**The Salvation of Your Soul**

Based on [1 Peter 1](https://biblia.com/books/esv/1Pe1)

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Lenten Midweek 1

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St. Peter wrote his first epistle to the “elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” From the beginning, the one true catholic and apostolic church has been dispersed…*scattered* throughout the world in various places. Though dispersed, the church is still a whole,--one in mind, one in spirit, one in baptism, one in faith, one in the Lord Jesus Christ. **Just as the soldiers divided Jesus’ outer garments, but his inner tunic remained seamless, (1) so too the church may be scattered outwardly, but is inwardly united by the seamless doctrine and faith delivered once for all to the saints.** (2) So too, the faithful are dispersed throughout the earth, but have their permanent residence in heaven. (3) So too the enemies of the church can destroy Christ’s body and scatter its many members, but they cannot destroy the soul.

The church has been, and always will be dispersed and scattered…like so many rosebuds scattered in a thicket. In a smattering of different places, circumstances, and challenges, there is still a united purpose, goal and hope that centers and focuses such people to congregate together, huddle together in the wilderness. Peter writes, “**You believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls**.”

The Son of God created our race; and when we were sold into sin he ransomed us with the blood of his cross, more precious than Gold or Silver. My life is his; your life is his. Some preachers today promise that if you follow Christ, he will help you achieve *your* personal goals. The most contemporary churches promise that if you strive meet the felt needs of each and every person, Jesus will grow *your* church. But the Christianity preached by St. Peter assumes that all true Christians already have the same goal, the same hope, the same crystal clear purpose. It’s not to have a great job, perfect spouse and exactly 2.5 children. It’s not to be a part of a church that has a winning strategy for successfully collect as many warm bodies as it can. The Christianity preached by St. Peter *assumes* that every one of the elect exiles of the dispersion have as their only goal to receive the crown of eternal life from their Saviour, and to remain in the faith that guards souls unto salvation. In short, the goal of the Christian--the one whose soul has been redeemed by Christ--is to live their life in such a way as not to lose their soul. This can only happen through the continual planting--in season and out of season--of the imperishable seed in our hearts…the living and abiding word of God.

The Good News is that this salvation is not something that you have to earn or accomplish for yourself. The crown of eternal life has already been won for you. **The treasure is laid up in heaven by the blood of Christ, who has ransomed you from the futile ways of the world, a world that is destined to go on seeking but never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, or attain the righteousness of heaven.** The crown is prepared for you, adorned with precious jewels from the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundation of the world. And you are here now to wait for the revealing of Him on the last day…the day of your coronation. You will be crowned with eternal life only to cast *your* crowns before the king of all creation.

Peter writes to just such elect exiles and saints dispersed…knowing that they are of the same mind and judgment as he. **Having attained salvation, they must be taught how to live in it without losing it.** Having nothing to accomplish in this world—(since Christ has accomplished all things)--we are not to strive after perishable things like, wealth, happiness, honor, and earthly praise. Our atonement is finished, and there is nothing left undone for us to do.

We have the victory through Christ. And so now we wait. We wait. We wait in this land as strangers, waiting for his coming. Not in idleness do we wait…not in anxiousness, not in perplexity, but in *holiness*…that is in the Spirit of Christ, who sanctifies you. The devil, the world, and our flesh would ever entice us towards the next conquest, bigger wage, better employment, a bigger house, more retirement savings, away from contentment in order to covet the things of this world. **But the only thing we need is righteousness, and that has already been achieved for us by Christ, and bestowed upon us through faith.** We still strive, but not for earthly gain; but towards our heavenly treasure. Peter reminds us that in Christ we are holy and we are to remain holy. It is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

We are exiles, a select few saints huddled together for warmth in this or that city or town. So now that we have already obtained everything and come together in shared warmth of the gospel, we are called to this purpose. We are called to conduct ourselves with fear throughout the time of our exile. Not fear of the devil, or fear of the world--but fear of God who can destroy both body and soul in hell. **The devil and the world seek after your redeemed soul, to return it to its former bondage to sin make it worthy of such divine destruction.**  You cannot make yourself holy, but you can desecrate yourself. You cannot earn salvation, but you can forfeit it.

Therefore, the remainder of Peter’s epistle is aimed at instructing such exiles as ourselves how to conduct ourselves while we are waiting. **How to strive, not *for* the flesh, but *against* it.**  He tells us to be sober minded, meaning that we set our hope FULLY…fully—(that means *only*)--on the consummate grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Christ. And since we sit in hope for something that will come only in the fullness of time, we are given instruction in the manner in which we are to wait.

“**As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.”** We were once slaves to sin, according to the nature of our sinful flesh. And though that sin is not who you are, it still sticks to your bones. Sin is crouching at your door, you must overcome it. **You must subdue it, master it, keep it from enticing you to seek temporary treasures that will only divide your loyalty to Christ and corrupt your conviction to the truth.** You cannot serve two masters; in the end you will love one and despise the other. And what then? What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?

In the next weeks and the next chapters, Peter will instruct us how we are to remain holy in our various callings. For we are all under authority, and have duties given to us as Mother, Father, son, daughter, husbands, wives, workers, citizens, and children of God. **All of these will require suffering, but that is only because they require a love for one another that issues from a pure heart, which is the sanctuary of holiness for those who believe.** Because this is love…*sacrifice and suffering for one another*. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. And greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.