

### Friday: A Quest...

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:10-12<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,<sup>11</sup> inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.<sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

**Reflect:**

I often wonder if we realize how good we have it. I mean really, do we realize how GOOD we have it? We have the benefit of God’s entire revelation (the Bible, but also His supreme revelation – the person of Jesus). Yet quite often we want ‘just a little bit more’ – don’t we?

The words for “searched” and “inquired” indicate an intense searching for the truth. Some of this searching took place in the Scriptures. They weren’t as plentiful then as they are today. Just think about how many Bibles you have in your house, or have seen in your lifetime.

The image of angels longing to look into something is fascinating isn’t it? While this seems extremely odd to us, it will make more sense later in 1 Peter. Yet for now it is sufficient to say that angels don’t know everything (e.g., Mk13:32; Rom16:25; 1Cor2:6-9).

**Respond:**

Is there a ‘proof’ you’d like to have from God about something?

How much time do you spend reading your Bible each week? What about the newspaper, or romance novels, or websites, or \_\_\_?

What might have happened if God hadn’t kept His plan with Jesus ‘secret’ for so many years?

**Pray:** Thank God for His Word – pray you don’t take it for granted. Pray for the upcoming National Missionary Convention (Nov 20-23) in Tulsa. Continue to pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.

### Saturday: More Than Just A Day...

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:13-21<sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed...<sup>16</sup> since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”...<sup>21</sup>... so that your faith and hope are in God.

**Reflect:**

Sundays can be wonderful days. There are a lot of good things that happen on them. More than likely it is the longest sustained time that people focus on God during the week. For many it is an uplifting experience they forward to during the week.

Yet as wonderful as Sundays can be, I have a question. Could we live like it was Sunday all week long? Note, I’m not talking merely about having multiple days off from work – many would be all for that. I’m also not talking about me preaching a new sermon every day of the week – I certainly would **not** be for that...

What I’m talking about is the general attitude that sometimes permeates Sundays. Many times people will think twice about doing something they know is wrong because “it’s Sunday”. Quite often people focus more on God, will be kinder to others, etc. I wonder, could we really sustain that?

**Respond:**

What do you enjoy about Sundays at New Life? Do you tell others about it/them?

What can you do today, even right now, to prepare yourself for worship tomorrow at the building?

When was the last time you invited someone to come with you on Sunday?

**Pray:** Pray for those God is prompting to come to New Life tomorrow to be obedient and come. Pray that what we do tomorrow is pleasing to God and that lives will be positively impacted by the interactions we have, the singing, preaching, and teaching...pray for a God-honoring day. Thank God for His love.

# Blessed Be God...

October 12 – 18

Words of praise, blessing God, are found in various places...

- Psalm 66:20
  - <sup>20</sup> Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!
- Ephesians 1:3
  - <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
  - <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Words blessing God are also found in our text for this week from 1 Peter.

- 1 Peter 1:3-9
  - <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

Have you ever noticed that our thoughts may drift toward blessing and praising God when things are going well for us, but what about when things are not going well? More importantly, what about when we are being ridiculed (likely the most intense form of persecution many of us have faced) for our faith? Are we apt to bless God and praise His holy name then? Or are we more likely to question Him?

Despite our present circumstances, there are always reasons to praise and bless God. Please note that I’m not simply talking about praising Him because, “it could have been worse” – though I think we’ve all likely done, and said, that.

The Christian life isn’t a cake-walk. Yet it seems that with a proper focus it can be put in a perspective that makes it much ‘easier’. Yet gaining that perspective requires us to rise above our current circumstances. By that I don’t mean simply “overcoming” them (although that can be a part of it). We must seek to look at our current circumstances in light of eternity. Unfortunately we’re so programmed to focus on the here and now that this is easier said than done...

## Monday: Mercy

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:3-5<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

### Reflect:

It's interesting how the word "mercy" will conjure up different images for different people. For adolescent boys it may bring to mind the game where, with hands interlocked, the one who twists his opponent's appendages in such a way to bring forth the call for "mercy" is the winner. For a penitent criminal he may think of how his sentence was only a fraction of what he deserved.

For Christians it ought to evoke images of God's faithfulness. Images like a shepherd – One who provides all we need. Images like immersion – dying to our old way of life and being born again. Images like Communion – a reminder of what has happened and an expectation of what will happen in the future.

Another powerful image is that of the cross, or perhaps more appropriately, an empty tomb. Jesus' resurrection is a onetime fact of history that cannot be undone. While God was indeed "merciful" before that horrendous event, it has helped to make this better known so that all can experience His mercy.

