The High Price of our Salvation

For Communion Sunday, Sep. 1, 2024, at First Church in Hartland. First in a four-part series from 1 Peter titled “Christian Perspectives that Strengthen Us.”

# Scripture: 1 Peter 1:1-4,10-21

# Key Thought: Our spiritual privileges were made possible at a precious price; so we live accordingly.

# Intro:

How many of you have some relatives or neighbors who just don’t have a clue about the value of things? They spend money like it grew on trees. Or they misuse things they have that were not cheap to get. Such actions reveal a lack of understanding of the true price of things. Worse, many people squander good relationships through carelessness and neglect, showing no appreciation for the value of close family, good neighbors and friends.

Today I am beginning a new series of messages called, “Christian Perspectives that Strengthen Us” all of which will be based on the book of 1 Peter. Today’s perspective is about valuing properly the salvation that God has provided through Jesus. In the first chapter of his first letter, Peter is very concerned that his readers might not be placing a high enough value on Jesus’ sacrifice. Our salvation comes to us by the free grace God, but Jesus paid a high price to make it possible. Peter is worried that lack of understanding of these facts by his readers could negatively affect their lives. So, Peter has three key purposes in the opening chapters of this letter to the scattered Jewish Christians to help them get the right perspectives. And paying attention to his advice will help us have healthy perspectives as well. First, …

# Peter builds up his suffering readers.

He begins the letter by encouraging his readers about who they are in Christ. He is writing to early Christians from Jerusalem area who had been scattered throughout Asia Minor (today’s Turkey) by persecution. Peter uses phrases of high value from their Jewish heritage and connects them to their Christian faith. For example, the Old Testament people of God were called God’s “chosen people.” In verse 2, Peter refers to the Christians as “chosen” by God as well. Think of the current Christian movie series titled, “The Chosen.” Peter’s readers would remember that Moses, as part of the first covenant rites had ceremonially sprinkled the people (Ex. 24:8). Peter deliberately appropriated the word “sprinkling” but used it figuratively to refer to the forgiveness that comes to us through Jesus because of his death on the cross. Peter continues to build up his reader’s status in Christ with deliberate echoes of OT words in chapter two. What he wrote we should take to heart as well for it also describes us.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9 NIV

Peter, no doubt, remembered the teaching of Jesus himself who reminded his disciples that what they were enjoying had come to them after generations of spiritual preparation. Jesus said,

Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. Matt 13:16-17 NIV

Today, when people disagree with our Christian values, it might be easy to shrink back and even be hesitant about our faith. But God wants us to rejoice that we have the privilege of following Jesus and to consider ourselves blessed indeed. We too are “chosen.” We too have good reason to be confident in Christ. As Paul wrote,

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. Rom 1:16

And as the writer to the Hebrews said,

So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper…” Heb 13:6

What a privilege it is to be the chosen people of God today, the family of God, supporting one another, learning to be holy, and entrusted to pray for others and share with them the good news of forgiveness and spiritual transformation through Jesus!

But building up his readers is not Peter’s sole line of thinking.

# Peter is also intent on lifting up his Lord and Savior.

Unless his readers properly appreciate what Jesus has accomplished, they will not fully understand their status in Christ either. Neither will they worship Jesus with proper devotion. Peter wants the people to be in reverent awe of the price that Jesus paid. The privileges we have were purchased with the precious blood of Jesus. The value of the price enhances the value of the product, and it leaves us humbled in worship of the one who paid the price for us. In Revelation, John describes Jesus as the one who “freed us from our sins by his blood (Rev. 1:5). This teaching that it was through the shed blood of Jesus that forgiveness is available to us came directly from Jesus himself. In the Gospel of Matthew, we read from Jesus’ own words at the Last Supper as he took the cup and gave it to his disciples. He said,

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matt 26:28 NIV

Because of Jesus’ words, John gave us the wonderful words of assurance,

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7 NIV

In our day, most of us seldom see blood unless we accidentally cut ourselves. So sometimes this talk about the blood of Jesus might be off-putting. But it is important to remember two things. One thought that is often helpful to the reader of the NT is to remember that an expression like the “blood of Jesus” is a frequently a figure of speech called metonymy. That’s when we use one word or phrase to stand in for another related one. We are familiar with this common figure of speech as when we refer to journalists collectively as “the press” or to a message coming for the President as coming from the “White House.” The reference to Jesus’ blood is often used in place of a direct reference to the death of Jesus. But why this metonym? Frequent NT references to the blood of Jesus and Peter’s teaching about us being redeemed by the blood of Christ reflects the underlying spiritual truths taught by the sacrificial system of the OT. One of them is summarized in the NT as, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). In the Mosaic system, the blood of an animal was shed as the worshipper sought forgiveness and reconciliation to God. So, first of all, when we speak of the blood of Jesus or of Jesus as the Lamb of God, it is the language of sacrifice reflecting the OT background of the NT (see Heb. 9:12-14). Reference to Jesus’ blood is a reminder that Jesus’ sacrifice was at once the culmination and termination of the OT sacrifices for sin. Hebrews teaches us that Jesus’ sacrifice was so perfect that no more were ever needed (Heb. 9:25-28).

No wonder Peter exalts Jesus and reminds us of the huge price he paid that we might be saved. Peter wants to give us a proper perspective so that we will not take our privileges lightly. Each time we take Communion as we will today, it is good for us to reflect on the price Jesus paid for us, not that we would be sorrowful, but that we would as Paul put it be motivated to

“live a life worthy of the calling we have received.” (Eph. 4:1)

Which brings us to Peter's third purpose in our text. It is to …

# encourage us to live holy lives that reflect the price of our salvation.

Peter's logic here is somewhat like that of good parents who are trying to teach their children the value of things. Such parents realize that children who get everything as gifts and never have to work for anything also have little concept of the actual cost of what they have received. So wise parents devise ways to help children learn the value of hours of work and financial transactions, so they get a healthy fiscal perspective.

