

A Living Hope

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 September 2013

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] But we're going to turn now to our reading for this morning. You'll find that in the New Testament in the first letter of Peter. If you have one of our church Bibles, I think that's page 1014, 1014.

If you have your own Bible, it's near the end, after Hebrews and James. We're looking this morning principally at verses 3 to 12 of chapter 1.

We've just begun this letter, but I'm going to read down to verse 21. The introduction, as we looked at last time, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect, chosen, but exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, all around that northern part of Turkey, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctification, the setting apart of the Spirit, and for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you. 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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, that your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 08] 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, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

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 preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Things into which angels long to look. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, be sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, so also be holy in all your conduct.

[3 : 20] Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him as father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like the blood of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Amen. And may God bless to us this, his word. Well, as we said, perhaps you'd turn with me to the reading that we had this morning in 1 Peter chapter 1.

And let us indeed pray that in this scripture we find light to chase the lies.

Our title this morning is Authentic Salvation. As we focus here on the first part of 1 Peter chapter 1, as we saw last time, that is the theme tune, the melodic line, if you like, that runs through this whole

letter.

[4 : 59] The grace of God, the true grace of God, authentic salvation, as Peter calls it in chapter 5 verse 12. And he urges his readers to stand firm in this true grace of God and not to be led away into any error.

And this true grace of God is that we, who are in Christ, are both an elect people, as verse 1 says, and also an exiled people, strangers and foreigners in this world.

And that is because we are an Easter people. We are the people of a Christ who was crucified and then rose from the dead.

And that is the great paradox that Peter is addressing in this letter. It's a letter all about the glory that is ours with the glory of Christ.

But authentic glory, according to Christ's true apostle, is Easter glory. Our Lord, the Lord of glory, is a crucified Savior whose shed blood is what sprinkles us and cleanses us from sin.

[6 : 08] And the glory of our salvation is the glory of his suffering and death on the cross at Calvary. And his true people are those who are chosen to share in Christ's true glory.

And that's why it shouldn't surprise us that we also are called to share in the road to that glory. And that is the road of daily cross-carrying with Jesus in this world.

Indeed, Peter says that we are to share in Christ's sufferings so that we may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

When his glory will fill the whole world at the coming of Christ in glory. And so there is no other road to the eternal glory of Christ's kingdom than the road to Calvary, not for Jesus himself nor for any one of Jesus' true followers.

This is the true grace of God. This alone is authentic salvation, according to Peter. Now, why does Peter need to emphasize so strongly these things all the way through his letter?

[7 : 22] Well, it's because his first readers then, just like us today, we live in a hostile world. They find themselves increasingly marginalized and estranged from the culture.

They find being followers of Jesus very, very hard. And they face a lot of opposition. They face many trials precisely because of their faith, because they were Christians.

Christians. But why? Why was God allowing them to suffer so much if they were so precious to him, if God's spirit was truly upon them?

Well, it was easy, wasn't it, to wonder why that experience wasn't much more like, well, victory and rejoicing all the time instead of suffering and illness and pain and opposition.

And no doubt there were, as we know, there were in New Testament times, many teachers who came along and said, yes, well, we have the answer. We have the true message of the full grace and glory of God.

[8 : 24] And if only you'll listen to us, if only you'll come to our meetings, if only you'll listen to our special prophecies and revelations, well, we can offer you the gateway to that unreserved victory and glory.

The end of suffering. The end of trials. We can point you to that triumph and blessing of a fully awakened spiritual inheritance, just what you're looking for.

Now, friends, from Peter's day to our day and, according to Jesus himself, until the very day of his coming in glory, there will be, as there always have been, false prophets and false teachers who come in Jesus' name and who will lead many astray with precisely those kind of teachings.

they come in sheep's clothing, as we've been seeing in our Sunday night studies in 2 Corinthians, where Paul is dealing with exactly the same issues. They come full of language that sounds very spiritual, promising fullness and power and glory and blessing and the Spirit of God.

A full gospel, a full experience, new supernatural revelation and all kinds of things. Interestingly, they don't tend to come using the kind of language that Peter speaks of when he speaks of the true grace of God and what he says is authentic salvation.

[9 : 50] They don't tend to use the language of trial and testing and grief and sufferings and anxieties. They don't tend to talk about hope for a salvation that is in fact not yet and will not be ours until the day of Christ's coming, something we will see is very important for Peter.

