

1Peter 10-12-03a

This is Friday, the 3rd of December, 2010. We continue our study in the book of 1 Peter, we're in chapter 1, and we resume in the vicinity of verse 10. We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer.

It gives us all a chance to kind of fly straight and level, get our kinks unkinked and our wrinkles unwrinkled and our distractions set aside, me as much as anyone. And it gives us the opportunity to renew our appeal to God that the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be active and present in our midst. Shall we pray? Father, we're thankful as always that another week has passed and we can gather once again to appreciate our salvation, to appreciate you and the wonderful grace that you have bestowed on us and the many blessings that you have sent our way.

We thank you for the challenges and the difficulties that have tested our faith and given us the opportunity to practice what we learn and what we meditate on. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus, for His example of faithfulness and obedience in His humanity, in the full expression of your love and character toward us, fulfilling both of those roles in His earthly life and ministry, culminating at the cross where the great love that you have for us and that should be shed abroad in our own hearts was made manifest. We thank you for this passage of Scripture.

We thank you for the opportunity to study it together. We ask your blessing on us as we do so. May each of us find meaningful and pertinent application in these truths that we look at tonight together.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you remember the situation.

The Apostle Peter is writing a letter to the scattered pilgrims. These are almost entirely Jewish Christian converts outside the land. This is Peter's designated field of ministry.

Jesus said, You, eleven, shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, until the end of the world. And these people are originally from that region. And Peter is exercising his license to preach and to minister as the Apostle to these people, to send them a message of encouragement.

And he is subtly reminding them, after having explicitly stated that it was by God's choice and by God's foreknowledge that they have been scattered, that they have been taken out of the land, that they are facing what, in human terms, appears to be difficult circumstances, this was God's plan. This was God's purpose. God chose them for this fate.

It's not an accident. And so he has gone on to say that because you recognize this great deliverance that God has prepared beforehand and is going to ultimately deliver at the return of Jesus Christ, you can now rejoice. He begins and ends this section talking about joy, inexpressible and full of glory.

Verse 9 said, Receiving, embracing, taking along. This is not just Lombano receiving. This is komizaminoi, the end of your faith.

And your is only found in some of the manuscripts. Receiving the end of faith. And one of the reasons your is probably not original here, homone in Greek, is this.

The purpose, the telos, the end, the result of faith in any age, is the same. It is to receive deliverance from God. God does not grant deliverance to those who have no faith.

You remember when they came up against the borders of the land with Moses and Joshua and Caleb and the spies went in and came back with the report. God promised them, I will give you victory. I will deliver this inheritance into your hands.

You will thrive in this land And flowing with milk and honey, they did not have the faith to receive it. And God did not give them that deliverance. The end of faith, the end of trust, both its purpose and its fruit, is God delivering deliverance.

Delivering our souls. Now, it is a wonderful theological sounding concept, but what about us? We are not waiting to go into a land. We are just normal people trying to live a happy life.

Trying to keep from making very many other people miserable. Trying to not be made miserable by others. Pay our bills.

Get our stuff done. Grab a little entertainment here and there and some good fellowship. Have some fun.

Get some rest. Eat some food. We are just normal people.

And you think, why am I looking at this 1 Peter thing? I am not a pilgrim. I am not an exile. I am not an Israelite delivered from slavery.

I am just doing okay. I could be an unbeliever. I could never go to Bible class.

I could forget this whole faith business. And what would be the difference? Most Americans, I would live a life just like they do. What is the difference? Well, notice what Peter says here.

Look at verse 10 and following. Of this salvation, this deliverance that we have just been talking about, the deliverance of sukkah, the deliverance of your life really. Your sukkah is your life.

Of this soteriah, this salvation, this deliverance, 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. Now, I don't know about you, but when I read that, I immediately start losing my grip on the thread of his argument. I get that they're

pilgrims.

I get that they're scattered. I get that they're pining to be back in the land and that they figure in the land is where God's blessings are going to come. I understand that Peter is saying, look, God can bless you right where you are.

In fact, he chose you to be where you are so that he could bless you by these trials that you will occasionally encounter or that you may be experiencing right now. God is going to bless you in those trials. He chose you for that.

Okay, I'm good. I'm tracking. I think most of us would follow that so far.

