

## The Hope That Never Fades

I Peter 1:1-9, May 31, 2010

Trinity Sunday

Beloved of the Lord....Sooner or later everything on this earth fades away. Tomorrow many will place flowers or perhaps a flag at a tombstone. With a tender love many will remember the life of a loved one who has faded away. With a patriotic love, others will remember the sacrifice of soldiers who died that we might be free. "Great love hath no man than this." On Memorial Day civilians, soldiers, patriots, all Americans will enjoy fond memories, but there will also be sorrow. Sooner or later everything fades. The Bible says, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever."

There is only one Word from our God that delivers us from a world fading away in sin, to a world of glory which cannot fade. That one Word is Christ. Whereas the colors of the flowers and flags fade from one Memorial Day to the next, the deep red hue of Christ's blood never fades, for His love is from everlasting to everlasting. Thus dear discouraged and troubled Christians, because Jesus gave His dear blood for you, you have a hope that "fadeth not away" an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you.

Consider now Peter who wrote the discouraged Christians of Asia Minor, who were experiencing the reproach of the heathen. Though they as Christians did good, the unbelievers were calling them evil. It is the same in our world today. When we as Christians condemn premarital sex and those who live in sin, we are told marriage is just a piece of paper and we are old-fashioned. When we as Christians condemn same-sex marriage because the Bible calls the deed unnatural and perverse, suddenly marriage is not a piece of paper but a human right and we are discriminating. When we as Christians condemn those who cry "Save the whales" but they do not cry "Save the unborn baby", we are told we are ruining this earth and a woman has a choice. When we as Christians condemn the unscientific teaching of evolution and we teach God is the Creator of all things, the world condemns us as simple-minded and ignorant. When we as Christians teach Christ alone is the only way of salvation for sinful mortals, the world condemns and persecutes us. Marvel not if the world hate you. Jesus said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Thanks be to God we are by faith the **elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.** Believers are elected, namely God has chosen

and elected you, dear believer out from this world through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. The foreknowledge of God here is not foreseeing who would believe, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all". Nevertheless those who believe, believe only because God elected and chose them out of this world, that we might be called the sons of God. While the Bible does not in any way teach predestination to damnation, for Christ died for all and the Lord wants all to believe and be saved, the Bible does teach those who die in the faith were chosen by Him before the foundation of the world. Thus regarding your own salvation dear believer, all three persons of the Holy Trinity work as one to save and make you holy through Christ. The Father with love sent and gave His Son. The Son with love gave and yielded Himself. The Father and Son together send the Spirit who with a perfect love teaches your heart Jesus is your priceless treasure. Through baptism the Holy Spirit sanctified and declared you holy through the blood of Christ. Rest assured the Holy Spirit will finish what He starts, namely He through the Word will keep and preserve you in the truth faith to the end, "even the salvation of our souls." All this is a part of His election by grace. "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."

### **Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.**

Truly God's grace and peace are multiplied unto us through Christ,.... as far as the east is from the west, therefore **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** How do we bless God? What could we possibly give Him who says, "Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest are mine." While we are to give our firstfruits to support Gospel preaching, God also desires our sincere worship and praise for all the wonderful things He's done for us. Hebrews 13 says it best, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Thus by our word and deed, by holy living, obedience to God's commands, we bear witness to this world that Jesus is the treasure of our heart and "He that believe on Him is not condemned."

**According to His abundant mercy** He has **begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** What glorious words! By inspiration of the Holy Spirit each word here has meaning, every preposition, verb and adjective brings us the deepest comfort of heart for every trembling sinner. Notice God not only gives us MERCY, but ABUNDANT MERCY – namely immeasurable mercy through Christ. His cup of love

overflows. We are begotten, “born of water and of the Spirit” so we not only have hope, but a **LIVELY** hope! Our hope of forgiveness then, salvation, and heaven is not a matter where we cross our fingers when we die and hope for the best. Rather since Jesus made all our sins His own, shedding and giving His deep red blood into death, He took our sins into His grave and buried them permanently there! His death was the death of our sins, yet He rose again from the dead saying, “Because I live, ye shall live also!” In Jesus then our hope of salvation and life everlasting in heaven is a certain, sure, and **LIVING HOPE**, for Christ still lives and reigns in heaven yet He is also here with us now saying, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

Indeed He does not leave or forsake us, for we **are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**. Just as a mother does not give birth to a baby and walk away saying, “You’re on your own now kid”, so the Spirit does not quicken us and then walk away! Indeed wherever true faith of Christ in the heart lives, there in the heart also lives the entire Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They together in perfect unity work together to keep and preserve us in the true faith “unto salvation”, namely till we reach our heavenly home. Therefore dear Christian, stay close to the Means of Grace so your faith will be preserved. “Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.”

**Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.** Here God tells us that our trials and tribulations in life, even if it is a trial of fire, namely persecution, is more precious than gold! Would you dear Christian rather have gold or the forgiveness of sins? Would you rather have silver or the preservation of faith? Would you rather have good health for a few years or life everlasting in heaven with a glorified body? Thus whatever trial God has granted you in this life, you must remember this is His gift to you meant only for your heavenly reward. If God did not give us these trials and tribulations, we would fall away and lose our heavenly home! What good is gold, our life, our health, when everything here on earth fades and dies? Jesus alone is our priceless treasure, and faith alone in Him is all that is necessary for salvation. Yet faith can be lost, therefore “hold that fast, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Only those who endure to the end shall be saved. God then in His goodness uses trials and tribulations to keep us on that narrow path to heaven. God wounds only so He can heal. He afflicts only those He loves. The

psalmist therefore writes, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” Let us not be discouraged then when afflicted, but rather thank God, for “we shall through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

**An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.** Our names, by His blood, are written in heaven. Though we are indeed tired Christians, wearied by the sins of our body, discouraged by the sins of our soul, Jesus is the Good Samaritan who comes to us, looks with compassion upon us, and He stops to heal our wounds. He picks us up and holds us in His gentle arms like a Father who holds his precious child. He tells us “do not fear for I am here, I’ll take good care of you.” As He holds us He tells us of a place where there is no more sin, no more doubt, no more fears, worries, or sadness, but only laughter, joy, happiness and peace. Jesus speaks to us of heaven, our inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth now away. Unlike the colors of this earth that fade, God’s gift of heaven to you cannot fade or go away because Jesus with tender love has earned heaven for you. Neither sin, death, nor even the devil can erase the power of this blood, for it is divine and holy blood, freely given from a divine and holy heart, the heart of Jesus whose love for you is from everlasting to everlasting. Search the Scriptures dear child of God and you will find God really does have a heart, and His heart is breaking for you. He wants with all His heart, all His mind, and all His soul, **ONLY** your salvation. With all His heart, mind, and soul, He wants **ONLY** for you to be there with Him, in heaven.

**Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.** Even now in heaven dear believer God’s great heart is filled only with perfect love and affection for you. Even now His arms ache to hold you. Because Jesus gave His dear blood for you, you have a hope that “fadeth not away” an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you. Be patient in your afflictions, knowing the trial of your faith leads only to your heavenly home. In heaven we will see Jesus face to face, and we will rejoice with joy unspeakable. Amen.