

1 Peter 1:8-12 – Part BB

1Pe 1:8 (NKJV) **whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of *your* souls.**

In [1 Peter 1:9](#), Peter states what is the result of believing in Christ. He says it is that of “**receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls**”. The Greek word for “**receiving**” is “*komizo*” and is a present participle in the middle voice. It speaks specifically of receiving something or as some of the translations have it – “**obtaining**” (NASB, ESV) something. Being a present participle is very important to understand if we are going to rightly divide this verse and correctly translate the word “**salvation**” in the context of this passage. What the present participle does is to give the verb the sense of “progressively” obtaining the sanctifying benefits of salvation. What being in the middle voice signifies in a strong way is that the subject, in this case us as believers, is being affected by its own action. Think of it as progressively being affected by this salvation that God has given to us. It is never that salvation is something that we can obtain, but it not have an impact on our life. To the contrary, salvation always deeply affects the person that is saved.

However, the reality that Peter is teaching here is that even though a believer has all of the Holy Spirit that they will ever have, having been fully and permanently indwelt by Him, the impact of His presence is something that is progressively learned and incorporated into the believer’s life. Spiritual growth is never fast, never instantaneous, and never the result of some kind of spiritual experience that a person may have. There is no spiritual experience that we can have that will make us either mature or spiritual. The sanctifying work of God in a believer’s life is always progressive, always gradual, always developing, always advancing, but in that process, it is always impacting the believer’s life. That is what the middle voice implies, and we cannot ignore that grammatical nuance of the word “**receiving**”.

The word “**end**” in [1 Peter 1:9](#) is the Greek word “*telos*” and it means the “**outcome**” (NASB, ESV, AMP), the result, and the conclusion of believing in Christ.¹ Unfortunately, the way that most translations seem to read is that what Peter is addressing here is that eventually and eternally we receive salvation – which we do. However, because “**receiving**” or “**obtaining**” is a present participle in the middle voice, it means that it cannot be specifically or ONLY referring to our final salvation when we are actually ushered into the very presence of God. Rather it refers to what believing continually does for us in the present. It refers to receiving in this life all of the blessings that are embedded in salvation – grace, mercy, goodness, faith, wisdom, understanding, kindness, hope, peace, and so much more. It is referring to the entire process of growing in the Christian life and of appropriating more and more of the blessings of salvation into our life.² It is the continual and progressive development of these attributes into the believer’s life that mark the reality of their salvation.

The theological term that is used to describe this process of “**receiving**” or “**obtaining**” is called “progressive sanctification” because it is a process that continues throughout a believer’s entire Christian life. It begins at their conversion and is completed and perfected when we enter into the presence of Christ. So, it is important and critical to appreciate that our sanctification will never be completed in this life. The process of sanctification is God’s guarantee that vital and visible spiritual growth will be occurring in a believer’s life. This is really very critical to understand simply because if there is never

any visible spiritual growth, it is simply because the individual has never been saved. There may be snapshots in time where they are not growing, but a motion picture of their life reveals that they are progressively growing spiritually. There may be setbacks and failures. There may be periods of time where things are not progressing, but God's guaranteed work of sanctification in the believer's life will prevail. The reason that it will prevail is simply because God is the One who guarantees our sanctification. We must understand that the process of sanctification is a divinely guaranteed aspect of salvation. It is guaranteed. It will be taking place in every true believer. Even though we have responsibilities and obligations as believers, it is still God that has guaranteed that the work of sanctification will take place in the believer's life. So, there has to be visible results, visible evidence, visible indications and confirmations in the individual's life if salvation is genuinely an actuality in their life.

The reality of the Christian life is that it will always involve continual spiritual growth. I want to emphasize this in a very strong way, not to frighten someone that they may not be saved, but rather to encourage them that they are. Just look at your life. Just look at where you were before and where you are now. Just look at how you use to see life and how you see it now. God has made meaningful and significant changes in your life that are visible and knowable to you, as well as to those around you. It is obvious. That is the result of sanctification. That is the guaranteed result that what God has started in you, He will complete. A teaching like this should never make a true believer nervous, but rather reinforce that they are genuinely saved.

The Scriptures teach that believers “**grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ**” ([2 Peter 3:18](#)) as a normal part of sanctification. The word “**grow**” clearly indicates an ongoing process. It is a present tense, imperative mood verb indicating a command that is to constantly be taking place in the believer's life by their choice. This should be obvious. God has given every believer a new heart and a new nature, and both of those spiritual gifts provide all of the motivation that the new believer needs to choose the things of God in their life. What they use to love they now hate, and what they use to hate, they now love. What I am describing for you is the reality of the Christian life and what takes place when someone becomes a “**new creation**” in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is what salvation does.

