

June 15, 2012

*Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."*

I have been sharing recently from 1 Peter 1:3-8 in visitation among our senior saints. They have found the truths to be precious, as I trust you and I will as well.

1Peter 1:3-9

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us *new birth* into a *living hope* through the *resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, and into an *inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation* that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Peter addresses his hearers as strangers and pilgrims, aliens and outcasts. As such, his hearers have lost their earthly inheritance as displaced persons. Displacement can lead to disorientation, and an overwhelming sense of loss that can cause sufferers to believe life is no longer worth living.

Peter, the displaced fisherman is not disoriented. He has found his identity as a Christ follower, and his inheritance secure in heaven.

There are two ways to lose an earthly inheritance. It perishes, or we do! Either way, we lose it. Every earthly inheritance is, for that very reason, temporary. We outlive it or it outlives us! But our inheritance in Christ is secure for both of these same reasons. It is kept and so are we.

In the final analysis, what matters is what lasts! We have a lasting inheritance, and therefore a future that makes all the present distress endurable in that our suffering is temporary and leads to eternally productive glory.

Using the analogy of inheritance we are naturally drawn to what gives us identity (passed down) and security. An inheritance comes to us from our ancestor, passed down as a birthright. It is this generational inheritance that provides substantial security for the future. Peter calls us to see our new-birth-right inheritance, secured by Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Consider the following statements in the context of inheritance.

*new birth* – a new birth gives us a new family and therefore a new birth right to inheritance

*living hope* – not just a hope that lasts as long as I live, but a hope that is itself alive and enduring

*resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* – the One who gives us new birth and living hope is the risen guarantor of our inheritance who has conquered death and is able to maintain our eternal inheritance.

*into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade* – these three words describe three kinds of inheritance and what makes them temporary. "Perish" means to decay, and therefore unusable. It may refer to metals which were used for money. "Spoil" is to be defiled, and may refer to an inherited position. "Fade" refers to the demise of things of beauty, including flowers, paintings and physical

beauty. Considering the reality that all earthly, physical inheritances will in time perish, spoil or fade, we are told that our inheritance that not only *will not*, but "*cannot*" perish, spoil or fade. Our heavenly inheritance is therefore secure in quality.

*kept in heaven for you...* - not only is the inheritance secure in quality, it is secure in location, as it is kept in heaven by our risen Savior. This word "kept" connotes a military guard and fortress holding the object in complete security.

*who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation ready to be revealed...* - not only is the inheritance secure in quality and location, we ourselves are secure as we too are "shielded" (also a military connotation, that of mounting a guard) by God's omnipotence.

*We may be temporarily displaced strangers, but we are soon to be permanently positioned eternal heirs of an everlasting inheritance in heaven in Christ. It is not what we have temporarily lost that is at issue, it is what we have permanently gained that so far outweighs the loss that we are enabled to move through present sufferings with hope and anticipation of a yet to be realized glory soon to be bestowed.*

#### SELF CHECK:

- 1) Am I future focused, eagerly anticipating Christ's return or more often than not filled with regrets over past losses? Which focus captures my heart: anticipation or regret?
- 2) Am I heavenly minded? When was the last time that an earthly loss or suffering was put in its place in context of eternal glory soon to be mine?
- 3) Do I remind myself regularly of the glorious security of my heavenly treasures, that death is nothing to fear, but the doorway to glory in God's good time?

#### FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Trace the words "suffering(s)" and "glory" through the entire letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. Note the connection between Christ and his followers in both!

Matthew 6:19-34

Luke 9:22-26

Hebrews 9:15

Col 1:12; 3:24

Eph 1:11, 14

Acts 20:32; 26:18

O Risen Christ, You have given me new birth, eternal life, living hope, secure inheritance, and permanent glory with You in heaven. Forgive my complaints over temporary, earthly losses. Fill me anew with the realities of my eternal inheritance, that I treasure what lasts forever. All this is Your gift by grace. To You be everlasting glory. In Your saving, conquering Name I pray, Amen and Amen. "

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,  
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible  
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,  
spending our time on eternity,  
owning nothing yet possessing everything  
that matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY

