



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 1: 17-25

Summer 2024

"Precious Blood"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. Good morning to all of you. We are continuing our studies in 1 Peter, and our Scripture reading is in chapter 1, verses 17 through 25.

Verse 17;

¹⁷ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; (*I love that expression, "your stay on earth." It's temporary. We need to know that. And it's very brief.*)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. ²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

²² Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

"All flesh is like grass,
And all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
And the flower falls off,
²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever."

And this is the word which was preached to you.

1 Peter 1:17-25

While we were praying in the meeting before coming in here, Warren gave thanks to the LORD for the great privilege we have to be able to meet together as we do. And meeting together to do this; read the Scriptures and study them together. But it is a great privilege and many, (as Warren mentioned), throughout the world don't have this privilege. They meet in secret; they meet in danger of their lives.

So we have much to be thankful for; and we should remember those who are not in such a blessed position as we are and remember them in our prayers. Let's do that. Let's pray.

Father we do thank You for the great privilege we have to be together as an assembly, as a body of people who are joined together spiritually through faith in Your Son—and through faith in Your Son, because You in Your grace, gave us the new birth. You brought us into Your family, as we were reminded in Sunday School with Mark, and his studies in Luke, (chapter 15), that, 'We were lost, and we are now found.' We were found by You: You pursued us and by the Good Shepherd who pursued us and found us; otherwise we would be lost. We are debtors to mercy alone, and we give You thanks for that—and also our privilege to be with one another in this body, in this place, and to be nourished by Your Word. And we pray that You will nourish us with this, as we study the Scriptures together.

But as we pray, we remember those that are meeting, perhaps at this time, or at different times during this day, all across this globe. And many of them do not have the

privilege that we do of being able to meet freely. We pray for them, and pray You'd protect them. We think of those saints in Cuba. Bless them. Bless the ministers there, and may they worship freely, and be protected by You. And others, across the globe; the church is an international body, made up of some from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You've given us peace, and we should use that peace to study, to worship, and to pray for them. So bless them, Father.

And bless us, not only spiritually. Some needs go unheard of, but You know, and I pray that You would bless, and encourage, and strengthen. And bless us now as we continue our worship together, and bless us as we spend time in studying Your Word. May it be a profitable time for all of us, and may You be glorified in it. I pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) A couple of weeks ago I commented on hymns we often sing, with lines like, "And now I am happy all the day", which we just sang. I would call such hymns more 'aspirational' than 'factual'. The best hymns, I think, are factual ones—and because they are factual, they make us happy and they move us to aspire.

Charles Wesley gave us such hymns like, "*O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*." Wesley wrote it in celebration of the 11th anniversary of his conversion. What inspired it was a meeting that he had with Peter Bohler, an influential Moravian leader of the Moravians—which was a very godly evangelistic group, and that had an influence on the salvation of his brother John.

Well, in a kind of an offhanded remark Bohler exclaimed, "Had I a thousand tongues I would praise Christ Jesus with all of them." That was Wesley's sentiment as well, and so he wrote a hymn explaining why he would do that.

Such as the fourth stanza, a stanza that you know well;

"He breaks the power of canceled sin,

He sets the prisoner free;

His blood can make the foulest clean,

His blood availed for me."

That is factual. The more we know it, the more we will praise Christ with the one tongue that we have. Nothing kindles love for the Lord, nothing kindles praise for the Lord, and a life lived for the Lord more than the blood of Christ.

Peter agreed. He called it "precious blood", (vs19), because Christ's death was the bloody sacrifice that redeemed us—saved us. That's what Peter wrote of in this portion of the first chapter of 1 Peter, in verses 17 through 25. The cross not only saved us from justice, (from eternal punishment), it saved us from what Peter called a "futile way of life". (vs18). So we are to live differently and not according to that futile way of life, not according to our past. We are to live differently—that's Peter's instruction here; that's the overarching theme of the passage.

He has just told the saints in the previous verses, verses 14 through 16, that they are to be obedient and they are to be holy; for God is holy. Then in verse 17 he told them, to live fearfully; "If you address as Father, the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;" (vs17).

