

The Gospel

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: 13 December 2015

Preacher: Angus Macdonald

[0 : 00] Let us turn together as we read God's Word in 1 Peter, chapter 1. 1 Epistle General of Peter, chapter 1.

Reading from the beginning of the chapter. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who relate the excels of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the full knowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ, and for 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 hath 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. The name of our Lord Jesus Christ is a holy man, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, through the tested genuineness of your faith.

More precious than gold, that perishes the earth, is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 43] For you have not seen him, you love him. For you do not know him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy, that is inexplicable and full of glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied are bearing the grace of us to be used, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicated, when he protected 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 you have been announced, things that have now been announced to you, through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven.

Things into which angels long to link. Therefore, prepare your minds for action, and be sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you in 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, you will also be holy in all your conduct.

[3 : 15] Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him, as father who judges him partially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you are ransomed from the futile wealth inherited from your forefathers, that will perish at the things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like the lamb, without blemish of sport.

He was forewarned before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, and through him will believe us in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God, for all flesh is like grass, and all is glory like the flower of the grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever, and this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Amen. And may God bless to us, and the word into his name be the priest, and all the glory. Let us unite our hearts together in prayer. Let us pray. And we pray, most holy God, as we gather together this morning, and our prayer is that as we address the Holy Throne, and acknowledging the one who inhabits the Holy Throne, who inhabits eternity, one who is eternal, one who is almighty,

unchangeable, invisible, and the only wise God, Lord God, in the heavens above, that our recognition of you will be of one who has made yourself known to us, that you have opened our eyes on our understanding to see things which were hidden from us before, that you have made known to us divine mysteries, and that you have opened even our hearts to show us how vile and lonesome we are before one that is infinitely holy.

[6 : 11] But we are compelled to go, we are encouraged to come, because being sinful, we need one who will make provision for sinners, and you demonstrate your great love for us.

For God, who is rich in mercy for us, great love for whom you loved us. And he who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

One enters then, that we may acknowledge that love, for greater love than this can no man have, that one should lay down his life for his enemies.

And behold, what man who have loved the Father have bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God, who may have a love of such exceeding great love.

And we may have a love of God, and that you have looked upon us, and that your love and kindness indeed far exceeds that which we can live in a mansion of think.

[7 : 24] So bless us this morning, give us thankful hearts, give us cause to rejoice, for Christ is on the throne, having accomplished his work. He alone could say it is finished, and we can say also it is finished, for all that he had done needed for us.

Bless your holy name, O God, amongst us. And our prayers we would acknowledge thee, as the one who opened our eyes and our understanding, showing us a new and living way, consecrated through the veil of your flesh, and grant unto us then, that we would walk in it.

Bless this congregation, bless us with spiritual blessings, and bless us, O God, and enrich us in the faith, for it is by faith that we stand, for the just shall live by faith, and we walk by faith and not by sight.

So bless each one of us in our homes and in our families. Bless all that is done in your name, wherever and by whoever, as we pray, O God, for the pastor of this congregation, and all who uphold the cause wherever and whoever, as we remind it of the church in this world.

They are called the little flock, fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, which was prepared for you. O God, we pray for the persecuted church, remembering them that our bonds have been burned with us, that we may indeed have an awareness of the affliction of Joseph, and our prayer is for all who suffer, O God, for righteousness' sake.

[9 : 21] We pray for them in Iraq, in Syria, and all the regions where Islam seems to rule, and indeed, we see the rule as one of much violence and hatred.

O God, surely they can even see the truth. Our prayer is that they will see the truth, as Pilate asks toward this truth, and hear us that all the truth and the life presented to us.

So we pray for those who are housebound, the age of the inferno, who come at all to their care, O God, this day, our young, all, each and every one of us, in which, as we pray, and open our hearts that we may be receptive to the gospel.

For Jesus' sake, Amen. Let us continue our singing this time from Psalm 102, again, the Scottish Salter.

Psalm 102, from verse 23 of the Psalm, that is the sharp mental version Psalm 103, of the Psalm 102, and for she hath abated in the way, and he my days has shortened thus here, therefore, did I say.