Then he says, and you can rejoice in this. This is where you get, even though things are bleak, there's joy. Well, how can there be joy? If you just look at the circumstance and you are bereaved or you are having to endure pain or endure problems, that's not a cause for joy.

Where does the joy come from? The joy does not come from the circumstance. The joy comes from the recognition that there is deliverance from God coming in and through it. Just like now, there is deliverance coming through it.

I've got to wake up a few people here. Maybe they need to stand or maybe they can keep themselves awake. Maybe I can keep them awake with my command voice.

Think about this now. This is really important. This book is here for a reason.

We're studying it tonight for a reason. All of us are sojourners and pilgrims. We're not in the land of our citizenship.

We are like these people. Peter says, you're getting your salvation now. So let me ask you, do you feel delivered right now? And the answer may be yes.

Do you feel like God is giving you some salvation in and through your circumstances? When you're tested, when you're tried, when you fail, that's a tough one. What has happened to me is my own fault. So I probably don't deserve deliverance.

I probably don't deserve any help. I should just suffer and wear a hair shirt and maybe hit myself with a splintery stick a few times and suffer because it's my own fault. God knew that we would fail.

He knew that we would mess up. We would exercise poor judgment, that we would make bad decisions, that our faith would waver. And He still works it together for good because He loves us.

And we can rejoice. We can take comfort. We can be encouraged.

We can move forward. We don't wallow in self-pity. We don't wallow in negative thoughts.

We don't get into a weird kind of arrogance that, oh, my problems are so bad. Nobody knows the trouble I've seen. I'm just out here in a hopeless swamp of despair.

Remember the slew of despair from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, if you've read that? The slew of despond or despair. I've read it like 40 years ago. I've kind of forgotten what it's named.

But John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, there's a slew, S-L-O-U-G-H, or a slough. It's a what? It's a slew. That's what we call it in Oklahoma.

It's a slew of despond, of despair. Well, we get into that, right? And it's swampy. It's sticky.

It's hard to get out. It's easy to look at the negative things. Any rank unbeliever, any godless, uninformed person, any backslidden, uninterested believer can get discouraged and be despondent and be negative and spread their negativity to others.

Anybody can do that. But you know what it is that those people cannot do that you can do and that I can do? It's what Peter says right here. To rejoice in the middle of that, yet believing pistuantes, this is your parteciple here, this is your ongoing attitude.

I am trusting. I am not... What is the difference between you and a scientist? I've been talking to scientists this week. Genuine card-carrying paper-publishing scientists.

I've been talking to them this week. They're looking down their nose at anybody that hasn't published X number of papers. I'm trying to ascertain how many papers it takes to make you a scientist because the guy tells me it has to be more than one.

So he's going to pay for that lapse in judgment because I'm going to make him tell me exactly how many papers it takes and what kind of papers. Can they just be any old scientific paper or does it need to be a substantial paper? What if you're one of several authors? Do you only get one-fifth credit if there were four other authors? Do you have to publish one yourself? Are you only 20% a scientist if four other guys contributed? I really want to find this out because he's dismissing a guy that believes in creation saying he's not even a biologist, he's a fraud. I said, well, why do you say he's a fraud? Because he hasn't published a paper.

Well, how many papers does he have to publish before he's not a fraud? Well, more than one. Well, how many? Three, four, twelve? How many? And what is any scientist's status before he gets his papers published? Is he not really a scientist? If he's published two but not three and three is your minimum, then is he no kind of scientist or he's kind of a half-baked scientist or a scientist on the half-shell? What is he until he gets his third paper published? And does he have to get sole credit for the paper or can he be one of 12 guys that wrote it? Can he just be a shirt-tail dragon hanger-on or does he have to really substantially, does it have to be an important paper? Is this, you know, here's where the Precambrian explosion of spinal columns came from or can it be something like, well, here's an enzyme that'll eat dried egg off your countertop? I

mean, how important does it have to be? How long does it have to be? Where does it have to be? Can it be published anywhere? But see, this is science. Science has to look at facts.

They've got to ascertain things. They have to observe. You remember the definition of science? Science is science, observation, you know, testing, verification in the physical realm, right? Are you a scientist when it comes to your salvation? No.

You're a person of faith. You believe what you cannot see. What does Hebrews 11.1 say? Now, faith is the substance of things I have measured and put in a scale.

