

1 Peter 1:20 - 21 – Part PP

The Eternal Gift

1Pe 1:20 (NKJV) He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Last week we began looking at what we called “The Eternal Gift” which was a phrase derived from teaching on the expression in [1 Peter 1:19-20](#) – “**foreordained before the foundation of the world**”. What we learned was that the expression “**before the foundation of the world**” was biblically synonymous with a very similar phrase that [Titus 1:1-2](#) expressed this way,

Tit 1:1 (NKJV) Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

So, the obvious question that we had to ask was “to whom was this promise made”, and we determined that it was in inter-Trinitarian promise made within the Godhead. What God the Father did was to make a remarkable promise to God the Son “**before time began**”, but it was also a promise that would greatly impact God the Holy Spirit. Then to further reinforce the promise, God the Father “**foreordained**” that the promise would in fact become a reality for the Son. [1 Peter 1:20](#) is the only place in the New Testament where the word “**foreordained**” is used and it is speaking specifically about all things that God purposed to do with regard to His promise “**before time began**”. So, what Peter was saying was that it was much more than the fact that God foreknew what His Son would have to do, but rather the fact that God the Father decreed what must happen for salvation. Once God “**foreordained**” how salvation would be provided, nothing could prevent it from happening – no man, no idea, no nation, no government, no demonic force – absolutely nothing could prevent it from happening.

However, the staggering truth that we discovered was that the eternal gift that God promised to the Son was us – believers, followers of Christ, people who did not even yet exist when the promise was made. We are not just the recipients of God’s grace, His amazing forgiveness, and His inexplicable love, but we are the actual gift that God the Father chose to give to His Son. One day the church will be presented to Christ as His bride and as a people who will forever worship and love Him. However, and what is so difficult to understand or explain, is that God’s foreordained redemptive plan created the need for the greatest sacrifice that would ever be made. The greatest demonstration of love ever made required the greatest sacrifice ever made. By foreordaining all of this, God the Father was guaranteeing that it would come to pass. Nothing could prevent it from happening. [2 Timothy 1:9](#) expresses it this way,

2Ti 1:9 (NKJV) who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

The redemptive purpose of God would be achieved “**in Christ Jesus**”, and it would be the greatest demonstration of love ever made. So, the word “**purpose**” is referring specifically to the work of Christ in securing the believer’s salvation. [Romans 8:28](#) says virtually the same thing when it declares,

Ro 8:28 (NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

One of the underlying and fundamental doctrines which we have consistently taught is that “salvation is all of God”. Salvation is all of God from start to finish, and nothing can prevent it from happening in the lives of those that God has sovereignly chosen to give to His Son as a gift. What Scripture constantly re-affirms is that if anyone is ever going to be saved, it is simply because God divinely intervenes in his or her spiritual lostness and depravity. It is God alone who brings a person to a place of both faith and repentance. In fact, Scripture describes both as actual gifts and works of God. [Ephesians 2:8](#) declares,

Eph 2:8 (NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*,

Everyone who comes to Christ is saved through the gift of faith that is given to them by God – “**not of yourselves**”. [Romans 2:4](#) says,

Ro 2:4 (NKJV) Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

The only reason that anyone ever recognizes their spiritual depravity before God and repents of their sin is simply because of God’s “**goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering**” in their life.

Now, as we removed the layers from the promise, what we saw was that there was and remains this amazing love within the Godhead for one another. It is not just a love for each other, but rather a sacrificial love where each member of the Godhead was willing to do whatever needed to be done in order to secure salvation for people who did not deserve it. Our tendency is to love our own, to love the members of our family, and to love those people who are kind and gracious to us. Our natural tendency is not to love those who do not love us, and especially not to love those who may mistreat us or treat us with disdain and contempt. However, within the Godhead the kind of love that they have always had is not that kind of love. What God the Father planned and initiated, what God the Son willingly accepted to do, and what God the Spirit orchestrated and guaranteed to happen had to be the most painful and the most excruciating demonstration, proof, validation, and manifestation of love ever provided. It was the most sacrificial decision ever made in eternity, and we were the objects of that great work and love of God. Apart from this amazing and sacrificial work of God on our behalf, everyone would die in their sins.

