

Our Future is in God's Capable Hands

Galatians 4:4, New Year's Day

January 1, 2009

Beloved of the Lord.....In today's world it is very easy to worry about the future. Sometimes we have big decisions to make in life and we worry about making the right choice. Sometimes our worries concern food and clothing, the basic necessities. Sometimes we worry about the future of our children or the loss of our freedoms. Perhaps as we enter into this New Year we have found ourselves worry about the future.

Before Adam and Eve fell into sin, do you think they worried about the future? When they knew only the perfect, full and secure love of God, did they ever lie down to sleep at night and worry about what might happen tomorrow? Truly they worried about none of these things. They were perfectly happy and content children of Almighty God. They didn't know the meaning of the word "fear". Their future was in God's capable hands.

Our fears regarding our future stem from sin and a lack of faith in God's perfect and ever abiding love. We know it is a sin to worry about the future for Jesus said, "Take no thought for the morrow". When we worry we are really doubting God's gracious nature. However, when we think by faith and remember the kindness and mercy of God, we realize our future is in God's good and capable hands. Our future is filled with the man gracious promises of God regarding forgiveness of sins, preservation of faith, and ultimately life everlasting. Truly, our fears vanish and the tempest of our heart is stilled when we hear the calm and gentle Gospel voice of our Savior saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Jn. 14:27 "Lo I am with you always." Our future is in God's capable hands.

Since much of our sermon today has to do with time and eternity, let us remember that God created Adam and Eve to live happily ever after in paradise. They were created to live forever. However, once they fell into sin, mortality, which is death, entered into this world. We worry about the future then because we are mortal and death is all around us. All flesh was grass. Because of sin our life is incredibly short, brief, finite, limited. By nature man's greatest fear is death, and when we think what it will be like for us to die one day, the terrors of death often fill our soul. We don't know how close it is, but daily the shadow of death approaches. Moreover, we know our sin and we know there is a judgment of all men after death. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

When Adam and Eve fled from God's presence, it was because they expected only His punishment. At times, we too as Christians do the same thing. We are afraid of the future sometimes because we fear God's

wrath lies in the future. But when such things happen we must remember God sent His Son into the world to save sinners and His Gospel continually declares sinners righteous through the blood of God's Son. Though our love for Him is far from perfect, His love toward us is always perfect. Therefore when we are afraid let us remember the very hairs of our head are numbered. It is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Our names are written in heaven, and by His grace the crown of everlasting life awaits us.

Therefore when we as Christians fear the future, we need to get into the habit of looking back into the past for comfort. The Bible says, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a son is given." Through this coming year we dare not forget this Child was God's greatest Gift ever given, our text today rightly concludes, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman." But what does this mean? Let us picture an empty glass being filled with water. It isn't full at half or three-quarters.....it isn't full until the water is perfectly level with the tippy tippy top. This means God provided, planned, and mapped out every last detail in the coming of Christ, that the full measure of His grace, be realized. It means that when all the conditions were just right for the appearance of the world's Savior, when all God's promises of the Old Testament had been given, when the Jews were under the thumb of Rome, when Mary was of the perfect age for motherhood, when Joseph was well able to lead and rule his house with wisdom, when all the people were in their proper place like, Zacharias, Elisabeth, John the Baptist, elderly Simeon and Anna, when the shepherds quietly kept watch over their flock by night.....at that perfect moment in time, only when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son. So the point here is that in a particular God-ordained moment in time, with this Child, His Son, God openly revealed His grace, His love toward a world of sinners. God's timing is always perfect. He leaves nothing to chance.

Here now consider the phrase "fulness of time" and telescope out, back, and away. For time itself is a creation of God. The norm for God is eternity, not time, hence before time there was only eternity. What was God doing before creation? Proverbs 8 gives us a glimpse. Listen to Christ the eternal Son of God speak, "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: When he prepared the heavens, I was there.....Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men." Not only do we here see Christ's eternal and happy existence with the Father, but we see their delight before time, in eternity was their plan of saving sinners from sin.

Christ is the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. Titus 1:2 says we have the hope of "eternal

life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Second Timothy 1:9 says He has "saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." We must then rightly conclude from the Scriptures that God's grace toward a world of sinners unworthy of such grace, existed from eternity, but it was openly revealed in the fulness of time when God sent forth His Son. "Grace is the divine mercy, favor, and love which had been intended toward the sinner from eternity, gained by the Son of God in time, and revealed by the Holy Ghost" by the Gospel (Gosswein). God's grace is not earned by man, nor is it drawn to man by anything man does. God's gracious favor and disposition toward man radiates forth, proceeding from the inner chambers of God's heart. These gentle rays of God's grace light upon us, or are revealed to us in the Gospel, when we see "in the fulness of time" God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.

God's grace then which existed before time from eternity, is the moving cause whereby God gave and sent His Son into the fulness of time, to save and redeem every sinner. Thus God who naturally lives in eternity, willingly for your sake and salvation entered into time itself to take your place under the law which condemned you.....He came to fulfil the law in your place! Oh how this knowledge should humble down to the very core of our heart! For His love, His favor, His gracious mercy toward us through Christ existed not only in a moment of time, but it was always there from eternity toward a world of sinners! From eternity the rays of grace shined from His heart so that Christ the Son of God was born a child in the fulness of time.

We then as sinners live and dwell in this creation called time, and yet through Christ we see God's gracious love for us existed from all eternity. As God preordained and set everything in order for Christ to be born in the fulness of time, we must consider that from eternity through Christ, God likewise has arranged and mapped out our path, our course, our trials in life for the singular purpose of our entrance from time into eternity. We who believe are the elect according to His grace. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?" "Whatever God has done, is doing, and will still do for us during our life on earth to bring us to faith in Christ and to preserve us in this faith unto eternal salvation" [this is not a matter of chance, but].....God has from eternity purposed and planned it!" (Koehler)

Thus when we consider now time itself and our future, is there anything to fear? From eternity God chose and elected His own Son to save us, and even we

from eternity were chosen and elected heirs of salvation, His adopted sons and daughters by grace. God therefore cannot and will not leave anything regarding your own salvation to chance! As long as we repent of these sins which continually plague us and trust only in the merits of our Savior, our salvation is secure. Therefore when we fear the future we need only look back in time to the cross when the Son of God entered into time from eternity that we might from time enter into eternity! What a joy to know our future is in God's capable hands. He molds and shapes the events in time around us for our eternal glory. He likewise has preordained our crosses and trials, our tears and tribulations, for the singular purpose of our entering eternal bliss. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit."

Therefore beloved of the Lord, do not fear the future, but look forward to it. God has planned, mapped and preordained it that you may enter His glory above. Moreover God has a plan for your children as well, and His same grace which preserves you, will also preserve them. Our future and theirs is in God's good and capable hands. The Church will endure! One day by God's grace we will joyfully enter our true and eternal home above. We will then be confirmed in our bliss, never to have a care or worry again. In heaven we will be the objects of His eternal love, and we will finally know and fully understand and experience this love He had for us in Christ from all eternity. This is our future, dear believer, "according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Amen.

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