[11 : 07] To God's praise, Psalm 102, from verse 23 to the end. My wants is strength and force me I'll be there to be no way I'll be the name of the Lord Outro eternally by years and you can say the far foundation of the earth of old time time has been the time

I don't show what the world is my own past days I shall fall and cry more and truth I think it shall change out this day and we are old and wise old like to come and die the world the lives the lives the best to the world and change and change and change and be part of the life and the years are to be and be the and the sea and the earth and all thy servants shall continue and believe and true and in my sight the

Lord their sea shall be salvation I think with the children's address I think I don't know how I've got to believe that I think I think I think with the children's address I think I don't know how I've got to believe I don't know how I've got to do that children's address seems to have to have made me I said I'm going to have both things well I said after three years If we turn together to Ephesians

chapter one but we shall come back to first Peter First Peter we shall come back to that chapter verse 17 and in verse 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints

I read that from the authorised version and sometimes the new version puts me because the chapter I read in first Peter I memorised that chapter a long time ago and it's one of my favourite chapters and when you put something into memory and you can just go through it sometimes another version really which I call trips me up like the darkness catches up with me but they say the other version is much better and I don't get them but now let's look at first Peter we shall continue we shall look at that also these verses in Ephesians and in verse Peter and in verse Peter chapter 12 and to him it was revealed and what we read in Ephesians that the eyes of your understanding have been enlightened and if you see through the eyes of your understanding and if you see through the eyes of your understanding been enlightened it reminds you that something has to happen to us before we actually come to a knowledge of God and in verse 12 of this chapter and to him it was revealed

I use the AV again so it has to be a special revelation for us to understand and grasp the scriptures in other words God himself has to reveal to us what he has to say to us what it means is that God has to communicate with us and when God is communicating with us he is going to communicate to us a knowledge of himself now we know that creation demonstrates a creator and the creation is silent although it speaks to us of many many things that the creator created and made and sustains may God is now reveal to us the mysteries of the universe science certainly opens our eyes and our understanding how wonderful and marvelous the universe is and how complex and it is everything but God did not reveal to us that mystery our minds could not grasp it what we are talking about is that God is knowable but only as he reveals himself to us the new ability of God otherwise where would we search for one as we have it in verse 8 whom have you not seen where would you go for someone you haven't seen and how could you love someone that you haven't seen whom have you not seen you love that's what it says so what God does he reveals a knowledge of himself and he presents to our minds his knowledge when we consider God we cannot measure God everything of God is infinite as one put said in Edwards in Edwards there are three things which could explain to us all that God is in himself that there is infinite infinite knowledge and there is infinite holiness and love we have that in 1st Peter and there is infinite joy and happiness these three things that is what God is going to communicate to his people knowledge holiness and love joy and happiness and it is written says Jesus in the prophets that all they shall be taught of God and much as creation actually teaches us as regards to the Creator nevertheless there is no knowledge of God if you ask the creation whatever can you tell me about your Creator the silence never anything so wonderful and marvelously made nor the laws which are in harmony with each other can you tell me anything about holiness and love

[21 : 05] no just the coldness the silence can you tell me anything about joy and happiness no no where can I find these things no can I search the world can I travel where can I find these things in this world where can I go there is no answer in this world no answer whatsoever so God has to reveal himself as we have it in verse 12 verse 12 and to him it was revealed but not unto himself but unto us so here we have the God revealing himself as regards to his knowledge the revelation that we have reminded at this time of the year very few of you are reminded are reminded of the truth of what really took place the incarnation the incarnation the incarnate God came into this world to reveal himself that's what he did and he came into our midst there was no preparation whatsoever as regards for this great event the greatest event that ever happened on this earth was when God came to communicate with man himself himself himself there was no preparation if you have someone of great importance coming to visit like our queen or anyone there is always preparation but not with the son of God he came into the midst of the world of chaos the world of sin the world of division the world of hatred that's when he came right into the midst of it