And so, as Christians today, we are just as much in need of Peter's apostolic realism, which is a crushing blow to the dangerous fantasy that masquerades so often as Christianity in our world today and which leads many naive and untaught young Christians, leads them utterly astray and into disaster.

It's all around us in the church today. It's even right here in the city center of Glasgow. Just a few blocks from here, there's a so-called prophetic center where people who style themselves, and I'm quoting, as having a strong apostolic and prophetic anointing where they offer to you, I quote, deeper healing ministry and signs and wonders to help the church, quotes, take up their inheritance, note that word, take up their freedom now, promise you a new glory, quotes, more glory than we've ever seen in 2013.

You can book an appointment for a prophetic checkup for yourself or for your business. It's recommended at least every two years. The minimum suggested donation, 20 pounds. Apparently, there is such a demand for this that a new rapid fire service has been introduced so that you can get a, quote, high impact, powerful prophetic word within a few weeks of your applying. [11:36] That is a very slick operation. There's no amateurism about it. One of the leaders, we're told, and I quote, desires to see signs and wonders in every situation of life, particularly in the business arena, and he is an expert in marketing and new media and digital communications, and their website amply demonstrates that.

And there was not a single space left to book an appointment for that when I tried. for research purposes only.

What you can still book is for a conference called Partnering with Resurrection Power. It's a three-day conference next weekend, and it will, I quote, awaken our spiritual inheritance. Notice the word. It will unlock the gates of your future, and it will do so through an array of lady prophets and apostles from the USA and for Europe.

I've rarely seen anything that smacks of such crass charlatanism, but no doubt many naive and many needy Christians, and alas, others too, will be drawn in and will be taken in by it.

[12:55] What's additionally sad and has understandably upset some of you is that the venue for those events are Glasgow Cathedral, and yes, you've guessed it, our former church building in Buchanan Street.

It's very striking, isn't it, how the extreme liberal wing and the extreme lunatic fringe of the church make such happy bedfellows, united as they are in the total absence of truth.

So do you see why the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, has preserved this letter from a genuine apostle of Christ to teach the church in every age what is the true grace of God and what the marks of authentic salvation really are.

It could not be more relevant to Glasgow in September 2013. against all false claims, against all misunderstandings, Peter proclaims to us the truth of God's authentic salvation so that we won't be discouraged by the reality of life as believers in a hostile world and so that we won't be deceived by those who peddle a false gospel which is no gospel at all.

So the first section of this letter, verses 3 to 21 of chapter 1, is all about the immense privilege that we have as New Testament Christians because we possess already the full gospel of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus.

[14:31] We know more, says Peter in verse 10, than all the prophets of old and we experience something more than even the angels in heaven experience, verse 12. They're captivated as they look and see what is happening to us.

and we have this, says Peter, because Jesus has now been raised from the dead. Notice the references to our living hope which is through his resurrection.

It brackets this whole section. Verse 3, we're born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. In verse 21, we are believers through him who was raised from the dead so that our faith and our hope are in God.

Our hope begins and ends with God and it's focused on Christ who was crucified and risen. That is authentic salvation.

And in this passage, Peter focuses on authentic salvation as both the great privilege of a living hope, the gospel which is fully made manifest to us, verses 3 to 12, and therefore also the responsibility for a lived hope that is the gospel fully manifest in us and through us, verses 13 to 21.

[15:50] Because God's great covenant privileges always confer great responsibilities. Now we'll come to the responsibilities next time, but this morning I want us to concentrate on verses 3 to 12 and on the great privilege that we have in the full revelation of the everlasting covenant which is now ours.

as we live in this New Testament era. This salvation which Peter describes as a living hope. And he tells us that we have the immense privilege of clarity, full clarity, on three vital things which if we don't grasp will leave us in disillusion and discouragement in our Christian lives.

And which will leave us prey to deceivers who peddle something other than the grace of God. Something that will not lead us to the true glory of Christ but something that will in the end lead us into the path of the devil himself whom Peter reminds us at the end of his letter is always prowling seeking those to devour.

So let's look at verses 3 to 12 and get clear what Peter makes absolutely clear about this authentic salvation which is the living hope made manifest to us in the good news of Christ crucified and risen.

First of all in verses 3 to 5 he tells us that we have the privilege of a clear perspective on our salvation and that is that it is a salvation reserved in heaven by God for us.

[17 : 29] Let's look at these verses and you will see quite plainly and unequivocally that our salvation is not yet. Authentic salvation in the New Testament is something which still lies in the future.