So for the believer, the Christian, God is our Father. No longer our judge, now He is our Father, and we are His children. We have been reconciled to God, and can no longer come under condemnation. As Paul put it in Romans chapter 5, (verse 1), "...we have peace with God..." And because we have peace *with* God, we should have the peace *of* God. The warfare has ended; we're His children; we're part of His family; and that peace should control our lives. But all who are saved by grace, live by grace and walk in good works, which is evidence of the new life. Those who are *born again* will live as those who are born again; they'll live as new creatures.

And their lives will be evaluated by God, that's what Peter says, He "judges." (vs17). Paul taught that also. He told the Corinthians, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...", (2Cor 5:10), 'to be repaid for our deeds, good and bad.' And Paul taught that as well in Romans, chapter 14, verse 12.

And Peter's statement shouldn't be limited to the future. Later he will say, in chapter 4, verse 17, that the church is judged; the church is disciplined. It says, "It is time for judgment to begin with the household of God." So, we read here, 'God judges.'

But His judgment is fair. Peter described Him as, "...the One who impartially judges according to each one's work..." (vs17b). He doesn't have favorites—or we could say, 'we are all His favorites'. He doesn't love one, more than another, because He loves each of us with an infinite love. We sang just recently, just a moment ago, about the 'unbounded love of God'. Well, if it's infinite, it has no end; and if it's infinite for all of us, then it's equally infinite for us. That's His love for all of us. He's impartial; He doesn't have favorites. And each one of us will give an account of our lives.

That's a sobering thought; and again, while this isn't the final judgment, it should lead to fear—a sober, circumspect life. And that's what Peter urged here; "...conduct yourselves in fear..." (vs17c). Grace is never a pretext, or basis, or reason for a casual, careless life. God deals with us, and with the church.

He dealt with the church in Jerusalem. In Acts chapter 5, we read of that with Ananias and Sapphira; they dropped dead for lying to the Holy Spirit. Each one of us could suffer that, I think. But the Lord God is merciful, and that became a great example of the seriousness of life. And Luke wrote, "And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard these things." (Acts 5: 11).

God's discipline is always for correction; it's always good. Still, it is reason for healthy fear. Not terror—but what has been described as, 'Living in reverential awe of God.'

After all, Peter began the letter by instructing them to have, 'peace in the fullest measure.' (1Pet 1:2c). God is now our Father. He's not our judge, He's our Father, and 'not the judge in the final sense'. So we address Him now as 'Father': That's a relationship of confidence, a relationship of love—the love of a child for a Father who is pure in His love for His children; indicating that this type '*fear*' is a fear of displeasing God due to His love for us—and our love for Him.

So, when Peter wrote, "...conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;" (vs17c), during this 'brief sojourn on earth', this 'pilgrimage' we are on, he meant, 'Live carefully. Live in reverence of God.'

And that's the best life. That's really the good life, living according to His will, His purpose. His purpose is not to restrict our behavior, it's not to deny us the enjoyable good things of life—just the opposite. He came, as Jesus said in John chapter 10, (verse 10), 'to give us abundant life.' And an obedient life is that life; for an obedient life keeps us from evil, because it keeps us off the path of the wicked.

The world is full of that. The world is filled with evil and with all kinds of nefarious characters; predators, seducers, defrauders, (the list can go on), looking for the young and the naïve to capture. Fear of the LORD protects us from that. As we fear the LORD and live in obedience to Him, we are avoiding that kind of situation.

But we should have that; we should be motivated to live it 'during our stay here' knowing, as Peter wrote next in verse 18 that, 'God has saved us at a great price', and that's how much He loves us. And His love for us is reason to live a holy life, and to live an obedient life. Verse 18; "...knowing that you were not *redeemed* with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life...", (and that literally is, '*out of*'), "...redeemed...out of your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers."

Edwin Blum wrote, "The logic is, 'Live because you know.' That is, 'The Christian life is lived out of knowledge of the redemption that Christ has accomplished'." There is no stronger or effective motivation to live in godly fear, in reverential awe, in obedience, than a real understanding of both our redemption and our Redeemer.

Redemption is one of the most important words and ideas in the Bible—but a better translation of it may be *ransom*. 'The LORD *ransomed* us from a futile way of life.'

In 1916, BB Warfield wrote an article on this subject titled, "Redeemer and Redemption", in which he discussed the importance of the meaning of the words. He preferred 'ransom' and 'ransom-er', since *redeem* is from the Latin, and it means to '*buy back*', while *ransom* better reflects the meaning of the Greek word, '*to buy out of*'.

