

Gospel Obsession: 1 Peter 1:10-12

Preached by David Kent at Harambee Church, March 29th, 2009

Unnoticed Treasure

"Concerning this salvation..."

In the first few words of this passage, Peter tells us that he is going to expand on the significance of the Gospel. These three verses show that our salvation is more than just a personal experience. Its effects are global, historical, and cosmic. In today's society, the Gospel is viewed something that is irrelevant or primitive at best, and dangerous and malicious at worst. It is a worthless piece of trash that needs to be swept into the dustbin of history so that humanity can continue its "inevitable" march towards enlightenment. The reality, though, is that the Gospel is something worth obsessing over. It is all parts of the overall story of humanity.

In 1 Peter 1:10-12 the prophets of the Old Testament are shown as being obsessed with the Gospel. It is not simply a personal decision, or a cultural mantra. The Gospel is so far-reaching and comprehensive that it affects them (and us) in three ways: the gospel saturates our minds, it burns in our souls, and it directs our actions.

The Gospel Saturates our Minds

"...the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully."

The Old Testament prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, etc.) spent their time researching, investigating, and inquiring to the Lord about the redemption of the human race. As they studied the history of Israel, they saw a pattern of redemption, grace, and mercy on the part of the Lord emerge and they inquired as to when it would ultimately find its fulfillment. From creation and the fall to the promise to Abram to the exodus from Egypt and deliverance into the promised land to the exile of Israel, the prophets could see that the Lord had a larger plan at work, and they wanted to know as much about it as possible. When we see the power of the Gospel, it impacts and engages our minds and sparks our imagination. This can play out in study, art, meditation, or writing, but regardless of how it plays out, when we become obsessed with the Gospel, it renews our mind (Romans 12:2)

The Gospel Burns in Our Souls

"Inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories."

As the prophets studied the scriptures they saw cycles of exile and restoration.

Every time Israel was rescued, they would fall back into sin and be exiled again. This cycle of continual loss and hope, exile and restoration, gave rise to a deep longing in the hearts of the prophets for a final restoration. In Psalm 35:17, David cries out to ask "How Long, O Lord, will you look on?" In the midst of this agony, the Holy Spirit indicated to the prophets that there would be an end and a final victory and redemption of their people. The prophets were obsessed with knowing when. They went beyond their book knowledge to ask who, how, and when this fulfillment would take place. As their minds were renewed by the beauty of the Gospel, their hearts were transformed to yearn for that restoration.

The Gospel Directs our Actions

"It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves, but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven..."

As the prophets inquired, the Lord revealed to them that the salvation would not be seen in their lifetimes, and that they were preaching and prophesying and sacrificing for the benefit of those in the future. Even knowing that they were serving not themselves, Abraham still took Isaac the mountain to be sacrificed to God, Elijah trusted in God's power by challenging the prophets of Baal, and Hosea took a wife he *knew* would cheat on him to demonstrate the contrast of God's faithfulness with our unfaithfulness. These types of actions are only taken when we are so obsessed with the Gospel that it directs our actions. These sacrifices are only made when we understand that our lives are not about ourselves, but about the glory of God.

Immeasurable Beauty

"...things into which angels long to look."

This final part of the passage expands the significance of the gospel to the cosmic realm, as Peter mentions that even the heavenly angels yearn to know, see, and understand how God can maintain his perfect holiness, perfect justice, and perfect love and still save us for eternity. Even the angels are obsessed with the Gospel. Are we?