I wonder if that surprises you. It may surprise you because we often use the language of salvation as something that we already have. We say that, don't we? Have you been saved?

You might ask somebody or you might say to somebody, well I was saved 20 years ago when I trusted in Christ. Well according to the New Testament that is not so. Certainly according to the Apostle Peter that is not so.

Yes, you have indeed been, verse 3, born again if you have trusted Christ truly. He has caused us to be born again into a living hope.

But hope implies something that is not yet. It's still in the future. The Apostle Paul says the same thing in Romans chapter 8. We are saved in hope.

[18 : 35] But clearly it's not hope, he says, if it's something we already see or have. No. We hope, says Paul, for what we do not yet see. And we wait for it with patience.

It's in the future. What do we hope for but not yet see? According to Peter here. Well look down at verse 4. An inheritance. Aha!

A spiritual inheritance to be unlocked. That's what the UK Council of Prophets says we're to take up now, without delay, and no more glory in that inheritance than we've ever seen before this year.

That's what will be awakened and unlocked for us if we will participate in resurrection power. Well, Apostle Peter, what do you say about this inheritance?

Verse 4. It's imperishable. How wonderful. It will be untouched by death. It's undefiled. How marvelous. It can't be spoiled by sin.

[19 : 36] And it's unfading. What joy. It won't ever fade away with time. It is indeed a full and a complete salvation.

The salvation and the glorifying of our whole bodies, our souls, as verse 9 puts it. That is our whole being. The word soul there is not in the Bible.

It doesn't mean what we often use it to mean, meaning the non-bodily part of us. In the Bible, that word soul means the whole of us, body, mind, and spirit. It's our whole being in every part.

That's certainly how Peter uses it several times in this letter. For example, in chapter 4, verse 25, he says, we have returned to the shepherd and the overseer of our souls, our whole bodies.

He means we've come home to God as our good shepherd. The shepherd tends and feeds real bodily sheep, not the spirits of wistful sheep wandering around in the atmosphere. But that is our real inheritance through Christ's resurrection, Peter says.

[20 : 39] That is our authentic salvation. It is our complete, renewed, restored humanity body, in real physical bodies which are imperishable and undefiled and unfading, untouched by death and any sickness, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time.

As one writer paraphrases verse 4, the very things that do destroy and wipe away all of our earthly hopes. Just like Jesus said in Luke's gospel, chapter 12, the moth and the rust, the thief, the aging money bags.

But that will be banished forever in our true salvation, says Peter. What a great salvation that is. I want that salvation, don't you?

I want to partner with resurrection power and have that unlocked to me. Complete bodily healing, complete freedom from all the touch of sin and its taint in my life.

Complete release from all the suffering and evil in this world. And there are many self-styled apostles and prophets and others today who will say, yes, and we have the key that will unlock all of that to you now, today.

[22 : 11] But you see here, Peter, Christ's true apostle, says something quite, quite different. That inheritance, that salvation, he says, is yours, it belongs to you already, but it's kept for you by God's power.

Where? Verse 4. It's being kept in heaven for you. That is, it is not yet yours to possess bodily on this earth.

When will it be revealed to us to possess fully on earth? Well, verse 5, it is a salvation, he says, ready to be revealed in the last time. Not yet.

In the very last day of time, which is, according to verse 7, do you see? At the revelation of Jesus Christ. If you don't quite get that, he repeats that again in verse 13.

Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation salvation of Jesus Christ. Genuine salvation, biblical salvation, as taught by Christ and his apostles, is not yet.

[23 : 19] Because salvation lies on the other side of God's judgment on the last day. Salvation is rescue from that judgment, from God's wrath, and from its penalty of everlasting death.

And therefore, salvation on that day is a rescue through judgment that will lead into everlasting bodily life in the new heavens and the new earth. And so it can't possibly be ours before that day. Because God's eternal glory, his kingdom of glory in Christ must be revealed. It must fill the whole cosmos before we can live in it. Stands to reason. And only that is authentic biblical salvation. Anything less than that is just a parody of this true salvation, this full inheritance that is promised to us in Jesus. Authentic salvation is not yet.

But it is, nevertheless, certain. There is an already about our salvation. And that is that already, says Peter, we have a living hope.

[24 : 31] That is, we have a certain assurance of this promised future. We have already seen in verses 1 and 2 last time that God's people are already chosen and set apart for that salvation by his spirit and sealed by Christ's blood into this everlasting covenant, this unbreakable bond.