Peter is trying to do the same thing with these new Christians. He has reminded them that while they have been saved by grace, the spiritual riches that they are receiving cost Jesus his life! So Peter gives us that inimitable comparison,

You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed… but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18,19 NIV

Peter knows that if they understand the tremendous price of their salvation his readers will live differently. They will want to live in a way that pleases the one who died for them. They will want to live holy lives that bring credit to Jesus.

Let's reflect briefly on Peter’s description of what such a life looks like. First, the Christian who is living in an awareness of the price that Jesus paid…

## Keeps their mind alert, sober, and ready to do God’s work (1:13).

In the English Standard Version of 1 Peter 1:13, you as a Christian are described as…

preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, 1 Peter 1:13 ESV

In the first century world, people wore long robes, and they needed to pull them up and tuck them into the belt in order to be ready to do anything active. The first phrase refers to that action, but Peter applies the expression to our minds meaning that we need to have our minds ready for action. The main meaning of the second word has to do with being sober as in abstaining from misuse of alcohol. It affirms the same idea. We need to be people with clear minds ready for God to use, not minds dulled by misuse of the body or substance abuse.

A second characteristic of Christians who are aware of the price Jesus paid is that they

## Do not conform to evil desires.

According to verse fourteen, Peter’s admonishes,

As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 1 Peter 1:14 NIV

One of the best definitions of evil desires comes from the Apostle John who wrote,

Everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2:16 NIV

When we are living as Jesus wants, we will have an acute sense that there are some things we need to be turning away from. Each of us knows our own weaknesses and we can’t wimp out with excuses like, “I can’t help myself,” or “Everybody does it” either. For the Bible says,

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. 1 Cor 10:13

The grace of God will help us.

Another characteristic of the powerful Christian, according to Peter is that they…

## Crave spiritual food (2:2)

The first part of chapter 2 is very relevant here. Peter says…

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1-3

Now I was raised in a country home where Mom baked often and we usually had dessert after supper, so I tend to crave something sweet after dinner – a cookie, a piece of pie or cake, some fruit or a little ice cream with maple syrup. But now that I am no longer a growing farm boy, that kind of craving is not the best for my waistline.

But the kind of craving that Peter is urging us to have is quite different, and it is excellent for our Christian growth. He wants us to have a healthy craving for God’s Word.

However, statistical researchers here in the US tell us that most Christians do not read their Bible between Sundays. That is a sad state of affairs and means that we are not reflecting the mindset that Peter says we should have – a craving for spiritual food.

There are lots of ways to take in God’s Word today. Do you carry a cell phone? I am one of over 600 million YouVersion Bible app users. I read Scripture on it nearly every day. You can pick the translation that you like and if you are not a reader, you can listen to it read to you instead. All sorts of resources are available and there is a kid’s version of the app too. I just helped my grandson put a link to YouVersion on his computer this past week. I highly recommend it.

Next time you have a food craving ask yourself, how do I feed my craving for God’s Word?

Finally, Peter gives us one more perspective to help us. He reminds us that the maturing Christian….

## Has their hope set on the day when Jesus will be revealed.

All the Apostles drew their ruling perspective from that future day. Peter says,

Set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. 1 Peter 1:13

Whether we are thinking of the day we go to be with Jesus or of the day that Jesus returns to this earth really does not matter. For the Christian, thinking about meeting Jesus someday brings a thought of our accountability before him. But it is also a reminder that such a day will be the culmination of our salvation and will bring the ultimate in rewards as well. The Apostle John wrote,

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 NIV

# Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, we need the perspectives that the Apostle Peter is bringing to us for living today. In this world where material things are highly valued, where people spend their lives for pleasures and experiences, we need to remember the price that was paid for our eternal salvation and the day that is coming which sets forever that which is truly valuable. And when the perspectives that Peter has given us rule our lives, we will find joy in worshipping Jesus and also be eager to live in a way that pleases Him. AMEN.

Outline

Title: The High Price of our Salvation

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:1-4,10-21 Please use 2011 NIV again.

Key Thought: Our spiritual privileges were made possible at a precious price; so we live accordingly.

* Peter builds up his suffering readers.
* Peter is intent on lifting up his Lord and Savior.
* Peter encourages us to live holy lives that reflect the price of our salvation.

Call to Worship:

Oh God, we gather to lift up our souls to you. We trust in you to hear our prayers and to help us because of your mercy. Please teach us your paths and lead in your truth for you are our God and our salvation, through Jesus, our Savior, we pray, AMEN.

Prayer of Awareness:

Our Heavenly Father, perfect in holiness and love, whenever we draw near to You we are increasingly aware of our shortcomings. We acknowledge the sins that so easily cling to us as the Bible has warned us. Please forgive us and help us to escape the snares of the enemy and walk in the light of life found in Jesus, AMEN.

Prayer of Dedication:

Our heavenly Father, we praise you as the giver of all good things. And we thank you for a chance to be in some small way faithful to you as you always are to us. Now we ask that you preserve and enhance the supply of all those who honor you with their gifts, according to your promises, in Jesus’ name, AMEN.

Hymn: When Morning Gilds the Skies #100

Hymn: Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross #587

Hymn after the sermon: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross #195

Song before Communion: O How I Love Jesus #99 vv1.2