

“That You May Be Sprinkled by His Blood”
(1 Peter 1:1-2)

Introduction: The Lord’s Supper, in which we are going to participate this morning, calls us to reflect again upon the work of Christ. God has given us these symbols of His Son to remind us of what our redemption cost Him. They remind us that Jesus our Lord gave Himself up to die on the cross for us, that He willingly sacrificed Himself, that He gave Himself not only to be mocked and beaten by those who hated Him, but also that our sins might be laid on Him and He put to death in our place. These signs also remind us of the electing love of God the Father in giving His Son as a sacrifice for us. God the Father, in His eternal councils, made a covenant with His Son, that if He would take upon Himself our nature and our obligation to fulfill justice, then He would give us to Him as an everlasting inheritance, and the eternal Son agreed. He agreed to undergo that suffering out of love for His Father, for He was looking to the reward, the reward of all those whom the Father has given Him. They lastly remind us of the work of the Spirit of God, whom the Father and the Son sent forth into the world to apply this work of redemption. The Spirit, in His marvelous work of the new birth, enveloped us in Christ, wrapped us up in Him, united us to Him, so that all that He did has become ours. All that Christ has done is yours this morning, you are the elect of the Father, you are the recipients of God’s Spirit, if you are resting in Him alone for salvation, and striving to obey all that He has commanded you.

Since this is what the sacrament represents to us, I thought it would be appropriate for us to again reflect upon these truths as we prepare to come to the table this morning. It is not good for us to come to the Supper unprepared, for it shows that we do not take it seriously enough. This meal represents the death of our beloved Savior. He doesn’t want this to be a mere tradition, something that we add to the service six times a year. He wants it to be a love feast, a feast where He reveals His love to us, and where we lift our love to Him and to each other as fellow-members of His body. Let us therefore prepare ourselves now, that we might eat and drink to the glory of God. And let us do so by dwelling on this point,

If you are a follower of the Lamb this morning, the three Persons of the Godhead have all united to save you from your sins.

First, I want us to consider that Peter’s letter comes with all the authority of God; second, that it is written to strangers who dwell in a strange land; and thirdly, that it brings the encouragement we need in the work of God to bring us to our heavenly home.

I. First, This Word Comes to You with the Authority of the Messenger of God.

A. Peter, Who Was Personally Commissioned as an Ambassador of the Lamb, Wrote This Letter.

1. An apostle, you will recall, is one who is sent by someone else for a specific purpose.
2. Peter, one of the twelve apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, was commissioned by Him to be the herald of His good news, of the message of the Gospel and the doctrine conforming to godliness.
3. When he speaks, he does not speak on his own authority, as though there was something special about Peter’s words. He speaks with the authority of Christ. He

speaks the words of your king.

4. Therefore, nothing of what he says is to be despised by us, whether we think it is too easy or too severe. If it is the word of our Lord, then we must say with all the faithful, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant is listening."
- B. And That Same Authority Adheres to It Still, for the Purposes of the Lord Never Change.
1. Whenever a king, who reigns over a country, issues a decree, that decree remains in force until either the king changes it, or the king dies and another rises up after him who will not enforce it.
 2. Christ is a king who will reign forever. He lives forever by the power of an indestructible life. And since He will not die, no one will take His place. And since He remains forever the same, He will never change His mind.
 3. Therefore what He has laid down for us through the apostle, remains firm. His good intentions towards His own never grow weak or fail. They remain constantly and eternally the same. His promises forever hold true. His purpose to help His own remain constant. His commandments are continually upheld by Him. And His judgments will never fail.
 4. It is good to know that the Word of God will always be yea and amen in Him.

II. Secondly, This Word Comes to You as Strangers in a Strange Land.

- A. Peter Addressed This Letter **"to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."** These are the many regions of Asia minor, which today is known as Turkey.
1. Many believe that Peter's audience was made up mainly of Jews.
 - a. They are here called literally "the strangers of the dispersion."
 - b. They are strangers because they are scattered, away from their native land. They are foreigners.
 - c. The dispersion in Scripture often refers to Jews, for it was they who were scattered abroad through their disobedience to the Lord. They were taken into exile.
 - d. And we should not think it strange that Peter would write to them, after all, he was the apostle to the Jews. Paul wrote, **"I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)"** (Gal. 2:7-8).
 - e. Furthermore, some even point to the fact that these areas he mentions here are very similar to those mentioned in the book of Acts, where many Jews had come to Jerusalem from where they had been scattered in order to observe the feast of Weeks. On the day of Pentecost they heard the disciples speaking in their own languages, and they said, **"Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God"** (Acts 2:7-11).
 - f. The Jews were widely spread out, and here some of the regions they name are the

same as Peter names.