God revealing himself he came into the carnage and he came to give us knowledge of himself you see where there is no knowledge and lack of knowledge the people perish and by giving him his knowledge of himself he did not just give knowledge by a sort of a vision because Israel was the one into which into the into who he came into the into where he came and yet they did not wish to know him so seeing having seen Christ did not necessarily mean that you came to acknowledge

often as we read in Ephesians 3:17 that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened and so we have it in verse 23 something must happen to you and I before we can actually grasp his knowledge and that is he speaks about a new birth being born again not of corruptible seed but incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever so he has to reveal himself to us and you see before we can enjoy a relationship with God there has to be an opening of our understanding at the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that is opened something must happen to you and I before God can communicate himself to us that is the first step before there is any relationship or regards to a sacred relation between God and you and I there has to be a new change a change in man because man cannot accept God on God's terms until God himself changes him and opens his eyes on your understanding to receive him because if you and I were left in the dark with no knowledge of God as we said before where would we find him? where would we look for him? where would the fear of God be? where would the wisdom be? the love? the knowledge? where would anything be without God opening the eyes and understanding that's why there are so few here today because the understanding and their eyes have not been opened so here we have the incarnation God came to us before him he was one he spoke to us by the prophets in these last days has spoken to us by his son that's what he says God who had sundry times and his various manners spoken times past to our fathers by the prophets having these last days spoken to us by his son and in the last verse of this chapter here he speaks to us in the gospel and this is the gospel which is preached unto you the gospel the good news and that's what it's all about

God communicates to us and reveals himself to us in the incarnate son but what is he really revealed to us? what is it revealed to you and I this morning or since we first began? well in verse 16 here he reminds us of his holiness it's not a popular word today holiness even in the church there is much silence on the word holiness you don't hear people speaking of holiness the holiness movement that began in Germany in the 19th century people were not happy with their standard of Christianity as regards to the teaching and so they set themselves apart they didn't actually it didn't actually form other churches but they started what they call the holiness movement of the house churches in order that they would have a clearer insight and a greater knowledge of God and that their own lives would seem to be deficient of this one thing they lacked they lacked this holiness of life they were aware of the power of holiness so they formed these house groups and it spread across to England and it finished up with Keswick some of you here have been to Keswick well Keswick began as a holiness movement people were aware that this was one thing that was lacking in their lives we have it here in verse 16 be ye holy for I am holy for it is written he says that's what it says it is written with God there is infinite holiness for I am holy and if God is going to communicate anything to us as regards to his knowledge then it must be first of all his holiness it has to be for God is holy and when you consider man in his original state he was created he was created as being holy and there is nothing that resembles the creator no soul where there is divine likeness in a human being is holiness nothing is like Christ nothing is like God like holiness and nothing resembles his nature so much as holiness that's what it says here to be like him to be like him would that be the desire this morning above everything in life

[30 : 04] I want to be like God well God will make you like himself because he cannot possibly work in us anything that is foreign to his own nature that actually answers to his own nature as face answers to face in a mirror and in a new creation and in a new birth as we have it in verse 23 he restored that image and it's the image that corresponds to his own and that is holiness and there is nothing that fits man for glory more so than holiness and there is nothing that fits man for glory more so than holiness but you and I are going to be introduced and to be subjects as one called of the country of angels that that's where Christ went back to the country of angels where their faces are veiled and there is nothing that fits and there is nothing that fits anyone for glory more so than holiness because we have it here be ye holy he says how can we be holy unless he makes us so and he imparts his own holiness to us it's not something that we generate from within from within our own power it comes from above that's what it is and that's what it is and when Adam before the fall he was holy and that's what he lost friends he saw his nakedness not because he had no clothes he was ashamed he was he the shame was that he was not he was not a man he was not a man he was he he the shame was that he he was stripped of what was so necessary for him to communicate with his God that he lost his holiness he lost what was most precious to him and that's the difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate the regenerate as we have in verse 23 they are made holy though at times they see so much

unholiness in themselves but that is holiness showing them the unholiness of the foreign state that's what we have here when we consider the difference between good angels and bad angels they are still angels but the difference between a good angel and a devil is holiness and if you are going to make a devil a good angel you would add to that angel holiness and that would make that devil a holy angel because that's where the deficiency comes from there is no holiness in the foreign angel and if you were to ask someone or ask the angels what is the greatest glory in heaven where you dwell you say holiness holiness there is nothing like it it's the glory of God himself his holiness is not for the same holy, holy, holy glory

Lord God of hosts the whole of heaven is filled with thy holiness and when the angels came to announce the birth of Christ it wasn't to the earth through it now unto you so in the scale of no glory to God in the highest it was always to God's glory everything is to the glory of God everything everything not to the glory of man it's to the glory of God and you see when we consider holiness we try to analyze what exactly does this holiness mean when we consider it to be a moral issue and we might be accused of being narrow or you may think well I must walk according to the law because God's law you see is holy it's what we call the moral law it's holy and with those it's a moral issue but it's smaller than a moral issue with God

