

The Pilgrims' Privilege

1 Peter 1:10–12

The Fifth Sermon on First Peter

© 2014 Daniel R. Hyde

This is a passage that I have been thinking about all week. I felt like that character in the movie *Airplane* who sort of lost it and said, “I gotta get out of here!” only to have the entire plane of passengers line up to say, “Snap out of it!” This passage has grabbed me, looked me in the eyes, and said, “Do you realize who you are and what you have?”

You see, as chapter has been saying to us, here we are as **exiles** or pilgrims in this world. And because the world in the form of our unbelieving family, friends, and neighbors causes us to feel like outcasts we get depressed because we're lonely and don't belong here. And as this chapter goes on to say in this life we are grieved by trials. And they hurt. They sting, don't they?

But this passage is saying to us that in the transientness of this pilgrim life we have something firm in eternity, in heaven. And that firm inheritance will come to us fully on the last day. But more than point us to heaven, this passage says now, now in the wilderness, now in your trials, and now in your griefs you have a privilege right under your noses that you probably don't even realize.

Where is it? Right here in preaching. Preaching, literally, is the announcement of news. And for us, it's the good news, the greatest news, isn't it?

That's why Peter speaks here of **the things...announced to you as the good news** (v. 12). And these **things** that you now here were also **prophesied** in ages long ago, which Peter says is **this salvation** and **grace** (v. 10) that was made known in **the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories** (v. 11). And for us, are preachers are **those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven** (v. 12). So you heard the good news from preachers who were commissioned by the Holy Spirit who has come down from heaven. This means your preacher is a heavenly messenger with a heavenly message.

And what Peter then does in verses 10–12 is to teach us about *the pilgrims' privilege*. The message we hear privileges us over two groups that we normally think are more privileged than us:

1. *Your Privilege Over the Prophets*
2. *Your Privilege Over the Angels*

May the Lord open our hearts and minds to his truth tonight.

Your Privilege Over the Prophets

First of all, brothers and sisters, do you realize that you are privileged over the Old Testament prophets? How so? Notice that Peter says in verse 10 that **this salvation**, which is the salvation of our souls in verse 9, was what the prophets **searched and inquired carefully** about **what person or time** these things would come true (vv. 10–11). Literally, Peter says, “what” not “what person,”

because they knew it was the Messiah they were preaching.¹ One commentator said, “So sweet and ravishing a study is that way of salvation through Christ incarnate that the more knowledge thereof any attain to, they will still be the more and more inquisitive and diligent after a further measure.”² For example, Daniel searched the scroll of Jeremiah the prophet to determine the end of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, but then he was shown that those seventy years were symbolic of a future age to come. Have you done a family tree yet? You know all the investigation, all the work, all the time that takes to figure out who is who and where you’ve come from. So the Gospel you hear is what they inquired to know.

Also notice in verse 12 that Peter says the prophets realized that were **serv**ing not themselves but you. Isn’t that amazing? So long ago the Lord sent prophets to speak to their own age, but ultimately, it was for your sake. Have you ever stumbled across love letters between your grandparents? I did once. My grandfather was writing my grandmother from the Pacific during WWII. But I was reading them and it was as if I was reading of a love that would eventually bring me into the world. They were writing to me!

Notice also that the prophets prophesied of a future **grace that was to be yours**; and now that grace is ours! (v. 10) What they looked forward to, has come alive in Jesus Christ; and although we’ve not seen him, as verse 8 says, we believe in him. Look with me at Matthew 13:16–17. In speaking the parable of the sower, Jesus goes on to say to his disciples, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and

¹ See the discussion in Schreiner, 73–74; cf. Poole, 900.

² Alexander Nisbet, *1 & 2 Peter*, 28.

your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

Think about that! Moses, who ate in the presence of Almighty God on Mount Sinai and who hid in the cleft of the rock and saw the Lord pass by, did not see or hear what you see now and what you hear now! Samuel, who lived in the tabernacle next to the Ark and who heard the distinct voice of God calling him did not see or hear what you do! Elijah, who was caught up into heaven; Isaiah, who saw the Lord high and lifted up in the temple; Ezekiel, who saw visions unexplainable, all desired to sit where you are sitting tonight! Are you feeling spiritually low tonight? Start to see how God sees you in this text tonight!

Your Privilege Over the Angels

And do you realize tonight that you are privileged over the angels themselves? I know the culture wants us to think of angels as those chubby little babies with wings. But Scripture says they are glorious creations of God that serve God in heaven and on earth. And Peter speaks of our salvation here as **things into which angels long to look** (v. 12). This shows your privilege. Now I have to show you this step by step, so bear with me; trust me, it will be worth it.

This verb translated **to look** is only used four other times in the New Testament. In James 1:25 it's used figuratively of looking into the law. But turn with me to John 20:11. Here it is used of Mary stooping to look in the tomb. Now look at

John 20:5, where you see it's used of Peter stooping to look. Finally, look at Luke 24:12 where it's used of Peter again stooping down to look into the tomb to see Jesus gone and to see his linens lying there. A couple of weeks ago the kids' Grammy gave them a plant that was supposed to attract butterflies. A couple of disappointing weeks followed! Then this past Monday morning, I believe, as we were walking outside to the car Caiden yells out, "Butterflies!" The kids hovered over the plant and were watching the caterpillars all over it. Of course me, being the doubting Thomas said, "Let me see." That's what this word is all about.

This is a verb Peter knew by experience as he had done it. And he's saying that just as Mary and he stooped down to see for themselves the empty tomb the angels in heaven desire to stoop down into earth, into this sanctuary tonight, to see and to understand what is going on among us sinners saved by grace! What a privilege!

Grasp the magnitude of this, brothers and sisters. The angels that sang out at creation, that surrounded Mount Sinai's cloud and fire, that surround the throne in heaven singing, "Holy, holy, holy" (Rev. 4:8), that announced the birth of Jesus with the song, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14), that attended the empty tomb and said, "He is not here, he is risen" (Luke 24:6)—these desire to hear the Scripture read, expounded, and applied as you get to hear!

Are you so ravished by the wonder that God has saved you a sinner that you are taking up and reading the story he unfolded in his Word?³

Conclusion

Do you realize who you are and what you have, brothers and sisters? The big application of this is to bring you back from your feeling depressed this week because your family and friends have forsaken you, to bring you back from what seems like a meaningless life shuttling back and forth from this place to that. Meditate on this passage and be amazed; be changed. Amen.

³ “So excellent and ravishing a mystery is this plot of the salvation of lost sinners through Christ incarnate which the Gospel manifests, that they are no less humble and accurate students of it, and no less seriously taken up with the contemplation of the way of God’s reconciling Himself to sinners.” Alexander Nisbet, *1 & 2 Peter*, 33.