I was thinking about the kind of love that the Triune God demonstrated. Obviously, it would be naïve to think that we could understand or even appreciate the depth of their love and the extent and profoundness of their sacrifice. So often we only see the sacrifice that Christ made for us, but in reality the sacrifice of the Father, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit to follow through with their saving plan, was of such a magnitude that it cannot be measured. We have to think of it like this: **the value of an object can be measured by the cost involved to purchase it**. The greatest price ever paid for an object was the cost paid by the Triune God to save those who did not deserve to be saved. The cost of our salvation to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit cannot be measured. As believers, we have no means whereby we can measure the cost. We have no understanding of the magnitude of their sacrifice.

There were **three distinct attributes of God's love** being demonstrated in the work of salvation. **(1) There was the willingness of God the Father to sacrifice His Son.** Because the love that the Father had for the Son was perfect and is without equal, we will never be able to understand the impact of that on God the Father. As stated last week, I am convinced that God the Father could have just as easily chosen to offer Himself. He was just as qualified as was God the Son. **Secondly, there was the willingness of God the Son to become a living sacrifice and to remain as the God / Man for eternity.** This sacrifice cannot be measured or understood at a human level. Then **thirdly, there was the willingness of the Holy Spirit to execute the Father's plan.** For the Holy Spirit to know that He was fully responsible to both guarantee and carry out the plan of salvation is more than can be understood. All that had to transpire, the over 400 specific prophecies concerning Christ, and the providential outworking to ensure that there was not one hiccup or minor malfunction in the plan was more than can be fathomed. The human mind simply cannot grasp the magnitude of these sacrifices. We literally have no idea what an "eternal" sacrifice actually encompasses. For many believers, they consider it a sacrifice just to come to church or to spend meaningful time in God's Word. With that kind of perspective, understanding what the Triune God did would be impossible to achieve and even more impossible to appreciate.

So, at this point in the discussion, we have to ask a very simple question, - how are people saved? However, before we can answer that question, it is important to make one very simple observation. That observation is that it would be the most foolish, reckless, and irrational idea possible if we ever thought that God the Father made the decision to sacrifice God the Son, but had no guarantee that it was actually going to work. For God the Father to sacrifice His Son, but not have a means of securing the intended result and of not really knowing if people would accept the sacrifice of Christ, would be utterly senseless and laughable on our part. God the Father would never create a plan of such cost and magnitude if He was at risk in securing the results that He desired to achieve. God has never devised a plan that could only "possibly" work, or just had the potential to work. To the contrary, whatever God the Father chooses to do is by its very nature guaranteed to work. **"Before time began" God "foreordained"** that people would be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit or value in them personally, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure and His sovereign work in their life.

It is important to ask at this point, "What is the purpose of all of this, of sinners being given to the Son as a gift?" It is so that the Son will be loved forever and glorified forever by those who love Him. Christ is worthy of all praise, of all honor. In **Revelation 4 and 5** believers are seen as gathered around the throne crying out forever and ever **"Worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb"**. Not only that, but God has purposed that every believer will be like Christ and be conformed into His image. Every believer will have a body like Christ's resurrection body.

In **1 Corinthians 15:25-28**, there is another aspect,

1Co 15:25 (NKJV) For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

In v27, everything is brought under subjection to the Son. This is where the Father presents the bride to the Son. Everything is subjected to Christ. Every believer will be there. The earth and the heavens as we know it will have been dissolved. Human history will all be over, and the bride will be complete to the last person, and then given to the Son as God the Father’s gift to Him. However, in v28 – an amazing verse, the Son gives everything back to the Father, and will subject Himself to the Father as the God-Man that God the Father “may be all in all”, or utterly sovereign and supreme over everyone and everything. The Son giving every believer back to the Father is the reciprocal love of the Son for the Father on display.