And as verse 3 says here, our hope is made a living and a certain hope through the fact of Jesus' resurrection in history. It is his resurrection and his ascension to glory that guarantees his return to reveal that glory to the whole world forever.

So our hope is living. It's alive. It is absolutely rock-solid certain. It's important to understand that is what hope means in the Bible.

It is absolutely not the kind of hope that says, well, I hope the weather today will be dry in Glasgow. I tell you, that is a forlorn hope, friends. And if you are new to our city, you will discover that very soon.

Biblical hope is a totally different thing. It is a certainty because it rests in the promise and the power of God whose purpose never fails.

[25 : 47] This inheritance, this salvation is, verse 4, kept for us by God. And verse 5, he says, we are being kept, we are being guarded for this salvation also by God.

He's keeping the inheritance for us and he's keeping us for that inheritance. So it can't be messed up, it can't be lost by us. You parents all know when you take your children on holiday, you keep their ticket and you keep their passport for them so they don't lose them.

And you keep hold of them too so you don't lose them either. And only by keeping hold of them and keeping hold of their passport will you reach your happy holiday destination, the sunshine and the seaside.

Not just so with our own heavenly father. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his mercy, he has caused us to be born again into a living hope, to an inheritance kept for us, who by God's power are also being kept, guarded through faith, for a salvation to be revealed at the last time.

A clear perspective on authentic salvation from the apostle of Christ, a true apostle we can trust. And friends, don't we need to know this, this living hope?

[27 : 18] It's impossible, isn't it, to live as a human being without hope. Hopelessness in our personal life, in community life, in cultures, in national life.

Hopelessness leads to despair, it leads to disease, it leads to death. The tragic fact, isn't it, of our hopelessness in society today, that the chief cause of death among young men in our country is

suicide.

Human beings need hope, because we're made for eternity. God has set eternity in our hearts, and therefore we can't avoid as human beings the quest for a future, for hope.

We can't avoid it as part of our makeup, that longing for something more, for significance, for meaning, for life, more than life seems to be.

But you see, if the hope of heaven, if the genuine salvation the Bible speaks of in the kingdom of Christ's glory, the glory to be revealed at his coming, if that living hope is not man's hope, then inevitably human beings will have to manufacture some kind of hope, trying to build heaven on earth here and now.

[28 : 44] Friends, that is only ever going to be a dead hope, because it means investing your life in things which are perishable, which will be defiled, which will fade away inevitably with time.

But that's what people do. Many people do put their hope in the perfect marriage, even talk, even though they're not religious, about a match made in heaven.

It's ironic, isn't it, as one of our politicians said recently, never has there been a time when weddings have been more expensive, but marriage has become so cheapened. And how quickly heaven turns to hell.

And marriage has been your great hope for life. The tragedy of the divorce statistics and shattered families is hellish, isn't it?

Many set their hopes on their careers, or perhaps on the wealth that that might bring, or on health, and on beauty, and fitness, and all of these things, but how fleeting, how perishable all these things are.

[29 : 58] Or think of the great hopes of cultures and societies promising heaven on earth. Think of Hitler's promise to the German people of the great thousand-year Reich, or Karl Marx and the utopianism of communism.

Did that produce heaven on earth? Hell on earth, more to the point. What about the Arab Spring and the great hope for the future?

Well, how long has that lasted in Egypt today? What about the glorious hope of the Eurozone? But we have a true hope, a certain hope, a real salvation, untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time, an inheritance of true life, life as it is meant to be, life in all its glorious fullness. Not yet. So you mustn't be taken in by false prophets, by counterfeit apostles who do promise health healing and sinless perfection and all sorts of heavenly glory now.

False hopes, friends, placed in those kind of things fade so quickly into despair, into disillusion. And so often also, I find to end in taintedness and sin and scandal of all kinds.

[31 : 32] things. But our true hope is certain. It is kept for us by God and it is coming with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you need to know that.

When you're struggling as a Christian, maybe facing abuse or insults in your school class or your college dorm or wherever it is, or when you're struggling with sin and failure in your own life, or when you're suffering whatever kind of grievous trial it may be, this is not as good as it gets.

As Jack Nicholson declares in the film of that name. No, it's not. And one key reason why we need to meet together weekly as believers, as a church, is to remind ourselves of that great hope, to get a glimpse of it as we look around at one another and we see God's power at work, keeping other Christian believers, old and young, keeping them, in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ for the glory that is to come.