God does not come under his own law like the ten commandments God is eternal is unchangeable infinite is eternal there's no moral issue with God you see with God you see holiness means that he is distinct that he is separate that he is separate from all creatures he is God when we say God we sometimes use the word without really knowing what we're saying God what is God the question was asked by the reformers what is God and the good only answer of what God revealed himself to be God is a spirit he is infinite and he is eternal and he is unchangeable and he is exalted above everything as one put it he has infinite majesty in Galilee gets more along we cannot measure God and when we speak of God's holiness holiness is transcendental it is the effulgence of his glory like the sun shining from the heavens so with God holiness it is more than a moral issue like it is with us it is a perfection of God and when we speak of God's grace we can highlight grace we can highlight grace and we speak of God's mercy it is an act of God an attribute of God we speak of God's love but preceding these things we can put his holy grace his holy love and his holy mercy everything with God is holy everything with God is holy and if we as a church recognize the holiness of God there will be far more reverence in the worship and in our circumspecting our walk before him far more and what God communicates to man is holiness but there is something else along with holiness in verse 8 there is love because we are told that God is also love for God is love you see God loves what God sees in himself

God approves of everything that he sees in himself he cannot possibly disapprove of anything that he sees in himself and if there is anything that unites the heart to the thing loved is to love having not seen him having not seen he love he love how can you love someone you haven't seen how? only if that love is poured into your heart there is no other way no other way and he speaks about in Ephesians 1's thought chosen in him before the foundation of the world the world that we should be holy and without praying before him in love see?

[38 : 50] if you were asked to how can we differentiate between holiness and love the similarity is so that you can actually use one for the other God is holy in God and God is love and we must love what God reveals to us love you see where there is lack of love there is a coldness that was the problem with the Ephesian church they were commanded for their love they were commanded they were commanded they were commanded that the love had gone cold it had gone cold it had gone cold well it can happen in a church quite quickly when the love of many can walk cold these two go together holiness and love they all come from God you see God communicates you see these things of himself we don't invent these things we don't make ourselves holy beings certainly we cannot make ourselves love the unseen the unknown unless the unknown makes us love himself and then becomes known to us and this love in Romans 5 verse 5 it is being poured into your hearts by the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit given unto you poured into the heart like an empty vessel we have it in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 for we have this treasure he says in earthen vessels or in jars of clairs we have it in the new version we have this treasure in earthen vessels that here we have carrying with us this incredible treasure of holiness and of love which has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and given unto us the Holy Spirit is not some distant person that does these things from a distance but right in our midst the Holy Spirit and to fill our hearts with holy love holy love for the Lord himself not the works of righteousness that we have done but his own

message he saved us by the washing of regeneration by the renewing of the Holy Spirit says to Titus all that is the work of God all that is the work of God you see this love is not something that is rationed like something comes down drop oh well

I felt this love many years ago I felt this love but recently I'm cold and I don't feel it well if that be the case friends then we have to consider our own walk before God it's not drop and drop and a drip here and a drip there or running to and through to find this love and listening to some great preacher maybe I'll get it from him no no no no you'll get it from him he who is holy that's where we get it from and we'll carry that with us you see it's poured richly and there's nothing spared because that's what he says that poured into your hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us it is like something that is filled like a heart filled and is running over spilling over he doesn't hold anything back of his fullness he says to the apostle John says of his fullness we have received grace he says for grace and he communicates this love to us because he sends the son of his love in the incarnate God it is infinite love and it's God's love for us and it's God's love in us pour into our hearts and in verse 8 he says whom have you not seen you love for now you see you not yet rejoicing so rejoicing where there is knowledge where there is holiness where there is love there is joy you cannot but have joy you cannot you cannot you cannot you cannot yet rejoicing that's what it is and where there is joy there is something else there is happiness happiness they go together everything goes together like twins happiness the man whose God is the Lord the word blessed means happiness the beatitude begins with blessed blessed are the poor in spirit blessed are the who mourn blessed are the weak blessed are the who hunger and thirst blessed are the merciful blessed are the peacemakers Psalm 1 begins with the word blessed opens the book of Psalms the book of Psalms with the word blessed and you see a joyful person cannot be a happy person it cannot and that person is strong in the Lord because we also have the joy of the Lord as your strength remember this is all from the Lord it's his joy that is our strength and he communicates his joy to us it is joy unspeakable that's what it says joy unspeakable it says and full of glory now if someone actually asks you this can you explain this joy that you actually experience I cannot it's unspeakable it's inexpressible as it says in the new version

