

Kings and Prophets 15-02-27a

This is Friday, the 12th of November, 2010. We continue our study in the book of 1 Peter. We resume in verse seven of chapter one.

We'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we will begin. Father, we are always so grateful for the manifold ways that you express your grace and your faithfulness toward us. We deserve nothing.

We can earn nothing. We have nothing to bring before you. Everything that we have has come from you through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for him. We pray that our study tonight will prepare us and motivate us and enable us to be better servants and better Christians, provide a better reflection of your glory. We pray that the things we address tonight from your word will be meaningful to each one of us and will be something with which God the Holy Spirit can equip us for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. You will remember in the book of 1 Peter, we have a letter written to people who are not in ideal circumstances. The ideal circumstance for a Jewish family, a Jewish individual, is to be living in the land, preferably in or near Jerusalem.

If you love the Lord, if you want to worship, if you want to immerse yourself in his word, baptize yourself daily, as it were, in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit, you want to be near that center ordained by God, the place where he chose to establish his name, and that is Jerusalem. These Jewish individuals and families are not in or near Jerusalem or Israel. They are in the dispersion.

They're in Pontius and Galatia and so on. And so Peter is writing. He is a designated apostle to these people.

Jesus said, you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and Judea and in Samaria until the end of the age. Those 11 apostles are witnesses to the Jewish people, and this is their primary, not exclusive, but it is their primary domain. Just as Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, nevertheless, he did minister and witness to the Syrophenician woman, the Roman centurion, and others.

It's the same with Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, that is all the rest of those disciples excluding the apostle Paul. And remember, he's the apostle to the Gentiles, and yet he also bears witness to Jews. So it's not a rigorous legalistic distinction.

It is an emphasis. It is a primary mission. Just because you have a primary mission or wear a primary hat doesn't mean that you cannot fulfill others as God wills.

But Peter is writing to his primary sheep, and they're not Catholics, and he's not their Pope. He's a Jewish apostle, and he's writing to Jewish Christians. And this is his primary role.

He's not a guy in a long golden robe with a pointy hat living in Rome. He is a Jewish fisherman converted to be a fisher of men. And those good fish are already swimming in the Sea of Galilee, but he wants to capture them for the kingdom.

He wants to bring them into that place of productivity and fruitfulness. It's not just evangelism. It is teaching, and that's what this letter is.

It is teaching. It is taking believers in Jesus Christ. It's not an evangelistic letter in any way, shape or form.

It is an encouragement. It is a preachment. It is edification for believers, teaching believers.

Believers, his audience, those to whom the Lord Jesus Christ called him. He begins, and throughout this letter, makes reference to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope. And we talked about what it means to be born again last week.

And we talk constantly, you hear references to born again Christians. And we sort of lose the meaning through that frequent use. What an opportunity, what a wonderful new potential it is to be in Christ.

And our potentials are renewed every day. It's not like, well, I got saved. I had a lot of chances, but now I've been saved a while and I've kind of had to adjust my expectations.

I'm not as ambitious. I'm not as motivated. I don't, no.

Every day, God's mercies are renewed every morning. This is why David in the Psalms says, evening and morning and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud and he will hear my voice. He doesn't say, when I first get saved, I'll cry aloud.

And if it doesn't work out, then I'm just going to be kind of a halfway, you know, middle of the road, average Christian every day. God's mercies are renewed every morning. I can't tell you how many times I wake up in the morning and it occurs to me, this is a resurrection.

I laid down last night and it is as though I died. And look, God has given me another day. I could have died in my sleep.

If I die before I wake, I pray the Lord, my soul to take. But I didn't. I wake up and it's a new life.

It's a new chance. It's a new opportunity. It's a clean slate.

Pray in the morning, ask God to bless your efforts. And you're given another day. Every morning is a resurrection.

Every morning is a new birth. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Well, what if you've been in Christ for 40 years? You're still a new creation.

He doesn't say if any man believes in Christ, he was a new creation. We are a new creation. It's the most wonderful thing.

Nobody else anywhere can give you renewal, personal renewal. They can renew your magazine subscription. They can renew the warranty on your camera or something.

But you can't be young again if you're getting old, reconcile yourself, quit your complaining. You had your chance to be young. You're not gonna be renewed in this life to youth.

They've got a couple of pills you can take that make you feel young, at least temporarily. What is that? Meloxicam I took for a while. I took Meloxicam for my shoulder and I felt young.

I felt like I had lost 20 years of aging. That stuff is great. But can't live on pills.

Well, some of us can't live on pills. Some of us do. But hear me now.

Peter says, born again to a living hope. God begets us to a, it's a living hope. It's not a one time, get it while you can hope.

It's a living hope. Every day you live, there is this hope. Forget the failures.