Is that what it says? Faith is the analytical deductions I have drawn from factual data and physical evidence that I have gathered. Is that what it says? Faith is the substance of what you hope for, evidence of things not seen. You're better than a scientist.

Scientists are limited. They can't take anything on faith, allegedly. They take everything on faith, but they say they can't.

They say, oh, just the facts, man. I'm Jack Webb. I'm only going to look at the facts.

You've got to give me some hard evidence. I don't believe in fairies. I don't believe in gods.

I don't believe in flying spaghetti monsters. I believe in molecules and grams and newtons and so forth. Well, that's a limitation.

That's like only having one sense. I can hear, but I can't see or smell or taste or any of the rest of it. I've only got... You're not limited.

You can process all of the information of a circumstance, and you have the eyes of faith. You have insight from the Word of God. You're a complete human being because you are both in the physical realm and in the spiritual realm.

These people are half human. They can only deal in the material realm. They're stuck in it.

They're limited to it. They can't grasp anything beyond it. And I feel sorry for them.

They're just bumping around in the dark. They can only hear. They can't see.

And because they can't see, they disparage anybody who can see, and they dismiss the thought that anybody else can see. If they can't see, certainly nobody else can see. Hearing is the only sense there is.

So, here's my point. Don't give away your gift from God. You have spiritual insight.

You have the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. He will inform us and tell us about things that are invisible to the mortal man. Paul Simon had this song.

Slipping away. Sliding away. What does he say? God only knows, and God makes His plan.

Whenever I sing that song, I sing it this way. The information is available to the mortal man. Paul wrote, the information is unavailable.

Well, he's not reading his Bible, if he's got one. God only knows. God makes His plan.

The information is available to the mortal man. It's available through the ministry of the Spirit. I really enjoy that song when I change the words to suit myself.

The information is available. We work at our jobs. We earn our pay.

And we're gliding down the highway. We may or may not be making progress. It depends on where we stand with the Lord.

The information is available. And we can make great strides, great progress, and we can enjoy great happiness. This is Peter's message.

This sums up the first nine verses of this chapter. Don't give away your gift. Have you ever gotten a gift at Christmas, and you look at it, and you say, you know what? I gave this to somebody three years ago, and they've forgotten, and now they're giving it to me.

This has been sitting on a shelf somewhere. They didn't even unwrap it. And here it is.

I don't know if this has happened to me, but I've seen it happen. I've seen somebody get a gift, and it turns out they re-gifted. They gave a gift that they got that they couldn't use.

And there's nothing intrinsically wrong with that. But if you're given this great and precious gift from God, don't hand it away. Don't discard it.

Don't set it on a shelf and never use it. We can enjoy our troubles. We can enjoy our hardships.

We can enjoy the process of working through difficulties. We're not going to be slap-happy or giggly necessarily, but we can enjoy it because we have this extra dimension in our lives that Peter is talking about here. Receiving the end of your faith.

This is the deliverance of your soul. Your soul is still in your body. It's still in the earth.

It's still in the midst of troubles. But it's delivered out of the misery and the oppression and the slavery and the limitation of that circumstance because I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded that He's able to keep what I've committed to Him against that day.

That future day is coming. The time is short. These tests are limited.

I don't have to get wrapped around the axle. I don't have to get tied up in knots. I don't have to

wake up in the middle of the night worrying about stuff.

God is in His heaven. He planned this. He assigned this to me.

He made perfect provision for me to get through this trial. There is nothing that is going to be a surprise to God. There is no part of this test that He hasn't already foreseen, already made provision for, and that He didn't design especially and specifically for me.

It's a gift. It's the perfect, tailor-made plan of God for me. He's tailored it better than any foreign-made suit of clothes.

It's perfect, and it's just for me. God made it, He designed it, and He designed the deliverance. He built it right in.

He built in the growth, and He built in the benefit. I ought to be happy about that. You're happy, you look under the tree, and here's a box that's got your name on the tag, and you say, wow, you open it up, and here's something you really wanted.

Well, guess what? The gift that God has given us is a perfect plan for our lives. It is finely tuned. It is infinitely balanced.

We've talked about that. Don't give away your gift. Don't ignore your gift.

We ought to be happy. Get a gift from each other. That's one kind of happiness.

You get a gift from the Lord God that has your name and only your name on the tag. We ought to be really happy about that. Joy inexpressible and full of glory.

