
Spiritual Formation Part 27

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Christ our Redeemer!

1 Peter 1: 3-12

We are chosen and given our new birth! We live in hope! As Christians, we have God's abundant mercy, hope, and assurance so we can praise God for His grace and salvation! In our new life, we are set apart, as we have salvation and an eternal inheritance available to us! God makes us holy in His sight and relevant for life here and now as well as for the eternity to come.

All this is a result of His sacrifice of redemption, His permanence, and His love for us. He lived, died, and rose again for you and me! All we are to do is trust and obey Him, and as we continue in this endeavor, He gives us even more empowerment for enduring life and performing ministry along with His special favor and peace! Even if we do not see Jesus, He sees us, loves us, and helps us persevere. This may seem unattainable or even unfathomable when we are under stress or the hostile occupation of life. However, we can do this because we have access to His empowerment; we are literally kept by God through faith. As we grow in our faith, we become even more precious to God and He will preserve us through trials and life.

Christ is our living Hope that will never fade away! We are chosen by God and by God alone! The Spirit sets us apart. We are able to hear and receive His Words of grace and life. We need to be reminded of what we have and who we are in Christ. If not, we will soon forget and replace His guidance either with our frailty or with the ways of the world.

- *Praise be /Blessed be the God.* This word, *berakah*, comes from Jewish blessings, and means the *God Who blesses us*. It also means rebirth—that God *converts* or “re-births” us. It is the theme that, as Christians, we are born again because God adopts and changes our nature as in *starting again as new* (Jer. 1:11-12; Ezek. 36:24-27; Mic. 1:10-15; John 3; 7:37-39). In Peter's time, this phrase also referred to Gentiles who converted to Judaism. Now, He switches it to those who converted to Christ as their new living Hope, inheritance, security, and God.
- *Abundant mercy.* This phrase continues from the previous phrase of God's blessing, and refers to how lovingly God goes out of His way to redeem us.
- *Begotten us again/given us new birth.* It is God who gives us new birth (John 1:12-13, 3:3-8, 16).
- *Living hope* is one of the main, running themes of this epistle. It does not indicate wishing or thinking positively; rather, it refers to the confidence and conviction we

have that our living God keeps His promises and secures us in Him. It is the assurance—and fact—that God has redeemed us, will bless us, and will care for us (1 Peter 1:13, 21; 3:15).

- *Inheritance* means the “substance” of the hope we have in Christ. It refers to salvation—our deliverance from sin; we are God’s children, sealed in Him and joint-heirs with Him by His Work (Rom. 8:16-17; Heb. 1:14). For the Jews, this meant inheriting a future world such as Israel’s inheritance of the Promised Land while wandering the desert. It infers redemption and the process God used to redeem us. To the Jews, then, it meant treasures stored up in Heaven for them (4 Ezra—a Jewish apocryphal book). For us, by Jesus’ righteousness and our obedience, our treasures are also stored up, while we still have opportunities now.
- *Kept/shielded/reserved* means that the righteous will be saved and the deeds of the wicked will be known. Salvation produces hope and joy. He is our living Hope that will not fade away! This bond ties us to the responsibility of responding to what our God has done for us. He gives us faith; we are responsible for keeping the faith going and growing because we will be delivered from those who oppose us (Eph. 6:16; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 5:8-9).
- *Power of God*, a military term to vigilantly defend a fort, means the priority, vigilance, and permanence of God’s grace and protection He gives to help us keep our faith going and growing (Rom. 8:23, 30; 13:11; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5).
- *Last time* refers to Christ’s second coming and connects verse 7, *the revelation of Jesus Christ* and *testing*. In the End Times, there will be great testing and sufferings.

Do you realize that the *prophets of old* desperately desired and sought what we have—that which is free, and that we take for granted? Never take your faith or what Christ has done for you for granted. If you do, your spiritual journey will derail, your faith will stagnate, and the hopeless gloom of the world will be your only “vesper” (a bell that summons monks to pray). You will be seeking what is feeble and worthless and disavow what is real and jubilant. We are to declare our faith internally, see its veracity and application, and then declare it publicly.

We are to love Him, even though we cannot see Him or touch Him. This may go against common sense, but the reality of His grace and impact can sometimes be hidden by our desires, circumstances, and feelings. This is the test of faith and trust, if we see no hope, we then must look to our Lord; then the hope is given and can be seen. The reward of our faith far outweighs any endurance or struggle we face. The joy we have is real and significant (John 20:29).

Questions

1. Have you ever inherited anything? How did you feel about it?
2. Think this question through: What does it mean to you that you are personally chosen, given new birth, are able to live in hope, and are given abundant mercy and assurance by God?
3. How have you been purified and refined, as you have gone through the trials of life?
4. What would happen to your faith, character, and spiritual formation if you never went through any trials?
5. How can knowing that trials have a purpose and reason help you focus away from anger to being willing to learn and grow from them?
6. Do you realize that as you grow in your faith, you become even more precious to God and He will preserve you through trials and life?
7. How does the fact you are precious by God make you feel? How does this strengthen you?
8. Do you realize that what you have free of charge—what Christ has done, and what you may take for granted—the Prophets of Old so desperately desired and sought?
9. How can this fact give you more confidence, conviction and assurance in your daily life?
10. What can you do to show your love to Christ, even though sometimes we don't see Him or feel Him? How will this help you see Him?

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Corinthians 10:11-13