2. But on the other hand, we should not think it strange if this description also includes Gentiles.
 - a. After all, those Jews who were saved on Pentecost lived around Gentiles, and if they took their calling from the Lord seriously, they surely tried to reach out to them.
 - b. And we shouldn't think it strange that Peter would refer to them with the same names that are used for Israel. Paul calls the Gentiles "the sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7), "the children of promise" (Gal. 4:28), "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). It shouldn't surprise us then if Peter uses a name which is most often used of Israel to refer to the church.
 - c. But it is also clear in his letter that Peter intends to include the Gentiles. He says in 2:10, "**For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**" Though this may apply to all the converted, yet in the OT, and in the New by the apostle Paul, it is used to refer to the Gentiles.
 - d. This letter then is addressed to all the people of God in all the regions in which they had been scattered. And it appears from the letter that what had scattered them was an ongoing persecution.
 - e. At the time of this writing, it is believed that the persecutions by the emperor Nero were ongoing. That is why in the letter Peter makes so many references to suffering, and points to Christ as a model on how the godly must suffer.
- B. Christian, You, as well as They, Are Also to See Yourself as a Stranger in a Strange Land.
1. You, like the Jews, are exiles and strangers in this world, and should long for Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem where your Savior is.
 - a. The Jews in exile longed to be back within the gates of Jerusalem, the holy city, where God dwelt and where He revealed His presence in blessing.
 - b. The Christian as well longs to be in the heavenly Mount Zion where God dwells.
 - c. When I think of this, I can't help but think of Bunyon's *Pilgrims's Progress*, where Pilgrim, realizing that he was in the city of Destruction and would be destroyed with it unless he fled, desired to find a way of salvation and started on his way to Zion. After he met a man on the way, named Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who tried to guide him to peace through law-keeping and morality, Evangelist again pointed him to the gate of salvation. In that part of the story, we read, "So, in process of time, Christian got up to the gate. Now, over the gate there was written, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matthew 7:7. He knocked, therefore, more than once or twice, saying —

"May I now enter here? Will he within
Open to sorry me, though I have been
An undeserving rebel? Then shall I
Not fail to sing his lasting praise on high."

At last there came a grave person to the gate, named Goodwill, who asked who was there? and whence he came? and what he would have?

CHR. Here is a poor burdened sinner. I come from the City of Destruction, but am going to Mount Zion, that I may be delivered from the wrath to come. I would therefore, Sir, since I am informed that by this gate is the way thither, know if you are willing to let me in?

“I am willing with all my heart,” said Goodwill; and with that he opened the gate (*Pilgrim’s* 132-133 [Sage]).

- d. The Christian knows that here he has no lasting home. Here he is a stranger and a wanderer. He is but a Pilgrim passing through on his way to the Heavenly Mount Zion.
- e. Are you such a person? Are you fleeing from the wrath to come? Do you long for the eternal dwellings, into which the Lord has promised to receive all who forsake the world and come to Him by faith?
- f. There is nothing worth hanging onto in this world. It will all pass away in a moment, in a thunderous clap, at the last day. But the one who does the will of the Lord will abide forever with the Lord in glory.
- g. The real blessings are for those who have been born again from above. The psalmist writes, **“But of Zion it shall be said, ‘This one and that one were born in her’; and the Most High Himself will establish her”** (Ps. 87:5).
- h. The apostle Paul writes, **“But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother”** (Gal. 4:26).
- i. Let us therefore long to be with our Lord, where He is, seated at the right hand of the Father, praying for us and longing for the day when we, His children, will be with Him.
- j. But let us also not forget this morning, what the Lord has done to bring us safely there.

III. Thirdly, This Word Comes to You to Encourage You that God Has Accomplished the Work that Is Necessary for You to Arrive There.

A. Peter Reminds His Readers that They Have Been **“Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God.”** And This Is Apparent to Him Because of the Sanctifying Work of the Spirit Producing Faith and Obedience within Them.