Forget the shortcomings. Forget the, I flunked the test. Forgetting those things which are behind, Paul says, I press toward the mark of the high call of God in Christ Jesus.

You can't let yourself be dragged down. God can convert cursing to blessing. God can take the results and the consequences and the ongoing issues related to failure, whether it's our failure or somebody else's failure.

He can work things together for good. How many times have you seen someone who has suffered a severe trauma in their life? Somebody comes back from the war and they're blind or they have lost limbs or they've had some terrible experience and yet it has opened a door of ministry and testimony and opportunity to learn and draw closer to God. And those people will honestly tell you that they are thankful for their disaster.

They weren't thankful when it happened and they might not have been thankful in the course, but eventually most of us reach a place where we look back and we say, the world meant it for evil. Others meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Joseph didn't enjoy being sold into slavery by his brothers.

He didn't enjoy spending time in an Egyptian prison, but when he was second only to Pharaoh in the land and was able to deliver his entire family and bless them beyond all comprehension, he said, brothers, I forgive you. I love you. I am glad to see you.

I know you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. And of course, it's a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who came and was sold out by his brethren. And it was as though he was dead to his father.

The bloody coat of many colors was brought before God the father. And it was as though the son had died. And yet to Jacob, Joseph, it is a resurrection.

My son that I thought was dead is alive. And there is that great reunion and reconciliation and look at what Joseph has become through that necessary suffering. And that's the theme of our study in this section of chapter one of 1 Peter tonight is what God does.

We're going to enter into one of the major themes of the letter, what God does through our difficulties. Difficulties, large and small. Sometimes we think, well, if I lost an arm, if I lost my spouse or a child or a loved one, some great catastrophic huge event, then God would work through that.

Every difficulty, every test, every poikilos, remember we had that last time, every different kind, every different variety, poikilos perosmon. And it's translated though for now, you suffer various trials. This same word is used later on in the book to talk about God's grace.

And there it's translated manifold, the manifold grace of God. Well, it's poikilos. Even though now you have manifold, what's the grace of God like? Sometimes it's big, sometimes it's small.

Sometimes it's stunning. Sometimes it's very subtle. Sometimes it's splashy and seismic and captures the imagination.

Other times we almost recognize it after the fact. We look back and say, look at how God has been gracious. I didn't even recognize it at the time.

Our tests are described by the very same word as God's grace. They're manifold. It's translated multicolored, many colored in some contexts in Greek.

Poikilos is, it's variegated. We talk about flowers being variegated in their colors. Poikilos.

So the deliverance, that prepared deliverance, that pre-planned. I was thinking about this in the Marine Corps, they have units that will serve for a time as a ready unit. You're on call.

If the flare goes up, if some emergency strikes, there are units that are on standby. They're on alert. And when we were in Okinawa, we did this I think two or three different times where we were the standby artillery battery.

And if anything were to happen in that part of the world, India Battery 312 would be the guys. We had our stuff pre-packed. We had our chow, our bullets, our powder, all of our stuff staged and ready.

And within three hours, we could be off the island and in the air and ready to go react. It's like a quick reaction platoon would be in a smaller context. And so you, in order to do that, and even now the military has a cache of equipment, ammunition, food, all of the things that a unit needs.

And it's pre-positioned. They are pre-positioned stores. They are put in the ready for whoever is on call and is gonna go to a place.

You get a unit on alert and they take their light gear with them. And then you take these pre-staged resources and you unite them at the point of need. And so these pre-staged things, it's already prepared.

Somebody sat down and thought, now we need to put enough stuff, enough equipment and supplies in here to last this size unit for two weeks. We will not have to resupply them for two weeks. This will keep them going for half a month.

It's pre-planned. It's been thought out. It's already staged.

And at a moment's notice, it will be delivered. That's the description of our deliverance. It's ready deliverance.

It says ready to be revealed. It's not the revelation that's ready. It's the salvation that's ready.

It's a ready salvation, which will be shown in the last time. And so he says in verse six, in this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you are grieved by various trials. Poikilos perosmos in Greek.

And at the risk of once again, being a master of the obvious, do you notice something here in verse six? This pre-staged, pre-planned, already finished deliverance. It's kind of like when the alert battery shows up at the point of battle. Oh, look, here comes the helicopters and here's all of our stuff.

It was already ready. And now here it is when we need it. That's the way our deliverance is going to come.

That's the way our salvation is going to be shown. We are going to see how perfect it is and how tailor-made and how exact God in the past made it specifically for us. And we will see that in that final time.

We don't see it now. We have a different kind of deliverance now. We have a daily deliverance.

We are delivered in and through and sometimes out of our trials. God has three different kinds of deliverance now. There is, I am tested, I am in a trial, I'm in a tribulation and God gives me deliverance sustaining me through it.