This is an unfading joy. This is a permanent joy. This is a joy that we will look back on and continue to enjoy all through the eternal future.

We'll always think back at this life and think, look at the wonderful way that God provided for me. Look at the wonderful way He designed the path that I would take through my life, the family I would have, the situations I would encounter, the experiences. God designed this for me.

Just me. Nobody else was born where I was born. Nobody else got to do what I got to do.

Nobody else has been where I've been, seen what I've seen, felt what I've felt, failed where I've failed. I've explored avenues of failure nobody's even seen before. They're liable to write a whole failure book in the third testament of the Bible just on me.

There'll be the book of Job, and then there's going to be the book of Sam. And in the book of Sam, there's going to be this huge, here's Sam facing the test, failed. Here's Sam facing the test, failed.

Here's Sam facing the test, failed. And it'll go that way for, you know, a couple dozen chapters. But Lord Grant, somewhere toward the end, he finally got it.

After 27 tries, on try number 28, he climbed out of the slough of despond, he climbed out of the morass of impatience, and he got there. He made it. How glorious will that be as a tribute to the grace of God that he didn't just disassemble my atoms and say, you know what, 27 times, forget it, I'm sick of looking at this guy.

Take him out of the game. Run somebody else on. Think about your life.

It is unique. Of all of the billions of people that have ever been on the planet, nobody, they try to tell you this, you know, in secular terms, you're special. You really are special in the plan of God and only in the plan of God.

If you're not in the plan of God, you're not special. How many Chinamen have lived and died in China? Living up, planting a little bit of rice, eating a little bit of rice, planting a little more rice, eating a little more rice, and dying. There's billions of Chinamen that have lived and died, nobody ever knows they were here.

Not you. You are a member of the body of Christ. You have a plan and a purpose that God made for you.

Nobody else. And it's eternal. It's graven in the gold of heaven.

Don't fritter it away. Don't ignore it. Don't forget it.

Because if you can remember this, you can rejoice at any time. You can rejoice in anything. Because this momentary light affliction is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed in the sons of God.

That's scripture. I don't remember where it is. You can look it up.

So, joy inexpressible and full of glory. Receiving the end of your faith. Receiving now the end of your faith.

What's the good of faith if it's only pie in the sky, by and by, and you're just as miserable as any old heathen? We get deliverance now. First chapter of Colossians, I think it is, where Paul says that God's purpose is to deliver us out of this present evil age. Christ died to deliver us out of this present taxing, testing age.

Not just raise us up out of the dust of death. Deliver us now. Do you feel it? Do you experience it? Do you care about it? Do you access it? Do you grab hold of it? Do you commit yourself? Are you a grasper, an embracer, a carrier of this great salvation? If not, what are we waiting for? It's here.

It's now. And it's great. Better than any high that the world has to offer.

Of this deliverance, the deliverance I have just described, the prophets have inquired and searched carefully. Now I'm immediately... I have to stop right there. The prophets have inquired and searched about this deliverance.

What prophets? In what way did they inquire and search? What prophet ever said anything about this? You all have played some Bible trivia? A lot of you. What prophet ever inquired in and searched carefully to this salvation? Who are the prophets? You've got your major prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

Any of those guys? Can you think of any case where Ezekiel said, Oh Lord, when is that deliverance going to come? Isaiah. Isaiah spends 39 chapters delivering God's criticism and judgment against Judah and the rest of the 27 chapters telling them their comfort and their encouragement. Does he ever say anything about this? Look at what Peter says here.

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. Now, there's two parts of this prophecy. Do you see them? Do you sleepy people see them? The two parts of the prophecy? If you had your Bible open, you could see it.

There's two parts of the prophecy. What are they? Two parts. They inquired and searched diligently.

Here's an old prophet. An old baggy robe wearing prophet back by the river Kabar or schlepping around in Judah someplace. And he says, I wonder something.

What is he wondering? What is he inquiring into? Can you see it? Two things. First of all, what is the time or at least the manner of time that this deliverance is going to come? Is it near or is it far? Is it going to happen tomorrow? Is it going to happen a thousand years from now? They knew that God had promised deliverance. Right? But, they were inquiring and don't people inquire today? Wouldn't you like to know when the rapture is? Wouldn't you like to know when Jesus is coming back? What if I could tell you beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ is returning at 425 p.m. day after tomorrow? Would it be helpful? Would it be interesting? Would it make you do anything different on Saturday? Think you might change which ball game you watch or which task you complete? Lord Jesus is coming back.

