know who this young man was... and what he was like. One of the first descriptions that I had of him... was that he was passionate about studying Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. ... This has proven to be true. And for the last two Christmases... Shawn has provided me with some great books... that I had never heard of... on this subject. ... So Patti and I have been studying Messianic prophecy in the evenings together... and there is a lot for us to be grateful... for how

these prophets have served us. ... Let me just take you to a small sampling of the prophecies.

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

“Wonder Counselor”... There are some words in Hebrew that are to be used ONLY of God... and never of men. “Barah” (to create) is one of those words. “Pele” is another one of those words. It is only used for God. “Pele” means “wonderful” and is the very word that is used in Isaiah 9:6. ... But as if that is not clear enough that Isaiah is prophesying that Messiah would be God... the very next name that Isaiah uses is “Mighty God.” Isaiah also says that He will have a government of peace... and He will sit on the throne of David.

So Isaiah revealed that Messiah would be God... a King... and a man (because He would be a descendant of David).

**Isaiah 11:1-2 (ESV)**

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

This prophecy emphasizes the Messiah's lowly origin. The picture is that of a tree that was cut down... leaving only a dead stump. A single shoot remains growing... near to the ground. ... Now notice that it is not called the "Stump of David" ... but instead it is the "Stump of Jesse." Who was Jesse? Jesse was David's father. During the lifetime of David... the house of Jesse was raised from poverty in Bethlehem... to honor and majesty in Jerusalem. ... Remember... David was first a poor shepherd boy. But Messiah... being the stump of Jesse... would not come... until the house of Jesse had been cut down and become lowly again. ... From this lowly position... the Messiah would come and become a tree in its own right. That is exactly what happened as Jesus was born into the house of Joseph and Mary. Messiah was born into a house of lowliness... the stump of Jesse.

There really are so many of these that give us quite a picture of the promised Messiah. They are in the Old Testament books of the Law and of the Prophets. ... Let me just finish this part about the prophets by reading (without comment) from Isaiah 53...

### **Isaiah 53**

Isaiah was serving you and I when he wrote this!

- #1. Christ Predicted It**
- #2. The Prophets Longed to See It, and**
- #3. The Prophets Served Us in It, and**
- #4. The Angels Love to Look into It**

## 1 Peter 1:12c

The next thing Peter says to highlight the value of our salvation is that angels love to look into it. ...In a sense they are outsiders to the drama of sin and redemption... (since Angels never sinned)... and they love to watch the great work of God's salvation unfold in history and in the lives of the saints.

Peter's point is this: *“If angels get excited about our salvation... how much more should we...? If angels love to look at the work of God in saving sinners like us... how much more should we who are the very beneficiaries of that salvation... (not just onlookers)... love to look into it... and be thankful for it...?”*

You and I need to celebrate our salvation constantly. Our joy is diminished... perhaps not even noticeable... because we don't celebrate it well enough. ... Are you thankful for this thing called grace... which the prophets just could not understand...?

Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in Manhattan, shares the story of a woman in his congregation who was learning how the grace extended to us through Christ's work on the cross can actually be more challenging than the religion.... that those prophets were familiar with. He writes:

Some years ago I met with a woman who began coming to church at Redeemer and had never before heard a distinction drawn between the gospel and religion [i.e. the distinction between grace and what is often a works-based righteousness]. She had always heard that God accepts us only if we are good enough. She said that the new

message was scary. I asked why it was scary and she replied: *If I was saved by my good works then there would be a limit to what God could ask of me or put me through. I would be like a taxpayer with "rights"—I would have done my duty and now I would deserve a certain quality of life. But if I am a sinner saved by grace—then there's nothing he cannot ask of me."*

She understood the dynamic of grace and gratitude. If when you have lost all fear of punishment you also lose all incentive to live a good, unselfish life, then the only incentive you ever had to live a decent life was fear. This woman could see immediately that the wonderful-beyond-belief teaching of salvation by sheer grace had an edge to it. She knew that if she was a sinner saved by grace, she was (if anything) more subject to the sovereign Lordship of God. She knew that if Jesus really had done all this for her, she would not be her own. She would joyfully, gratefully belong to Jesus, who provided all this for her at infinite cost to himself.