There is a resolution of that trial. It's a big problem and God solves it. We overcome it.

We're victorious. We win a battle and we conquer that thing. And there is a deliverance out and away from.

We are just grabbed by the hair of the head like Ezekiel and snatched out of a trial. So you can

endure through, you can overcome and resolve or you can be removed from the trial. Three different kinds of in-time deliverance.

This deliverance that Peter is talking about is that there is a salvation, which is a part of our hope that is going to be revealed at the last time. And that deliverance is, we're going to be delivered from the flesh. We're going to be delivered from the world.

We're going to be delivered from Satan, the devil. We will, that is a complete, every kind of deliverance. We are hopefully going to be overcomers.

We will have survived through this life and we will be delivered out. It's going to be all three rolled into one. That salvation that is prepared for each one of us.

Each one of us has a resurrection body. Each one of us will have an assigned place in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in supervisory or in service or in whatever other role. It's tailor-made.

We have a designated slot. There is a great organizational chart that the Lord Jesus has where he says, I go to prepare a place for you. Well, the place is organized.

It's got functions. It has hierarchies. It has services.

It has opportunities. It has things to do. It's not just a shelf to set a vase on.

It's organic. It is meaningful. It has a mission.

It has a purpose. It moves forward. People will actively be doing things and serving God, serving the Lord Jesus.

And that is all rolled up in this ready deliverance. We are going to be delivered into a new world for which we are being prepared now. And it says in this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by poikilos perasmos, by various trials.

And my obvious point here is you can be suffering and be joyful. You can have joy even while you're being tested or taxed. It is possible because look what it says.

In this, you greatly rejoice, though you are experiencing, if need be, various trials. So if you look at it spatially, look up here for a second, here is my trial. Here is my hope.

Here is my expectation, my knowledge of the prepared deliverance. One is here and one is here. In this, my prepared deliverance, what I know of God and his plan and his grace and his purpose and his salvation.

In this, I rejoice, though for a time, if need be, down here, I am tested and I am taxed. It doesn't say I'm rejoicing about this. Oh Lord, pour on the pain.

Oh Lord, send me another problem. I'm enjoying this so much. In this salvation, I rejoice.

So you know how they talk about pain management? We want to talk about joy management. You can't get so focused on your trial that you miss your hope because your hope is where your joy is. And if you lose sight of hope and you lose sight of God's prepared and ready deliverance, your joy dissipates.

And what this tells us by way of application is, you can't obsess on your problems and maintain joy. Joy is not going to be in the problems. The joy comes from our hope.

In this, you greatly rejoice. It doesn't take your problems away, but that's where your excitement and your happiness and your peace is. It's in the knowledge, it's in the recognition of that deliverance.

Now, say, okay, I understand the separation deal. That's kind of a man thing. You know, women integrate everything, convolute and involve everything.

Men segregate and compartmentalize. That's kind of the way we're built. So that would just be a man thing.

I'm going to put the salvation and the joy and the hope up here, and I'm going to put the problem and the pain and the trial down here. And some of the women are saying, well, I just can't do that. You know, I just can't think about one without thinking about the other.

Well, here's the thing. How do you do this? Especially if you're not built that way. It's probably harder for women than it is for men.

I find it relatively easy to compartmentalize. In fact, it can almost be a problem. Get so compartmentalized, I forget to open the door and check on stuff in the other compartments.

But how do you do this? So, okay, so one's up here and one's down here. How do I do it? This is why we are told and enjoined and reminded and exhorted and commanded to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night. I can use my eyes and see my problems.

I can use my ears and hear my problems. I can use my hands and feel my problems. The ready deliverance, the grace and the glory of God, the hope of eternal future citizenship in heaven, my inheritance with the Lord on high, I only see through the eyes of faith in meditation, in deliberating and thinking about the word of God.

I must see my salvation and my hope through the word of God. That's where it is revealed. That's where the picture is painted.

I can't see it unless I look at and meditate on the word of God and God, the Holy Spirit, ministers it to our souls. So if I'm going to keep these things in some sort of balance, if I'm going to have joy in my life, I cannot neglect the spirit of God that is in me. I cannot neglect the word of God that has been taught to me.

I cannot neglect the insight and the picture of real and eternal things that is given to me in the

word of God. This is why our Bible study is so important because without the word of God, the Holy Spirit cannot speak. He doesn't speak on his own.

Jesus said, he's not going to speak from himself. He is going to take the things of me. He's going to take the words that I've spoken.

He's going to take whatsoever I've commanded you. He's going to take the inspired words of scripture and reveal truth. He will lead you into all truth.

We have to have that. And without it, we're no better than the carnal man who is carnally minded and cannot enter into spiritual things which are spiritually discerned. You might as well be an unbeliever.