It goes back to the institution of slavery in the ancient world. A person could become a slave in various ways; through war, (by becoming a captive of war), or through debt, or by birth—there are various ways for a person to become a captive. And in the Roman empire there were millions of slaves; the whole economy of that empire was built, really, on the shoulder of slaves. And yet a slave could be freed from bondage by the payment of a price by someone else coming along and buying him or her out of slavery.

Now, that's the meaning of Matthew chapter 20, verse 28. "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Warfield's purpose was not to criticize the word '*redeem*', but to protect its meaning in explaining how our salvation occurred. As he said, "The central fact is, 'It is an act of purchase'." And I think that is very important: To understand what Christ did on the cross, we must understand that He made a *purchase*; He bought us. —He bought His people.

He, (*Warfield*), made the point because in some places, (and one of the places mentioned was Germany), that idea had been lost and Christ was identified as '*the deliverer*'. And His saving work was described as '*deliverance*', (which again, is not a bad word; Christ is our deliverer), but the word doesn't go far enough. It is 'loose'; it's not a precise word and doesn't explain how the '*deliverance*' happened.

A person can deliver someone by his strength, or words, or influence. And if that's the meaning, the 'it' could be a deliverance from wrong ideas by a change of mind and heart. In that sense, Jesus could simply be, 'a great influencer' —one who persuades, (influences), men by His life, (or by His death), to make a moral change and deliver people from their foolish life.

Since the Middle Ages, 'The moral influence theory of the atonement' has been, and is, a very popular idea in which Christ delivers us by His life 'as an example', and, 'we see in that life, love—and that makes us want to love, and want to change our attitude and our mind to become a better person...moral people!'

Well, we are influenced by the example of Christ; but that, in itself, is not Christianity. Christ's deliverance of us is salvation: 'Out of sin' and its consequences by

the payment that Christ made—and that must be stressed to understand salvation and atonement. 'Atonement' is, '*satisfaction*'. And Christ '*satisfied*' God's righteousness, the just demands of the Law. He *satisfied* that, *fulfilled* that, by His death. In that way He *redeemed* us. He 'ransomed' us, or, He 'bought' us out of a futile way of life; and did so at high cost—too high for any of us to pay.

The ancient Greeks understood the idea of 'ransom'. It's found, for example, in Homer's *Iliad*—and I've used this example before, so forgive me for repeating it, but I think it illustrates the point. The *Iliad* is the classic story of the Trojan War, starring Achilles and Hector.

In one chapter, Odysseus, (also known by the Latin name Ulysses), and a companion go out one night and they capture a young Trojan warrior, (and the Trojan warrior is a prince). His father is the king; and he pleaded for his life saying that his father would pay a rich *ransom* for his freedom. Unfortunately for the Trojan, the Greeks rejected his offer.

And when it comes to our ransom from the slavery of sin and judgment, from divine justice, God refuses any offer man thinks could satisfy Him. In fact, the sons of Korah wrote in Psalm 49, verse 7,

"No man can by any means redeem *his* brother
Or give to God a ransom for him."

We can't redeem one another; we can't redeem ourselves. The cost of our deliverance and freedom is too high for us to pay. Only God can make that payment. And happily, the psalmist wrote in verse 15,

"But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol,
For He will receive me. Selah."

Well that's what Peter explained here: All the riches of the world could not ransom them, or us, from what Peter called, "your futile way of life." (vs18b). Well, we might reflect on that expression, "futile way of life", and think of it as a profligate life,

a pagan life of immorality and dissipation. (And that may be part of Peter's meaning; in verse 14 he wrote of their "former lusts", so that was an aspect of their life from which they were saved.) But this life, we read, 'is inherited from their forefathers', (vs18c), and suggests a life of traditions—cultural and religious customs that bind people together in a community. But in binding them together, it binds them to their community, their nation, their family—like chains. It's hard to leave that; it's hard to break those chains of tradition.

In his poem, *Horatius*, Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote of the Roman hero, Horatius. At one point in the poem Horatius says,

"...And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods?"

Winston Churchill loved that poem. It was his favorite. He memorized it when he was a schoolboy at Harrow. It's about patriotism, and it's about honor, and it's about traditions. These are things that are good, in and of themselves; we honor our heroes, rightly.