I better get ready. Better make sure I'm fessed up. Maybe I'll get in a little Bible reading.

Maybe I'll get in a little bit of last minute fellowship and try to score a few more eternal points before the Lord comes and takes me to the judgment. Well, these guys were wondering. They knew that God had promised salvation.

They said, well, when is it? And if I can't figure out exactly when it is, can I at least get the type of time that it will be? That's what it says here, indicating what or what manner of time. Is there a specific year or can you at least tell me the conditions? I can identify it by its characteristics. This is what Jesus does when he says, in the last days there shall be.

Matthew 24. Remember that? So that's one part. What's the other part of the prophecy that he's talking about here? The prophets who prophesied of this 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 of what? The sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

So, we want to figure out the time of the sufferings of Christ because the glories follow it. First the sufferings, then the glories. Now, does this in any way parallel what Peter has been talking about? Has he said anything about suffering now and glory afterward? I hope you recognize that that's what he's been talking about in the first nine verses.

Even though for a time you experienced some sorrows and some testing, some dokimazo of your faith, you rejoice because you know that there is glory and deliverance following and you experience that deliverance and that glory now. That joy. This is the same salvation that the prophets were trying to figure out when it would come.

The sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. He's the archetype. He suffers first, glory comes later.

The devil tried to throw him off of this track. Remember? I'll give you the kingdoms of the world without the suffering. Just bow down.

That's not hard. It doesn't hurt. I'll move away the rocks here, get you a nice sandy spot.

Just bow down. I'll give you the kingdoms. All glory, no suffering.

What about it? The prophets understood. Suffering first, then glory. Jesus came and experienced.

Suffering first, suffering with us in his earthly life and ultimately suffering on the cross. But can you imagine the Lord of glory wandering around bumping into the likes of us with our pettiness and our short-sightedness? You look at the Pharisees and it's just the culmination of everything that's wrong with human nature. He suffered in his life long before he suffered in his death.

Oh, ye of little faith. Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her chicks, but you would have none of me. Your salvation has come and you don't see it.

And the Lord wept. The Lord wept when he raised Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, because after so much teaching and so much investment of himself, they just couldn't see it. They couldn't get it.

How frustrating. How difficult it had to be for the Lord to not sin in his mind, to not call down 10,000 angels to wipe everything out and start fresh. But he was obedient.

He suffered in his flesh. He learned obedience through the things that he suffered, it tells us. First suffering, then glory.

So guess what? For the believer who knows what's going on, the more you suffer, the more you are potentially lined up for glory and joy. Count it all joy, brethren, when you fall into various trials, knowing. Count it all joy, knowing.

Count it all joy, knowing that this testing of your faith is producing patience. Let patience have its perfect work. Why? Can you quote it? Let patience have its perfect work in you, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

You know what one of the greatest conditions to be in is? I lack no good thing. Can't even tell you what I want for Christmas. I've got everything I want.

Walk in the store. Don't even pull out a credit card. I have everything I want.

I am totally content. I lack no good thing. Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

What a great promise. But, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, because the trials are the key to entering into the faith, which leads you to patience. Patience has its perfect work, and you wind up being perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

It's an essential. We just back up and look at the big picture. This trial, this tough time, this laborious period, this difficult task, this challenge to my attitude, this challenge to my motivation, this challenge to my faith, is a good thing.

Why? Because it's connected. It's not meaningless. It's not the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, like it is for godless people, heathen people, and for ignorant, apathetic, indifferent believers.

Everybody is going to suffer. But, the faithful believer parlays suffering into blessing, into glory, into joy. That's our privilege.

Don't fumble that ball. Don't drop that gift. Don't stick it on a back shelf and lose it.

You have that. No other religion, no other faith system, no other people in the earth have it, but us. It's a precious, precious gift from God.

Don't miss it. Peter is reminding these scattered people that this is the gift they brought with them. It's something that doesn't require being in the land or being in any particular place.

It's always their possession. Well, that's how he moves into this section that begins in verse 10 and goes into 11. That's where we'll pick up when we come back from our break.