You might as well be a backslider. You might as well be a reversionist. You might as well be a reverse process reversionist.

You might as well be whatever your definition is of somebody that has lost their inheritance, sold it for a mess of pottage and is no better than an unbeliever. Believers can be helpless, hopeless, and useless by relinquishing birthright, relinquishing the grace of God, fallen from grace, cut off from Christ, enemy of the cross, clouds without rain, spots on love feasts, cursing by association. It's possible.

It is a daily feature of many Christians. Many of us as Christians are a blight on the body of Christ, a blot on the escutcheon of God where, as Paul told the Galatians, you've been bewitched, you've been led astray. Who got you off the path? You ran well.

Who hindered you? Think about this last week. This is like a little moment of truth. Think about the last week.

On any given day, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, how much time did we carve out of the day to stop activity and sit down and devote a few minutes to meditating on the word of God? Who am I? Why am I here? What have I learned in Bible class? What do I see when I open my personal copy of God's word and read a portion of it? When I go to the Lord in prayer, what comes to my heart? How many times did I do that this last week? Don't tell yourself what you're going to do in the coming week. What have we done? And if we have not given the Lord five minutes out of a 10 or 12 or 14 or 16 or 18 hour day, can we really be surprised when we experience failure, when we experience lack of fruitfulness? In this, you greatly rejoice the hope of God's deliverance, which is revealed in scripture, but your joy is going to be proportional to your vision. You can't rejoice in this if you can't see this, if you don't know this, if it isn't a reality, if it doesn't have features and handles that you can grab hold of, how can you rejoice in what you do not know? Hey kids, I've got a surprise for you.

Oh, what is it? What is it? Can't tell you. Just be happy. Be happy that something's coming.

Well, but what is it? Is it a present or a spanking? Can't tell you, something's coming. I need

details. I got it at the toy store and it's in a big box and it's heavy and it rattles and it plugs into the wall.

Now I'm getting excited because there's a thing I've been wanting that's big and rattles and plugs into the wall and comes from that store. So now you're giving me details. Now I'm getting excited because I have knowledge.

I can have imagination. I have expectation. I have anticipation.

In this, you greatly rejoice. In this, you greatly rejoice even though you're having testing. You used to always wonder, you know, count it all joy, brother, when you fall into various trials.

Kind of easy to say and harder to do. Well, Peter is giving us the how-to. Peter knows how to suffer.

Peter has suffered a lot and will suffer a lot more before his life ends. He knows what he's talking about. He had the personal teaching of the Lord Jesus.

And can you imagine Peter in his times of meditation, thinking back to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, thinking back to the sea of Galilee, thinking back to times in the boat, calm water, Jesus speaking, revealing truth, answering questions. You know, what would you give for one of those days? Speak Aramaic, be able to talk to the Lord, ask Him any question. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is right there to tell a parable instead of answering your question and make you think.

Well, you know, how many baskets of fragments did you take up last time? How many did you take up this time? Do you get it? Wouldn't that be great? That's gonna be our privilege. If we are close enough to the Lord Jesus, if we anticipate our ready salvation, we can walk in white with the Lord Jesus. We can sit next to Him in a chair and have that privilege endlessly.

But you have to want it. It's like a lot of things in life. You don't get things by not pursuing them.

If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time. We have to know what we're after. We have to recognize what that deliverance is.

We have to know the substance of our heavenly citizenship. In this, you greatly rejoice. Though now, if need be, you have been grieved by poikilos perosmos, manifold, multicolored, large and small, many shapes and sizes, trials.

So that, verse seven, hina, this is a purpose clause. Why would God make us suffer? Why would He put us through things? Why did Joseph have to go to prison? Why did Joseph have to be sold into slavery? Couldn't God have elegantly sent him down on a trip and Pharaoh took a shine to him and said, I like you, young lad. You look like you've got promise.

Why did he have to go through all this suffering to get to that high place? Joseph would not have been the same man had he simply taken a pleasure trip to Egypt and struck up a

friendship with the Pharaoh and have been elevated to high government office. He is who he is and he does what he does because of what God taught him on that journey, on that path through tribulation and trial. The Lord Jesus Christ himself learned about obedience through the things that he suffered.

The Lord Jesus Christ gained insight. The Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience through the things that he suffered. It is valuable.

It is necessary. We could not be, God can't make us the same kind of people if we don't go through these trials. You can't get strong if you don't push against resistance.

You can't be a faster runner and post a better time unless you push until it hurts. But how gratifying is it when you achieve that goal, when you reach that place? Practice is tedious. Repetition is tedious.

Certain things are not pleasant at the time, but they afterward yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. So that, Hena, we go through this, so that the genuineness of faith, much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to the praise, honor, and glory, to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We have a couple of interesting observations about this gold that we'll address when we come back from the break.