Because of the believer's union with Christ at salvation, there were certain definitive things that happened to him and for him. [Romans 6](#) is the classic passage on this and says that the believer has been “**set free from sin**” ([Romans 6:18](#)). When the believer was justified by God, it included the power of sin being broken in the believer's life so that they now had within them in the presence of the Holy Spirit the power to overcome both sinful acts and sinful patterns of behavior. That is why Paul could say in [Romans 6:14](#) that “**sin shall not have dominion over you**”. That is exactly why he can encourage the believer in [Romans 6:11](#) that they must “**consider themselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord**”.³ Once again, the word “**reckon**” or “**consider**” is in the present tense, imperative mood, middle voice signifying that this is a progressive reality in the believer's life that is constantly impacting their life and their behavior because they are (1) being moved by God to do so, and (2) are choosing to do so because of personal desire.

Now, I want you to think through this with me for just a moment. What the believer is given is a “positional” sanctification of which there is also a “practical” sanctification that must be worked out in their life. On one side of the coin, we cannot simply say that “*I am free from sin*” and then use that as a

license to sin. **What we are free from is the power of sin controlling and dominating our life.** That control and domination was broken by Christ and has been given to us by virtue of our union with Him. On the other side of the coin, we should never think that sin has so overtaken us and defeated us that we cannot overcome it in our life. That is a lie. Why? It is because of what we just read in **Romans 6:14** that **“sin shall not have dominion over you”**. The word **“dominion”** is actually part of the verb and means that sin cannot (**“shall not”**) exercise control over your life as your master. It cannot just seize you and possess you. Obviously, it can impact your life if you yield to it, but the power of sin over your life has been broken by Christ. His power has broken the power of sin – and we need to know that and understand that.

If we take the position that we cannot overcome sin in our life, it means one of two things – either we are not saved, or we simply do not believe God’s Word. That is not in any way to diminish the struggle that sin obviously creates in a believer’s life. Just the fact that Paul says that **“sin shall not have dominion over you”** is an indication that that is exactly what sin is trying to do. That is why **Romans 6:12-13** says the following,

Ro 6:12 (NKJV) Therefore (YOU) do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And (YOU) do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but (YOU) present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Each of those three verbs – **“do not let”** and **“present”** (2X) - are in the imperative mood and are the first and last exhortations in Romans until **Romans 12**. The point is that I still have to do something, even though the power of sin has been completely broken in my life. Paul clearly recognizes that the presence of sin and the power of sin still remains in the believer’s life, so as believers we still have to deal with it. Even though we as believers are dead to sin in our life, that reality does not mean that sin itself is dead. To the contrary, sin is very much alive and very active. That is exactly where knowing and understanding the truth impacts us. Here is what we know. We know that **“sin shall not have dominion”** over our lives.

Here is the way that these truths have been communicated. I have heard this my entire Christian life and believe it to be accurate. It would be stated that even though the **penalty** of sin has been paid for and the **power** of sin has been broken, the **presence** of sin still remains in the believer’s life and must continually be put to death.⁴ That is why it is called “progressive” sanctification because the believer is constantly encouraged in the New Testament to live a life of holiness in the present tense. For instance, **Romans 12:2** says,

Ro 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It could read as **“be continually being transformed”** (present tense). This spiritual transformation is a progressive transformation. This is the pattern of the New Testament teaching – that we as believers are fully engaged in being and doing what God wants us to be and do. The problem is that between our own fallenness and the depravity of the world in which is constantly trying to influence us, there just seem to be many different areas in which how we think and what we think is being compromised. Many believers have become non-thinkers and only come to church so that someone else can do their spiritual thinking

for them. As Christians, we live in a world that is constantly challenging everything that we believe – schools, politics, television, magazines, the news, the Internet. I do not necessarily understand why, but it seems that for many that it is so difficult to believe in the face of constant opposition. No wonder that we need to be constantly reminded of Paul’s admonition to renew our minds.⁵

As a pastor / teacher, one of the primary responsibilities that I have is to root out any contradictions in our thinking that may plague our lives. Unfortunately, many so called believers do not know what the Bible teaches simply because they never really read it. Many portions of Scripture that are critically important to the Christian life and how we live and function as Christians are often considered unclear, questionable, and unreasonable for the 21st century Christian. I hope that we all appreciate that Christianity in a post-modern culture is now viewed as a threat to people’s freedoms. I have heard Christianity described as a “pathological condition”. If we take a strong position against homosexuality, lesbianism, or sodomy, it is deemed as a hate crime in our judicial system and we are subject to both fines and imprisonment. Did you know that various child protective services have listed having our children be engaged in regular church attendance as abusive parenting? It is not that Christians are simply seen as being wrong, but as being evil, as being a threat to the social structure of our country. How ironic and bizarre is that?⁶ Once again, no wonder we need to be developing in our life the discipline of renewing our minds and our hearts to the truth that is found in the Word of God. The presence of sin not only remains in us, but it remains in everything that surrounds us.