### Respond:

What is your favorite image of God's mercy? Why?

How has God's mercy impacted (or how will it) your actions today?

I notice many prayers thanking God for Jesus' "death" – but not nearly as many thanking Him for the Resurrection. Do you notice anything wrong with that?

**Pray:** Thank God for our time of worship together yesterday as a body of believers. Pray that our lives will continue to be changed for His glory. Continue to pray for workers in God's Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).

## Tuesday: Living Hope

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:3-5<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

### Reflect:

Think about the descriptive words of "living hope" for a minute. What came to mind? If something is "living" isn't there the possibility of it "dying"? How do we keep things from dying? Generally speaking, we nurture them...

We are born again for the purpose of having a hope that is alive. This is possible because nothing can "undo" the resurrection of Jesus. In other words, we don't have to worry about 'the rules of the game' being changed on us at a later date. Jesus' resurrection sealed the deal; now we just have to be faithful.

The descriptive words of our inheritance (v4) paint the picture of something that cannot be tampered with or touched by anything. How reassuring that is in an age when many earthly inheritances are seemingly 'up for grabs' due to the uncertainty of the American economy.

### Respond:

How have you nurtured your hope today? What about yesterday? And the day before...?

The word for "ready" implies a 'moment's notice'. Are you (and those you know) that ready for the revealing of Jesus?

What can you do to ensure your heavenly inheritance gets more focus than what you may leave as an earthly one?

**Pray:** Thank God that nothing can take away from the inheritance He has in store for those who remain faithful to Him. Pray for someone (a neighbor, a coworker, ?) who needs to know Jesus. Continue to pray for God's people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).

## Wednesday: Refining

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:6-7<sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

### Reflect:

Do we rejoice in God's mercy that brings about our salvation? In other words, is it at the forefront of our minds? Based on the current state of the world, and the current state of many Christians, I deduce that we don't rejoice in God's mercy enough...

These verses also teach us a hard truth. God tests our faith. It's not something we like to think about. It seems we prefer a "genie-God" rather than, well, the "God-God". Yet the testing of our faith is for a purpose...

Paul's was "tested" (same word as "tested" in v7) before he was entrusted with the gospel. We must not forget that Jesus was put through trials by Satan (e.g., Matt4:1ff). Paul said that we must "test" ourselves to see if our faith is genuine (2Cor13:5). Those are all important to note. Yet equally important is asking if once we have been through a refining process, do we leave behind that which has been exposed as not genuine in our faith?

### Respond:

What is a creative way you can rejoice in God's mercy?

The language here indicates suffering because of a commitment to Jesus (not sickness, money woes, etc.). How have you suffered for Jesus lately?

How has your faith been refined in the last year?

**Pray:** Pray for the Youth Group as they meet tonight. Ask for a desire to have your faith refined for God's glory, and strength to withstand the test. Continue to pray for God's Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).

## Thursday: "Seeing" Jesus...

**Read:** 1 Peter 1:8-9<sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,<sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

### Reflect:

Has anyone seen Jesus lately? It depends on what you mean. If you're talking about pictures/paintings of Him I'm sure many of us have. Yet have you ever realized how unrealistic the majority of those pictures are? I.e., do you really think he looked Swedish, or had white skin?

If you mean see Him, bodily, none of us have. If you mean see Him figuratively – as in through our actions – I hope others see Him in us daily. Peter says that even though we haven't seen Him we love Him. Jesus said if we love Him we'll keep His commandments (Jn14:15).

Verse nine is hard for us isn't it? It drips of delayed gratification – something at which we're not that good (typically speaking). As important as the delayed gratification part of this verse is, there's also an instantaneous part to it. Salvation is ours, now. Eternal life is a present possession for Christians. It's all about a quality of life – not just a quantity. In this respect we see it has an "already" and "not yet" aspect to it. I.e., even though we "already" enjoy aspects of our salvation (e.g., forgiveness, communion with God) the "not yet" is that we still haven't fully experienced it (e.g., no effects of sin, full presence of God).

### Respond:

Do you have pictures of Jesus in your home? Why/why not?

How have others seen Jesus in you this week?

Who can you encourage to persevere in their faith today? Will you encourage them?

**Pray:** Thank God that our faith isn't solely based on our experiences. Pray for your heart to be obedient to Jesus' commands. Continue to pray for open doors to share God's Word (Col4:2-6) and the boldness to do so.