We have a privilege of this clear perspective on our salvation, a salvation reserved in heaven by God.

But you might say, well, what do we have now as born again believers in Christ? If our salvation is future, if it's not yet ours, if it's not yet our possession, do we experience nothing of that glorious salvation now?

[33 : 05] Well, Peter's answer lies in verses 6 to 9. And he says, we do have a very full experience now, an experience both, both, of joy that is inexpressible and of pain.

that may often seem inexplicable unless we grasp this second point of his. But now we are privileged in that we see a clear purpose in our suffering.

We see a clear purpose in our suffering. And it is a suffering that is refining us now for a glory that we will share with Christ.

Look at verses 6 and 8. They go together. They both express, don't they, what we know to be true experience in the real world in our Christian lives. Notice the now in both of these verses.

Verse 6, now we are rejoicing in this great salvation and yet we're also grieved by various trials.

Verse 8, now we don't see Jesus revealed as we long to do.

[34 : 19] The bridegroom has not yet returned and yet he says even now we believe in him and we rejoice with joy inexpressible. Now doesn't that describe the real Christian life?

Not some fantasy pretend life of joy without pain, of rejoicing without shedding tears, but the reality for all of us who know the Lord, who love the Lord and rejoice in the Lord.

And yet who have eyes and ears and feelings and we know just as well as everybody else that we live in a fallen world, a world under the curse, a world that is not yet fully perfect.

We're longing for his coming and the joy and the pain are both there side by side day after day.

Grief and glory are the two sides of the same coin in healthy, balanced Bible Christianity.

Christianity in the real world, the real gospel. And we need to keep hold of both sides of that coin, otherwise we will end up totally unbalanced in our Christian faith.

[35 : 31] If we think that we should always be up and always be rejoicing and never feeling down, then friends, when you do experience griefs, when you do experience trials, inevitably you will think, well there must be something wrong with me, something wrong with my faith.

Or on the other hand, just always being morose and depressed and never able to rejoice at all in that wonderful living hope that is ours. We've got to hold both of these things together.

That's the real life of faith. It's not just that we're to hold these sides of our Christian experience together. We're to understand what Peter is actually saying about the purpose of these grievous trials.

Why do we rejoice, verse 6? It's not just that grievous trials are for a short time, but the glory to come will be eternal. That is true, and that should cause us to rejoice.

But it's much more than that. Do you see? It is that these grievous trials are the very thing that are working glory in us for eternity. Look at verse 5.

[36 : 46] We are being guarded through faith for this great salvation. That is how we will ultimately possess our full salvation, only if that faith endures to the end.

That's what Jesus said. The one who endures to the end will be saved. And in this, you rejoice, says Peter. Well, in what? Look at verse 7. In the knowledge that these trials are the very thing working in us to purify that faith, just as gold is purified in the fire, and to prove that that faith is true and genuine.

So that, do you see? So that it does result in praise and glory and honor the revelation of Jesus Christ. And that's why even now when we don't see yet Christ's glory, we love him and we rejoice with this joy so inexpressible.

We rejoice in what he is doing in us and for us, even through these most grievous of trials.

Because, verse 9, the outcome, the outcome of all this refining in our lives by faith will be our full salvation.

We are obtaining the inheritance that still lies in the future through what God is doing in us now, in our earthly pilgrimage.

[38 : 17] It's God's purpose, working all these things for our good. It's not the evil purpose of others or even the devil himself that is winning out here.

He is prowling all the time, Peter says in chapter 5, looking to see whom he can devour. But no, it's Genesis 50, verse 20, all over again, isn't it?

What evil men meant for evil, God purposes for good, for working out a great salvation. It's through all of this in our lives that he is restoring and confirming and strengthening and establishing you for eternal glory.

so we can rejoice because we know the clear purpose of our sufferings. They're refining us now in the hands of a master craftsman for glory that will be everlasting.

I have a cousin who is a triathlete and some time ago we were on holiday together and she was training for an iron man. Now in an iron man race you begin by swimming 3.8 kilometers you then cycle 180 kilometers and then you finish off with a 26 mile marathon for good measure.

[39 : 41] And the training schedule of that you can imagine is grueling and she had a personal trainer who laid it all out and who enforced it every single day. Now friends I can tell you somebody who made me do that I would hate with a bitter hatred but she loved him and she trusted him and

she obeyed him because he promised her and he said I know that if you keep to this you will certainly complete that race and you will receive the medal and she did and she did.

