

What You Need To Know In The Meantime

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Communion Meditation

By Jimmy Davis

Bible Text: 1 Peter 1:17-21

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Metrocrest Presbyterian Church

1265 E. Hebron Parkway

Carrollton, TX 75010

Website: www.metrocrestchurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/metrocrestchurch

If you'll look on the back of your program, you'll see verses that we've already read tonight. I'm going to read them again and it's interesting that Christine said that God planted the seed of his word in our hearts through a song before this took place because many scholars believe that the verses 18 through 21 of 1 Peter 1 are an ancient hymn and Peter talks in 1 Peter 1 about the word of God being that imperishable seed that he's planted in us, and Peter's whole letter is written to encourage the church to remember who they are, they are redeemed and precious in the sight of their God who has redeemed them because what they're about to suffer might cause them to believe otherwise, and particularly they're going to suffer for being his people.

So let me read these words again and just give you a couple of thoughts. Peter says,

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

In other words, conduct yourselves, live in such a way that it's in reverent respect and honor for your Father who has called you for a time to be exiled. And how do you conduct yourselves, how do you live that kind of life? You live it knowing, and here's the hymn,

18 knowing that 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. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

What is it that God wants his people to remember, to know, as they live between the already, "You are my people," and the not yet, "You are not yet my people as you will be one day"? How do we conduct ourselves, live a life of reverent obedience to our Father

throughout this exile that we're experiencing? How do we stay faithful to him in the midst of these difficult times? How do we love God in the meantime and these are mean times?

This hymn reminds us of three things. Verse 18, Jesus redeemed you. Verse 20, Jesus was revealed for you. And verse 21, Jesus was raised for you.

Verse 18, you were ransomed, redeemed, and he's hearkening back to the Exodus and they remember how my people were ransomed by the blood of a spotless lamb so that the angel of death passed over them and they were released from their slavery. You, my people, were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers. Whether you're a Greek or a Jew, your forefathers in whatever form of disobedience they preferred, their ways were futile, were empty. You've been ransomed from slavery to an empty life, to a wasted life, and you were bought with something, your Exodus came at an expensive price, the price of the blood of the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. So remember in the meantime when times are mean, Jesus redeemed you. As Isaiah 43 said, "You are redeemed. You are mine."

What's interesting about these verses is what we tend to do is we say, "Oh, we were ransomed not with perishable things such as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ. How valuable we must have been." But that's not what Peter's focus is at all. His focus is on how valuable Jesus is. You don't worship God by thinking about how wonderful you are. You worship him when you remember how worthy he is. So Jesus redeemed you. Think about his worth.

In verse 20, Jesus was revealed for you. "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest," was revealed, uncovered, "in the last times for the sake of you." Jesus has always been known to God, he's always been known to himself and the Father and the Spirit, but he, God, decided before the foundation of the world, before you ever sinned, before you ever did anything, existed, he decided that he wanted to reveal his Son to you now. He was made manifest in the last times for your sake. So in the meantime when these times are hard and mean between the already and the not yet, remember you've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and remember that God chose to reveal that Lamb to you now in the midst of the mean time.

And finally, verse 21, he was raised for you. He says, "who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." God raised Jesus from the dead for two reasons. 1. Because his resurrection affirms that your rebellion was paid for and so that emboldens your faith because your faith is on what Christ has done in dying for your sin. That's where you put your trust. But his resurrection also confirms that our resurrection is promised for us one day, that's the living hope that Peter talks about. So because Jesus was raised from the dead, you can have faith that your sins are paid for because his death was accepted as the payment for your sin, but you can also have hope that one day you will experience the glory of resurrection because Jesus is already experiencing the glory of resurrection. He's the firstfruits; he's gone on before us; he is waiting for you.

So in the meantime, remember, know you've been redeemed. No matter what it looks like, no matter what fires or waters are covering you, you have been redeemed by the priceless blood of the Lamb. Jesus has been revealed to you. You didn't find him, God chose to reveal Jesus to you. And he was raised for you. I think Peter, I think the Holy Spirit would have us hold onto these truths because he says knowing these three things enables you to conduct yourself with fear during your exile.

I'll close with this. I was reading Charles Spurgeon's sermon on this passage and this was something he said that was just too good. I think we should probably just stop preaching and just start reading all these old guys, all these dead guys' sermons. He says, "Beloved, we who love the Lord have our joy even in our present adversity. We have two heavens, a heaven here and a heaven hereafter. Jesus is with us and this is heaven. We are soon to be with Jesus and that is another heaven. Though sometimes cast down, we are glad at heart." Then he says, "I would not change my blessed estate for all that earth calls good or great." He says, "Give me but the company of the sweet Lord Jesus and I ask no greater felicity." Here you go, "Yes, let me go back to my bed and my pain if I may have Jesus there." We might as well leave after that. That's crazy. "Let me go back to my bed and my pain if I may have Jesus there. Better to lie in a dungeon and pine on bread and water with Christ's company than to sit in the parliament of kings and be yourself their emperor and be without the Lord." The last sentence, "Saints find everything in Christ when they have nothing else and they equally find everything in him when earthly comforts are multiplied."

So like Paul who said, "I'm content whether I have or whether I have not," why? Because I have Christ who redeems me. I have Christ who was revealed to me. I have Christ who was raised for me.

The other morning I was getting ready for work which, you know, doesn't take long for me, and I was listening to a song that talked about that song that says, "One thing I ask and this I seek," and the way the song put it was, "That I may see you and gaze into your eyes," and as I was listening to that, this thought occurred to me: one day, one day I will get to go and I will get to hug Jesus, the real, in the flesh, bodily resurrected Jesus. If he has a beard, I get to feel it on my face. If he has a robe, I get to put my face in his chest. I don't know what he looks like, I don't know what he smells like, but one day you and I get to hold him and be held by him, by the one whose hands are scarred, whose side is scarred, whose feet are scarred, by the one who was pierced for us. By the one whose hands should be crushing me, I'm going to be held by them.

You know Peter had to have had that hope in his head. You know he must have held onto whatever that last hug from Jesus he had before Jesus ascended, maybe it was that moment on the beach, I don't know, but he had to have been longing for the day when he could hold him again and I think that when Christine or whoever it is that has scars, they're going to go to Jesus and they're going to go, "Here's my scars," and I imagine him and sometimes I like to kiss those two little stubby toes on her foot, and I can imagine that Jesus is going to look at our scars and say, look at her scars but she's not going to care about her scars anymore because she's going to want to see his.

Folks, in order to make it and to live as faithful sons and daughters in this time of exile, we have to know, we have to know that we have been redeemed, that he has been revealed, and that he has been raised. Here's how you know. Here's how you know. Come, taste and see.