I cannot I know it I feel it it is God communicating with me it is God revealing himself to me and when we speak of of joy unspeakable what it means is it's a high degree of joy it's not just something that is momentary something that we we received like and then it sort of it gives us occasion to be to be glad like good news just now you hear of good news oh that's good that's good no no this you see is a high degree of joy it's inexpressible it says it's full of glory now we know that glory belongs to God as John says when he saw Christ we saw his glory we saw it we saw it with our own eyes it was objective but this joy is subjective it's in the heart and what what John saw was related to the senses to the ear to the eye but we saw his glory full of grace and of truth and that is what God reveals to us his joy rejoicing you see rejoicing in something is shown a liking to it and delighting it you know the word delight that's the language of scripture friends this is all this is all biblical you know this is not an invention of some preacher this is the church of God this is the living church this is not a dying church this is a church that is alive and rejoicing you see when we talk about love it denies the heart to the thing loved and if a heart is united to a thing that is loved then that that heart is joyful because nothing makes the heart more joyful than love man and wife they are joyful in love they are happy and that's what it says here and what joy does when it denies the heart to the thing loved that's what love does the joy enlarges the heart and that's what we have at the end of this chapter in verse in verse Peter that when he speaks about purifying the hearts unto unfamed love of the brethren love of the brethren see we need friends and enlarged heart to love the brethren we need joyful hearts that's why the soul of the love and we need joyful because we lack the peace that enables us to love and to enlarge our hearts to embrace and to unfamed that is incorruptible love for the brethren being born again not of corruptible seed by the word of God who deliver them abound forever so joy enlarges the heart and you see when we speak of love you can see that is joy expressed that's what it is we know that it can be seasonal and we know that a cloud can cover it

though we are in heaven as he says through many temptations he says that though now we are in heaven as through manifold temptations the trial of your faith being precious being much more precious than gold perisheth though betrayed by fire might be found in honour and glory the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ heaven is through manifold temptations sin there is grief there is sadness all things can sometimes like a cloud cover but it doesn't destroy what you have doesn't

destroy it you see it is God himself communicating all these graces to us poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us it is not joy in power it is not joy in gifts joy in gifts oh you say to a man oh you are so gifted you are such a great preacher and the man swells with pride they love me they follow me and the disciples came back full of it and they said to the Lord

[51 : 15] Lord all the devils are subject to us we were casting out devils here they are not the good they came back rejoicing in those gifts oh Lord says no he says in that rejoice no because the devils are subject to you but I tell you he says in what to rejoice rejoice he says that your names are written in heaven how can they know that they know because heaven you see has come to them come to them and fill their souls with knowledge of God and with his holiness and his love and his joy and his happiness that's what it means casting out devils you see was a gift that's a gift and gifted you see gifts sometimes can be a delusion and preaching is a gift but the names written in heaven that's where the eternal happiness lies so in this world we have a mixture of joy and grief and finally as we think of Christ himself the joy that was set before him

I say that was just that was a sort of something that was enabled him to keep us going going if the angel that came to the garden get sent in perhaps reminded him to encourage him to go on in his work Lord remember the joy that was set before you remember God being glorified in the work of redemption and he gathered strength from the joy that was set before him we have that in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross as if it prior to the cross he was made known to him this joy and the joy that's set before us two friends would enable us to endure and to endure being encouraged because Christ had his eye on the joy and the glory of God and also a desire that the same joy would fill your heart and my heart when God communicates that knowledge and holiness and love joy and happiness to us it's all of grace friends it's all of grace so we can run hither to and fro but he in verse 12 as he says and to him it was revealed till God reveals these things to me to us so when he foresaw the joy that would fill our hearts it gave him strength let us pray we pray with holy God for grace grace to go on in the faith grace to endure and grace to continue looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the same shame and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high and high part us with thy blessing for Jesus said
Amen