But those things can become a kind of secular religion for some. Men will die for the heritage of their family and nation. The Jews were bound by the life and traditions of the synagogue; Romans and Greeks by their culture and their past glories—they took great pride in all of that; and it had a controlling influence on their lives. But it is a futile life in that there is no salvation in the Law of Moses or the temple of Jupiter.

Now I'm not criticizing the Law of Moses. It was not given to save, it was given to point to the Savior; and prepare Israel for the Savior. But the Jewish traditions that surround it point to 'it', (*the Law*), as the *means* of salvation and the *path* of salvation.

Well, that's not to be found in anything—anything outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not share His place in a person's heart with a false god or a tradition. And so the LORD said, "Come out from among them", (2Cor 6:17), 'Come out from

idolatry; 'Come out from Judaism'; 'Come out from Mormonism, from Catholicism, liberalism, secularism'—and 'Come to Christ, and the blood of Christ.'

Well that's the call, but men can't do that, not in their own strength. The chains of tradition, and family, and nation were too strong then—and still are. But the power of Christ's blood, by God's grace, is greater;

"He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me."

(From verse 4, O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing)

That's Peter's answer in verse 19. It's what Peter called the "precious blood" of Christ that redeemed, (or ransomed)—bought him, and us, out of that 'worthless life' of our past. By "blood", Peter meant 'His death'. And "blood" speaks of a violent death, the death of a sacrifice—like a lamb laid on the alter by the priest and slaughtered. The temple was full of blood every day. It was a violent death that those sacrificial animals faced; and a violent death that our Lord underwent in judgment. He poured out His lifeblood to deliver us from that judgment—and out of our former way of life by dying in our place. And in that way, by dying in our place as our substitute, removed our guilt so that we could be justified—we could be right with God.

That was the '*ransom*'. And the value and acceptability of that ransom Christ paid is seen in the description of it being, "...of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (vs19b). Now that's an allusion to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which required that a lamb, (or a bull, or a goat), be without defect. And Christ is the fulfillment of that; all of that pictured Him.

We spoke of this a week or two ago, about the focus of the Old Testament—it's all about Christ!, in its types, and shadows, and in its prophecies. And those types and shadows are seen in those sacrifices that pictured Him. John the Baptist called Him, "...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29). Christ was without

defect; He was perfect, without moral flaws. He was obedient to His Father, and so was able, because of that, because of His purity, to offer Himself up as a substitute for our sins. Our sins. Not His own, for He had none.

This was the blood of the God-man, the Son of God; and so, the value of the Lord's death was infinitely precious to the Father. Gold and silver have value to man, but even to us, the value of it is limited. The value of Christ's blood is not—it is infinite because He is perfect, a perfect human. And His human nature was joined to His eternal divine nature in One Person. He is the God-man. It's not mixed. His humanity is not mixed with His deity. He is God and man, joined together in One Person. And so it is sufficient for an infinite number of sins, (and so more than sufficient for ours). Nothing less than that could 'redeem', or 'ransom', us out of sin and death, and judgment—the death of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ.

Samuel Rutherford said, "There are some who would have Christ cheap. They would have Him without the cross. But the price will not come down." That price, that 'ransom' was God's plan of salvation from all eternity. Christ, Peter wrote in verse 20, "...was foreknown before the foundation of the world." That means He was *chosen* to be the Redeemer; or, *predestined* to be the Savior from all eternity.

Now, Peter was not stating God 'knew' Christ before the creation of the world. (That would be stating the obvious, and is an idea that makes no sense in this context.) Peter was indicating *purpose*. And in connection with the previous verse about redemption, ransom—what he means here is that, 'God foreknew Christ as the suffering Savior.' It's a way of saying that, 'The Father chose the Son, elected Him from all eternity, to be the Savior of the world.'

And even if 'foreknow' was *foresight*, it would still mean *predestination*, because since God knows events before they occur, (since He is omniscient He knows everything), these events must occur as He knows them. Otherwise He doesn't know them. He can't be wrong about things. If He knows what's going to happen before it happens, it must happen. 'Foreknowledge', in the sense of prescience, or pre-vision,

or foresight implies certainty, every bit as much as foreordination does. But this is about foreordination: Christ was foreknown, or chosen, to be the Savior from all eternity.