It doesn't make all the difference in the world to know the purpose and indeed the privilege of the grievous trials that come into our life for Jesus' sake.

That it is all obtaining the glorious goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls, the salvation of our whole being. That it make a difference to know as the hymn says that his purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour.

the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower. We know the purpose of our sufferings. And finally in verses 10 to 12, Peter tells us that we who have the privilege of the full gospel made manifest to us, we have the assurance that we share in the clear pattern of the Savior.

[41 : 22] a pattern that's revealed consistently through the prophets of the Old Testament, and now completely in the apostolic gospel of the New Testament by the same infallible witness of the Holy Spirit himself.

You see, he's saying this pattern of salvation is the authentic biblical salvation through and through. It's a consistent message.

Verse 10, this is the salvation, that the prophets spoke of, and they knew it was a salvation still to be fulfilled and fully revealed only in the time of Christ's coming in the future.

And this is the salvation, verse 12, that is now announced in the good news of the apostolic gospel. There has only ever been one message of authentic salvation from the Holy Spirit of Christ.

He predicted it through the prophets and he proclaimed it through the apostles. But now it is a complete message. It's to you that this ultimate understanding has come.

[42 : 27] Many prophets long to see what you see and hear what you hear. That's what Jesus said. That's what Peter is saying here. And even the angels have been longing for this time.

And it's come in your experience with ultimate clarity. What is this consistent message of the prophets now complete in the gospel of the New Testament?

Well, it's there in verse 11. Do you see? It's the message of the sufferings and the subsequent glories of the Christ. That is the pattern of the Savior and that is the pattern of all authentic salvation.

Peter is telling us, says John Calvin, that from the beginning the cross has been the way to victory, death, the way to life. This has been clearly testified through all the scriptures.

Just read your Bible. Beginning to end, you'll find there there's a recurring pattern all through the Old Testament. All the true people of God suffered.

[43 : 37] They were oppressed and scorned and ill-treated by their fellow men, enemies abounded. Yet even more inexplicably, apparently, at the hand of God himself.

Think of the psalmist cries, how long, O Lord? Why, O Lord? Think of the afflictions of Job. Many others. Now, the Old Testament, of course, gives some answers to these agonies, but even the prophets who knew that they carried the infallible word of God's spirit, even they knew that they glimpsed only partially the full answer to it all.

They knew that God's people suffered for him. They knew also that those most intimately associated with God's plan and purposes often suffered the very most.

Think of Joseph that we were studying. Think of David, the anointed king, and all his enemies. But now, says Peter, we see it so, so clearly.

this pattern of suffering for God's most faithful people, it mirrors the pattern of God's own precious son, our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[44 : 56] He was glorified only through suffering. Those faithful ones suffered just because they belonged to that one who was to come, would walk the path of suffering on his way to glory.

Just as now, as Paul says elsewhere, we too have been granted not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake. That's always been the pattern for the people of the Christ, whether to those who belong to him through the promise of the Christ who is to come, or like us who have the privilege of trusting in the Christ who has come.

We have that privilege to see it all so much more clearly. The prophets dimly saw it. They pointed and predicted the subsequent glories and the suffering of Christ.

They saw that pattern. They saw it sometimes very clearly, just as Isaiah did in Isaiah 53, which Peter quotes several times in this letter. But they also saw that there was more.

They knew what they didn't know, the time and the circumstances. But they knew it was coming. But Peter says, we, we've seen it all.

[46 : 20] And the Holy Spirit came upon the church at Pentecost specifically to bring that full and final witness of God's authentic way of salvation through Christ alone to the whole world.

So we know the full wonder that is to be ours in Christ, a share of his everlasting inheritance of glory. We also know the true privilege, the incredible privilege, that God has chosen us to be united to his glorious son, that we should be made glorious exactly the same way that he was made glorious.

That is, God exalted him through his path of grief and suffering through the cross. So also for us, in sharing in his sufferings as we bear our cross, he is leading us to receive our crown.

We share in the pattern of the Savior, because there is no other pattern by which God can make us like him.

And so Peter says to us this morning, friends, this, and this alone, is authentic salvation. And so even amid griefs and trials, we can rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory because it is in this way that we are receiving the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our whole being, which is forever.

[48 : 15] Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, how we thank you for the inheritance that is ours, but is kept so guardedly and so wonderfully for us in your hands.

So will you keep us, guard us, purify us, and prove us, that on the day of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, we all here this morning might be found to result in praise and glory and honor.

Amen.