God the Father has demonstrated how much He loved us and cared for us by giving us His Son to die on our behalf. We who deserved absolutely nothing, who had no personal merit before a holy God – we will be conformed to the image of Christ. We have been given eternity and will live in glory as cannot be imagined. However, because the Son loves the Father so much, He also wants to give the Father a gift, and so He returns the gift that the Father had given to Him back to the Father. We have been saved and have been caught up in this glorious expression of love between the Father and the Son. We do not deserve to be saved. I love what Paul said in [Galatians 4:19](#),

Gal 4:19 (NKJV) My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

Paul understood all of this, and his desire was to present believers as a chaste virgin to the Father. [2 Corinthians 11:2](#) says,

2Co 11:2 (NKJV) For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

What we are addressing is the very heart of all of redemption. **Today, you are a Christian simply because God the Father chose you for His Son, wrote your name down in the Lamb’s Book of Life, irresistibly drew you by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, and gave you the very faith to believe so that you would receive the gift of eternal life that you did not deserve.** For those reasons, every believer can be eternally sure that they are eternally secure. In light of that, what a tragedy it is not to live for Christ with all of our heart and strength. We must remember that we were bought at an enormous price. There was a price for the bride, and it was the most profound price in all of eternity – the very life of God the Son. [1 Corinthians 6:20](#) says,

1Co 6:20 (NKJV) For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

[1 Peter 1:19](#) says that we have been purchased with the “**precious blood of Christ**”.

He who was rich became poor so that we who were spiritually destitute might become spiritually rich. This is really incredible to me, staggering beyond description. The Father was willing to allow His Son to become sin and to pay the price of redemption for an unholy, undeserving, unworthy bride. It is as if we were like Gomer in the story of Hosea – a prostitute, an adulterer, a whore. However, God set His love on us, and He is fully responsible for every aspect, for every detail, for every work of our salvation, and in eternity, He will receive all of the glory, and rightfully so.

To me, the love of God for us is pride crushing. It should produce in every believer nothing but humility and gratitude. No one believes in Christ and follows Christ because of any good thing in them. It is not that we are smarter or more spiritual or better than anyone else is. To the contrary, Isaiah declares that all of our righteousness is as “**filthy rags**” before God the Father. That is exactly why [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says,

2Co 5:21 (NKJV) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We can only become righteous by God making us righteous – and never on our own, never because of anything that we have done – never! It is the utter hopelessness of our own abilities that should strengthen us with joy simply because we know that God is the One Who has worked in our life.

The problem that most people have is that they are not able to rationalize and understand all of the attributes of this glorious work of God, and so they sit around and continuously try to figure out why it is not so, why it is not real – and in the process they lose the very glory of what God has done on their behalf. Rather than rejoicing in this great salvation that has been fully provided for them apart from anything in them or done by them, they try to find fault with God’s sovereignty and ultimately God’s glory. I have said it so many times that we had better be thankful, gloriously thankful that God is the One who has saved us and not ourselves. If salvation depended on us in anyway, we would never have come to Christ on our own – never in a million years. We need to celebrate this great salvation that is ours. For me, maybe more than any other truths in Scripture, these spiritual realities cause me to want to live as godly a life as I possibly can, to honor God, to honor Christ, to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading, and to obey the Word of God as much as I can. How could I transgress against such love bestowed on me personally? How could I disdain following Christ for worldly pleasures and pursuits? To do so is a travesty of the greatest measure. I must say that these great truths give great peace about the present and about the future. [Philippians 1:6](#) declares,

Php 1:6 (NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Now, I know at this point that people are going to ask the question, “*How can I know if I am actually saved?*” Well, let me give you **five simple proofs of salvation**, and all of them should be present in your life if you are truly one of God’s children. (1) Do you believe the gospel that Christ died for your sins? (2) Have you genuinely committed your life to Jesus Christ? (3) Have you repented of your sin? (4) Are you obedient to the Scriptures? (5) Do you truly love Christ, His Word, and His church? Those are the proofs simply because none of that is possible apart from the incredible sovereign work of God in a person’s life. A person must be very honest in answering these simple questions, or they will have no value for their life.