The cross was no afterthought. The cross was no 'Plan 'B' if Plan 'A' failed.' The cross was planned from all eternity. That's clear from Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2, verse 23, and from the prayer that the church prayed in Acts chapter 4, verses 27 and 28. The cross, the sacrifice of death, was according to God's predetermined plan; and was predestined to occur. That's what Peter and the church say in Acts. —That's what the Bible teaches. And here Peter said, 'It was for your sake.' (vs20c); (and you can translate that, "because of you.")

God's plan was personal. It was not some general plan for everyone indiscriminately: 'Everyone in general, and no one in particular.' It was, 'no shot in the dark'; it was planned with precision; it is personal and particular.

The Father had Peter's readers, those saints scattered throughout Asia Minor, specifically in mind—as He did each one of us, every believer, every redeemed child of God, throughout the ages. He had each of us on His mind and in His heart—and all of those He sent for His Son to redeem across the ages. Well, that's really the purpose of His coming. It's stated very simply and clearly in Matthew chapter 1, verse 21, where the angel tells Joseph what to name this child that Mary had; 'You'll name Him Jesus', "for He will save His people from their sins."

All of this is to say, you were individually on God's heart from all eternity. And in personalizing God's plan of salvation, Peter was stimulating, motivating them to obedience. And he continued to do that in verse 21 where he stated that, 'through Christ, who came for our sake, for our salvation', we believe in and have confidence in God the Father, who sent Him for us. "...no one comes to the Father but through Me.", except through Christ, (John 14, verse 6); He reconciles sinful man with the holy God.

And when we are at peace with the Father, we trust in Him as we trust in Christ. Peter wrote that our hope is in the Father, 'who raised Christ from the dead and seated

Him in glory.' (vs21). And since we are joined to Christ through faith, the Father will raise us also. We're joined to Him; we are part of His body; and so His resurrection is the foretaste of our own resurrection. That's a certainty. It's a hope. —It is our hope which is certain.

Now all of this, (God planning our salvation, choosing Christ to redeem us, ransom us, save us, and give us the hope of the resurrection), is incentive to do all Peter has urged us to do: Be obedient; be holy; in verses 14 and 15. 'Fear God'; in verse 17. Live in love and reverential awe of Him. That's not optional; that's the life we are to live. And we will live it, not perfectly, but we will live it by the grace of God.

Then next, in verse 22, Peter instructs them to 'love the brethren'. Fear God, love God, and love the brethren. 'That fulfills the whole Law'; as Jesus explained to the Pharisee in Matthew 22, (verses 34-40).

But we can't do that through the Law; we can't do that through our own effort and our own strength; we can only do that by God's grace, His sovereign grace by the new birth, which occurs through the preaching of the Gospel. The passage ends with Peter reminding them of that, verse 22, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart..."

It's not completely clear here, whether Peter is referring to *justification* or *sanctification* when he said that they had, 'purified their souls in obedience to the truth.' We are justified through faith in Christ and have righteous standing with God as a result of that. That is the basis for new conduct and loving the brethren. We are to live according to our standing with God, but we don't *purify*, or *justify*, or *regenerate* ourselves; God does that.

But we are described as 'active agents' in our sanctification; 'we cooperate.' Now I don't really like that expression or that description. Better to say, I think, 'We respond to the work of the Holy Spirit.' In James chapter 4, verse 8, the same word for 'purify' is

used. "*Cleanse* your hands", he wrote. In 1 John, chapter 3, verse 3, John wrote, that we "*purify*" ourselves. 'We *purify* ourselves with the hope of Christ's return.' Paul used a different word in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 1, but it has the same idea when he wrote, "Let us *cleanse* ourselves from all defilement."

Since Peter had already used the word, "*obey*", in verse 14, of Christian conduct, it may be better to understand his meaning here as referring to, 'Christian growth in sanctification.' By obedience to the Word of God we grow—and these saints were growing, because they were being obedient to God's Word. The result of sanctification is not only a deeper understanding of the Lord God and love for Him, but a love for His people—a "love of the brethren." (vs22).

So they were to love them earnestly, "*fervently*", (ibid). That's not always easy, is it? But we can do it. —We must do it. The last night Jesus was able to spend with His disciples before being arrested and crucified, He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13, verse 35). And it's the way of knowing that we're born again, by our behavior, our love for one another—and with the new birth, the Christian is able to do that.

Again, it's all of grace you understand. But because we have been born again and have a new heart that's part of the New Covenant, as well as a new mind, new abilities, we have a new nature—and with that new nature we have the Holy Spirit. All of that works together to enable us to live an obedient life and to love—love the brethren and love the LORD.

