

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Enduring Present Distress By Future Hope

by Dan Trygg

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One according to His great mercy begetting-us-from-above to a hope living by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ unto an inheritance which is incorruptible and unsullied and unfading, having been kept in the heavenlies for y’all, ⁵ the ones by the power of God being guarded by means of faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ in order that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look. ¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:3-13

This paragraph begins with a declaration of praise for what great things God has done! The word for “blessed” here is an adjective, that literally means “well-spoken-of” (eulogētos). There is no stated verb in the first phrase. It is implied. Well-spoken-of is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. **Look what He has done! Speak forth His praises, ...declare His great mercy! Consider what He has done!**

He begot/birthed us from above! The word here is a compound word (ana + gennaō). As in John 3:3, the preposition “ana” can mean either “again” or “from above”. Both ideas are miraculous, but as we see the descriptors Peter adds here, I think it would make more sense to see that Peter is describing an “otherworldly” birth. What he describes certainly is not equivalent to just starting over again. **We definitely are not just born-again, ...we are born-from-above! We are also born to a living hope.** Literally, it is saying that we were born-from-above to an expectation of good that is “living by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ”. Is it significant that Peter did not simply say “a living hope”, but a “hope living by means of the resurrection of Jesus”? **Our born-from-above hope is being-alive and living by means of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ!**

But Peter is just getting started. Now he is going to expand on that thought. **We are born-from-above unto an inheritance that is incorruptible, unsullied, and unfading.** Note the alliteration. That is a reflection of the language Peter uses here. Each word begins with the same letter, which negates the word. Not-corruptible, not-defiled, not-fading. **This inheritance is glorious, ...and there is no defect in it, ...and there will never be any defect, imperfection or loss of glory. We currently know nothing like it!** Everything in this world spoils, gets dirty, or loses its shine. This inheritance, ...this allotted portion which the Lord has set aside for us..., is unaffected or unaltered by any of the things of this fallen world that cause things to wear out, decompose, or lose their beauty. The shine will never come off the apple, there, ...and no bloom will ever fall from a rose, in that place. We have been born-from-above for this undiminishable inheritance. And, just as it is something we have never experienced here, it is having been kept, reserved and guarded for us in the heavenlies. **It is not of this fallen world, and it is held in reserve for us in its pristine perfection, untouched by anything that could harm or injure it in any way.**

In vs. 5, the attention shifts from this glorious inheritance to us, the heirs, the designated recipients of this amazing birthright and endowment of God’s grace. **We are the ones in the power of God being guarded and protected through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed, uncovered in the last time.** The word for “being guarded” was used for protective custody, or of a city surrounded by a military garrison for protection. **It refers to not only being preserved from attack, but also being watched over to keep us within safe bounds.** Think of the secret service agents who guard and protect the president. They not only are watchful for attacks from the outside, but also keep the president within the bounds of defensible locations. We have that kind of protection, ...protection from the enemy and also from ourselves and our own foolish decisions. This does not mean that we cannot make mistakes, or face negative and disastrous consequences. **In this context, it is referring to the power of God keeping us unto salvation, ...a salvation that is prepared to be made known, uncovered and revealed at the end.** It is the power of God Himself that is keeping, guarding and protecting us. As Jesus’ brother, Jude, wrote, **“He is able (powerful) to keep you without stumbling and to cause you to stand before His glory faultless in great joy”** (Jude 1:24).

After describing this glorious inheritance, Peter makes another shift, “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials...” We are right to rejoice in our promised hope, ...our hope that is living within us through the resurrection power of Jesus that abides in us as ones born-from-above. But **that inheritance is not our present possession, yet. That will not be fully revealed until the end of the age.** Remember the context: We are God’s not-so-secret-agents, ...His choice, select resident aliens..., scattered and dispersed according to His foreknowledge alongside of the “earthlers” who are not yet alive toward God. **We are no longer from this world, ...yet we live here, in hostile territory. It should not be surprising that we might encounter trials and difficulties here.** We are the light in the midst of the darkness, ...and the darkness does not appreciate our presence (Jn. 3:19-21). The apostle Paul, on his first missionary journey, was stoned in Lystra. He survived, and, on his return trip, matter of factly said, “**Through many tribulations it is necessary for us to enter the kingdom of God.**” This was by no means the only time he experienced such things. In 2 Corinthians 11, he spoke of some of what he endured, ...labors, imprisonments, beatings, in threat of mortal danger, beating with rods, whippings, being shipwrecked, dangers from all kinds of unscrupulous or threatening people, enduring hardships, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, dealing with cold and exposure, ...all for the sake of proclaiming the gospel.