1. Peter writes to them out of a judgment of charity, not really knowing whether or not they are really chosen.
 - a. He knows that God’s choice of them would have taken place in eternity.
 - b. He knows that it was a sovereign choice on the part of God, **“according to the foreknowledge of God,”** which is not a knowing beforehand of what they would do, nor merely a foreknowing of who they would be or what they would be like, but rather it was a foreloving on the part of God. A setting of His affections upon them.
2. But he also does not simply assume their election for no reason. He includes, **“by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.”**
 - a. They were not chosen by the sanctification of the Spirit, for this cleansing takes place in time, not in eternity.
 - b. Rather, this sanctification is the outward evidence by which Peter can make his judgment.
 - c. It is evidenced in their making profession of the true religion. They were professed

followers of Christ, or they would not be in the church at all. They were laying claim to saving faith in Christ Jesus.

- d. But their works, their activities, also showed that their lives, as much as could be seen outwardly, were consistent with that profession. They were seen to be God's chosen, **"by the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience,"** or, as the NASB put it, **"that you may obey Jesus Christ."**
- e. They showed by their lives that they had a right to lay claim to the fact that they were born again. They could say, **"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"** (Eph. 2:10).
- f. Peter could say of them, as Paul says of true believers, **"For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13). God's work is revealed by the believer's good works, for those is what God produces in the life of the believer.
- g. And if the sanctification is there, then Peter can also assume that the cleansing blood of Christ is also at work. He can assume that the blood which Jesus Christ shed on Calvary for His people, has been applied to them. They have been sprinkled, like the Old Covenant people of God, with the blood of the sacrifice, not merely with the blood of animals, which could not take away sins, but with the blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.
- h. If sanctification is present, if the likeness of Christ is being more and more impressed upon his hearers, then Peter will also assume their justification, that they have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and that His perfect righteousness has been imputed to them, thus identifying them as God's elect.

B. Christian, This Affords You Both Cause for Reflection and Great Joy.

1. Reflection, in that it calls you to look within to see if the graces of the Spirit are within you to which these promises are directed.
 - a. Every Bible text that we examine each week contains in it a challenge to examination, to see if the grace of God is in your life, and if it is, how much is there. Grace is invisible, but its effects are not. And we should exam ourselves to see if we possess it, especially in light of the Lord's Supper this morning. Paul wrote, **"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup"** (1 Cor. 11:28).
 - b. Is the grace of God in your life? Does your life show it by a constant desire and struggle to be more like Him, and to serve and obey Him more? Then God's promises of eternal life are for you. You may legitimately apply them to yourself.
2. And if you can, what joy this offers you. You have a hope which is **"both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil"** (Heb. 6:19).
 - a. People of God, if the grace of God is in your heart, this is a time to rejoice.
 - b. That grace is a mark of God's ownership, a mark of His adoption.
 - c. It is not just anyone who can lay claim to being a Christian. Not everyone has a right to embrace the promises of God. Only those who possess these marks.
 - d. If you meet the conditions of a lively and working faith, and repentance from all of

your sins, then you can take hope in the promises of everlasting life. You can come to the Supper knowing that the Lord is going to continue to sustain that grace in your heart throughout all eternity, and receive you as His own on that final day. Grace, once given, is never taken back. And it is indestructible. It is as powerful and long lasting as the infinite and eternal love of God for His saints.

- e. If such is the case with you, then prepare to come to the table with joy, and rejoice that Christ's flesh is true food for you, and His blood true drink. Partake with thankfulness and receive God's blessing for this is His table of blessing.
- f. But if your graces are running low, and you are beset all around with many temptations and trials, and your strength is at an end, come as well to the table, for this table is for you who struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. It is a table of refreshment, a table of hope. Come, and be renewed in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might!
- g. But if you find that you are a stranger to the grace of God, that there is none of it in you, you do not pass the test, the marks are not there; then do not partake of this spiritual food. This table is not for you. But it summons you first to repent of your sins and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for sinners, which, upon so doing, the Bible says that you will be saved. It summons you secondly, to join with a visible expression of the body of Christ in the local church, that you might serve with the people of God. There is one bread, and we are all members of His body. And thirdly, it summons you to die to yourself and to live for Christ alone the rest of your days on earth, as His servant. The Bible says, "**And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf**" (2 Cor. 5:15). If you are outside of Christ this morning, won't you come to Him, won't you accept His offer of life, so that you won't perish? I pray that you will. I pray that the Lord would put it in your heart to do so. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that if you would believe on Him, you should not perish, but have everlasting life. Come to Christ this morning, and live! Amen.