"For," Peter wrote, (or "since," as the English Standard Version translates the participle in verse 23), 'For', or, 'Since', "...you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring Word of God. (vs23).

So, since we've been born again, we can be obedient. And we're born again by the 'imperishable seed' that is implanted within us. That 'imperishable seed' is the life that the Holy Spirit implants in a person's soul. In John chapter 1, verse 13, John wrote of those who are God's children, His people, who were born, "...not of blood nor of the will

of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." We were born *of God*; it's a supernatural work. But that seed of 'life' that is planted is in connection with the Word of God—through the Word of God that is *preached*.

That's how the Spirit works in us. He 'plants the seed' through the preaching of the Gospel. He makes the human heart receptive to receive that Gospel; He opens eyes to see and understand; He opens hearts to receive it. The Word of God is powerful; Peter called it "living and enduring". (vs23). It is alive because the Holy Spirit always works through it to make it effective, to produce change in us, to cause faith and obedience.

The Word of God, the Gospel and all of Scripture, is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to give life, and to change life—to give, or bring about, the new birth and spiritual growth. Only God's Word is sufficient for that! So we need to emphasize the importance of God's Word in this day and age in which we live: The Word of God *needs* to be read, the Word of God *needs* to be studied, the Word of God *needs* to be preached from the pulpits.

And so Peter stresses the sufficiency of the Word of God in the remaining verses to emphasize the importance of it. And so to do that he quotes Isaiah chapter 40, verses 6 through 8. Verse 24, "For,

All flesh is like grass,
And all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
And the flower falls off,"

Just as the green grass and wildflowers of spring cover the land, (and Isaiah is thinking specifically of Israel and Jerusalem, that area, and how in the spring it becomes verdant, green, with all kinds of flowers), that's spring; and that's the life that God brings. But it's so brief, because soon the hot winds blow over it—and it's gone.

And so too, is all flesh. Man in his strength, and man in his pomp, and all of his glory is like the flower of the field. He doesn't last.

This text in Isaiah was originally written for the Jewish exiles in Babylon to comfort them. It was a prophecy given 100 plus years before they went into that exile. And chapter 40 begins with this great message, "Comfort, O comfort My people." And so it was given to encourage those Jewish exiles in Babylon, to comfort them with the assurance that, 'while the flesh doesn't last, God does.' He is reliable, and so His Word and promises are true and reliable. They never fail.

And Peter made that application to these Christians who were '*aliens*' and '*exiles*' in the world— '*pilgrims passing through*.' 'The grass withers and the flower falls off.'

“ “But the word of the LORD endures forever”

And this is the Word which was preached to you.” (vs25).

Through it they received eternal life and have spiritual growth; so they were to believe God's Word and obey it. It gives power to do that; it gives power to love one another. That is what the “precious blood” of Christ obtained—for all of God's people.

Knowing what Christ did for us, what the Father sacrificed for us, should move us to act—to love the brethren and fear God. It moved Charles Wesley to wish for a thousand tongues, to sing His praise; and Isaac Watts, to see the great debt that he owed, and sing,

"Here, Lord, I give myself away

'Tis all that I can do."

(From, *Alas and Did My Savior Bleed*)

We are debtors to God's mercy and grace. We are rich, very rich—at His expense. We need to know that; it will motivate us to live well for Him in the short time that we have in our, “stay on earth”.

If you've not believed in Him as God and Savior, if you've not trusted in Christ, your stay on earth is short. We're all just passing through.

Now is the day of salvation! Don't delay. —Come to Christ. Trust in Him; He receives all who do.

(Closing prayer) Father, what a great truth that is, that 'We will sing His praise and Your praise, the praise of the Triune God forever more' —And we'll be with You for all eternity.

And why? —Because of Your sovereign grace. Because the Word of God was preached to us, and it is alive and powerful, and it broke into hardened hearts and made them alive by the Spirit's power; and made us Your children through faith and faith alone. That's grace; that's sovereign grace, and we thank You for it.

Help us to understand better the things we considered this morning: All that You did for us through Your Son, the price that was paid for us so that we would become Your children. And now that we're Your children, we are Your family—we are to live it.

Enable us to do that, and motivate us to do that by the great price that was paid for us.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)