Obviously, the ultimate outcome that we obtain is the final “**salvation of our souls**”. The Greek word for “**salvation**” is “*soteria*” and is obviously a very important New Testament word. Everything that is meaningful to believers is anchored in this word “**salvation**”. At the most crucial level it is a word that refers, not merely to the sanctifying process that we just addressed, but specifically to the spiritual and eternal deliverance that we as sinners are given immediately upon responding to the gospel in faith and repentance in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is only in Christ. [Acts 4:12](#) boldly declares,

Ac 4:12 (NKJV) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

If there was no final and ultimate “**salvation**” that ushers the believer into the presence of God, there would be no Christianity. No one would want to live a certain way if in reality it had no eternal value for their life. We all want to live for something meaningful. So, the very simple message that Peter is expounding is this – what we may have to endure in the present is to always be seen in light of the glorious future and salvation that God has provided to us through Christ. We are progressively receiving the blessings of our salvation and we will eventually receive the final end – the complete redemption of our souls. Both aspects, both the present results and the future result, are critical to embrace if we are ever going to genuinely be victorious in the Christian life. We have to appreciate that because of Christ that God the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit is always giving to us exactly what we need, but we are called upon to appropriate it in our lives. We have to appropriate into our life what God says is true. The believer must act on the truth that God teaches him. Until the believer actually acts on what the Word of God says, that truth will have no practical value for their life. Think of it this way. An individual might know that they need to take a life preserver with them in a boat, but if they do not act on that and leave it at home, what they know to be true will have no value for them whatsoever. We may know what

God really wants us to do, but if we do not act on, what we know spiritually will have no meaningful value for our life.

All of this has been mentioned simply because the word “**receiving**” or “**obtaining**” is a present participle, an ongoing activity in a person’s life. Now, I know that someone is thinking to themselves that all of this seems a little over stated, but it is not. This entire reality of actually living out our faith is very critical to the reality of whether or not we are even saved. The individual that just “**says**” that they are saved, but there is no visible reality of that in their life is a liar and the truth is not in them. We studied this very carefully in [1 John 1:6](#) which says,

1Jn 1:6 (NKJV) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

In fact, a great portion of the epistle of [1 John](#) was devoted to someone saying one thing, but doing another. Their saying, but not doing, was evidence that they were not actually saved. So, a believer must draw the deduction, must conclude, must make the connection, must understand, and must realize that there is something incredible that has taken place in their life because they are in Christ. **It is the obligation of every believer to maintain the conviction of their position in Christ.** Obviously, Paul did not tell his readers to simply feel that they were dead to sin, but rather to act on God’s truth that they are in reality dead to sin. When the believer reckons or considers something to be true in their life, they are not merely claiming a promise, but they are **ACTING** on a spiritual fact and **ACTING** on something that is rooted and grounded in the immutability of God.⁷ In reality, it is the believer yielding their life to Christ, a surrendering of their life in a conscious and active submission of their members to God as “**instruments of righteousness**”. The very instruments that sin once dominated now become the very instruments that God uses for His glory.⁸

So, what if none of this is actually visible in a person’s life, what if the reality of this is never manifested? What does it mean? Well, without sounding overly arrogant or condescending in a statement like that, what would be the alternative – that everyone who is not living as a believer, not surrendering their life to Christ, not obedient to His Word, and not faithful to Christ or His church is a Christian? I doubt it! If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, there is a good chance that it is a duck! Why are we not able to be honest with people? Why do we pretend for all of this to just be spiritual make-believe when it is the most serious reality and certainty in the universe?

Without going into any depth in [1 Peter 1:10-12](#), suffice it to say that it simply speaks about this great salvation that God has given to us from four different perspectives. In v10 it speaks of the prophets who spoke about it and inquired about it, in v11 it speaks of the Holy Spirit who was responsible for it, in v12 it speaks of the apostles who proclaimed it, and in v12 it speaks of the angels who desire to look into it. It should be obvious that for many of the prophets and all of the apostles, that the message of God’s salvation literally consumed them. Obviously, the prophets never saw the salvation that was provided in Christ like the apostles did. The apostles saw, touched, handled. They were an actual part of all that was transpiring. They saw the life of Christ, they witnessed His death, and then they were able to see the resurrected Lord and watched Him actually ascend into heaven. In all of the redemptive drama that was transpiring, the Holy Spirit was the One who was orchestrating all of the events, so He revealed to the prophets all that was to take place regarding Christ. Even the angels are curious as to

how great our salvation truly is, so it must be really confusing to this great cloud of witnesses when we as believers treat the salvation that God has given to us in such a casual and nonchalant manner.

ENDNOTES

¹ Strong, 1409.

² Grudem, *1 Peter*, 67.

³ Grudem, *Systematic*, 747.

⁴ MacArthur, 635.

⁵ Baucham, 23,29.

⁶ Baucham, 24-26.

⁷ Wiersbe, 76.

⁸ MacArthur, *Conscience*, 220.

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