Not all of us will experience such extreme afflictions and difficulties, to be sure. But **the message of the NT is that we must be willing to choose self-denial to follow Jesus. He said that we must take up our cross to follow Him.** The cross was a method of capital punishment, ...a shameful, degrading, tortuous death. Jesus used this word picture on purpose, ...to prepare us for what we might face, ...what we may be called to do, ...if we are serious about following Him. Jesus Himself warned us that the world will hate us. It hated Him. It hated Him *not* because He did anything wrong. It hated Him because He did what was good and right. His good life exposed their evil hearts. That is one of the hard realities we must face. **People will misunderstand us, ...speak evil of us, ...talk behind our backs. They will look for any fault, so they can use it against us. Why? Because we are no longer of this world, ...and something in them is repelled by us.** This is a reality. **This is not rational, ...it is spiritual.** As we continue to overcome evil with good, however, the light of Jesus which lives in us will overcome and displace the darkness.

Peter described for us the glorious inheritance that awaits us, and encourages us to **greatly rejoice in this**, ...be thinking about and celebrating this amazing blessing God has set aside for us..., even though now, for a little while, we might experience pain, grief, irritation, sorrow, distress and vexation. **This is the same thing Jesus’ other brother, James wrote, “Think about every joy, whenever you encounter various trials...”** Change your focus. Think about the things that are joyful, ...promised or present blessings..., knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have its complete work in you, in order that you might be mature, complete in every area, lacking in nothing (Jas. 1:2-4). **The apostle Paul gives us similar counsel (Rom. 5:1-5). He assures us that we can rejoice or boast in our hope of the glory of God (our inheritance).** For this reason, we can rejoice or boast even in our afflictions, knowing that afflictions work out endurance, and endurance establishes proven-character, ...and the proven-character is the working out and demonstration of our hope, ...the glory of God in us sustaining and transforming us. **All three of these passages tell us to think of the positive outworking of our faith, when we are in the midst of our trials.**

What does Peter say here? He tells us to rejoice in the future blessing, even though we are experiencing difficult times here. We do this in order that (a purpose clause) the testing-and-genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold (which is *also* tested-and-refined by fire, ...but it still wears out), may be found to be to God’s praise, glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **Note the future vision. The future hope sustains us through the present difficulty. Because we stand fast in the present struggle, our perseverance will bring praise and honor to Jesus when He returns.** Present to future, again. Peter moves on, “Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you are not currently seeing Him, but trusting, you greatly rejoice in joy beyond-words and having-been-filled-with-splendor, presently-obtaining-for-yourselves the goal or end-fruit of your faith – the salvation of your souls.

Verses 10-13 talk about how prophets had wondered and inquired about these things, ...things which they themselves had spoken of, but had not experienced. Note that the Spirit who was in them was speaking about the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that would follow from that. **Sufferings, ...followed by glories.** Then, **Peter exhorts us to “prepare your minds for action”, “...get ready...”**. The Greek is describing the practice of a person pulling up his robe, and tucking it into his belt, so that he would be free to move without restriction. This was done in preparation for a race, or in preparation for battle. Here, it is a word picture for getting our *minds* ready. Be sound and clear-minded and be self-controlled in your emotions. Then, he draws our attention back toward the anticipated inheritance he had described. He says, “Completely hope upon the grace being brought to y’all in the revelation of Jesus Christ.” **In order to live well and victoriously in the present**, with its challenges, afflictions and distresses, **we must set our hope firmly and completely upon the uncorruptible, unsullied, and unfading inheritance being kept for us** in that day. Everything we do and endure here is so that we might honor Him who has given so much for us.