

1 Peter 1:17-20

Hope in the storm

The Chosen One



CAMERA FUND UPDATE

I want to begin with an exciting update on our Camera Fund! Last week I spoke to our church's need for a professional camera system so we can do a higher quality, more dependable recording of our worship service now and in the future. I said that our plans are to continue to do the live-stream service even after our public service is back to normal. We do this simply because it is an effective means to get outside the walls of this church building to reach people with the gospel of Jesus – people that we have never had the opportunity to reach before! So last week we announced the formation of a “Camera Fund” and I said that it would be expensive, as all newer, specialized technology is. I quoted a startup price of about \$10K and I have to say that even that amount is not the final total, as we will need a new sound booth computer – which is an antique as computers go – and other accessories such as expensive cords and connection, and equipment updates to present sound system which the audio part of the videos will be running through. BUT... here is the exciting news! Last Sunday after announcing the formation of the fund and asking you to give as the Spirit moves you, beside receiving a great general fund offering, we took in a collection that doubled what we already had in the Camera Fund. So at days end last Sunday after having just announced the creation of that Camera Fund, ***we had \$4,930 (almost 5K!) dollars*** – just 2K from the amount we need to sign a contract with a professional audio visual company working out of Green Bay.



So if God so moves you to give toward this "Camera Fund", we ask that you would designate it as "offering money", over-and-above the amount that you tithe. Tithe properly goes into the General Fund for operating expenses, and offerings (over-and-above the tithe) go for special projects. So we ask you to separate your Camera Fund offering from the normal amount you give. If you are here at church, we suggest that you use another envelope from the pew and mark it for the Camera Fund. ***Or*** if you are sending your tithes and offerings in to this church by snail mail, mark the Camera Fund offerings separately so that the financial secretary has a clear understanding of the difference in your support.

Vs 17 – “*Since you call on a father who judges each man’s work impartially...*”

When my two boys were growing up, both Karen and I were very careful about treating our sons equally. The nature of sibling rivalry is to compete for parental attention – they both wanted the lions share of Mom and Dad’s attention, and we had plenty of that rivalry between our sons. Of course they did not know they were doing that, but that is what was going on! **BUT**, we were very careful with our affection and our discipline to never give one or the other the impression that they were loved more or less than the other. We treated them equally. Our justice/discipline between the two was equal. Our gifts to them were equal. Our time and attentions were equal. Our affections were equally distributed between the two boys. Our training of them was equal. Their chores were equal. Our praise of them and our encouragement was as equal as possible.



No one told us that we had to do that. It came naturally. We just loved them so deeply and desired with all our hearts that they would each grow up straight and tall, become serious Christ-followers, and good husbands and fathers, and that we would be best friends when they grew up! So all our parental efforts went to that desired end. It was not forced. It was a patient labor of love, of hope, of joy,.. so, infinitely worth every bit of our time, effort, and resources!

Jesus spoke of the love that the Heavenly Father has for His followers. He compares it to human parental love and makes it clear that God’s parental love as our Creator is far greater than that love that earthly parents have for their children. “How much more”, He said, “will the Heavenly Father give His children good gifts”. Jesus, of course knew God the Father, and the love His Father holds in His heart for His people, and Jesus admonishes His people to trust the love of their Heavenly Father. He would never do evil to them. He is the giver of good gifts! By the way, His best gift is His loving discipline! Bad things can happen to good Christians just like they happen to anyone else – everyone knows that! But to assume that a hardship, grief, or failure is sent into our life by God is just plain bad theology! It is terribly unjust to blame God for these things. We live in a fallen world, and things happen in fallen world! The freedom that God has given us in a fallen world comes with a high cost and leaves open the possibility of things going very badly for us. That is not usually His doing but simple cause-and-effect in a world that has rejected the love of God! Children often blame their parents unjustly. Don’t do that to God! It is unfounded and unjust. Trust Him! He has earned your respect because of the cross of Christ! If He hasn’t, you must truly be a malcontent indeed! And He will be fair with you, just as He is with all – not more and not less than the next guy.

Vs 17b - “... live your lives as strangers here (in this life) in reverent fear”

God is a loving God who loves us very much, but don't ever forget that He is a holy God! Part of His holiness is his more severe attributes – those of righteous anger, of His judgment, of His condemnation! Without Jesus, as both our sacrifice and Heavenly Priest, we would be subject to the wrath of God against His enemies! If we do not accept His offer of love in His Son, Jesus, we are a part of that sorry majority of earth's population that are separated from Him and are then trapped within the classification of being under His judgment and wrath! If our sins and offenses against God are not paid for and eradicated from our record through the blood of Christ, then they continue to separate us from God! In fact, the self-sacrificing mission of Jesus was to be the peacemaker – the Reconciler - between God and humanity. Without Him there can be NO reconciliation between humans and God, because sin is the issue and it must be paid for! Either we must pay for it by eternal Hell, or Jesus will pay for it, and then we can be with Him in His heavenly home! We gain access to heaven when ***He*** pays for our sins, and He pays for our sins when we believe in and trust Him, and humbly ask Him to apply His sacrifice to take away our sins and to reconcile us to God! Then, and only then, are we placed “***in Christ***” where we receive the love of God, sharing in the love God has for His Only Son. In Christ, who acts like a great protective container of souls, our sins are shielded from the eyes of God, and we are cleaned up, made presentable even as Christ Himself is presentable! And so, God is no longer offended by us! He can lavish the love of a Father upon us as He so greatly desires, as He has always desired. In His Son's death on the cross we are made innocent! The obstacles to the love of God have been cleared away – *It is like a great boulder in a roadway blocking the road. You can progress no further. You can't remove it. It is way too big! But someone can and they are called and they clear it. Once it is removed you have clear passage and can move forward. Likewise, Christ has cleared the way that was blocked by the boulder of sin and of God-resistant independence, and He has made a clear path for us to have a loving relationship with our Creator/God! Understand that you have come a long ways from that precarious place of God's condemnation as Supreme Judge – and that is a sobering thought! Listen – we need to respect God! He is not some weak old guy in the sky! He is supreme! To have found favor in His sight by switching sides and coming over to Jesus in faith and trust, and by taking up our cross to follow Him.. well, that is a great privilege! We have escaped our inevitable fate by hitching a ride all the way to God's heaven on the coat tails of Jesus Christ!



This is reality not fantasy! Peter admonishes Christians everywhere to live as strangers in this world. Don't put your eggs in the basket of here and now like everyone else. We are able, for the time being, to live good lives here. But we are to remember that this life runs a far second to the life that happens after this life! This one is a tiny blip in time. The next one goes on forever. That will take some getting use to, I'm sure, but we'll manage! Just do not treat that with familiarity – do not take it for granted – as we are all prone to do! Peter's admonition was to treat with great respect the accomplishments of Christ, and to treat with great respect the Heavenly Father who sent Him to do what He did on our behalf! Treat eternal life with God in His heaven with the respect it deserves! Live in the here and now, yes, but live with eternity in the forefront of your minds. It will make a great difference in what you value most on earth and how you use your time and resources. But, keep going, stick to the apostle's teaching, get on board with the purposes of God to win the world to Himself through the love of Jesus channeled through His people!

[2 Thess. 3:4,5]

Nothing earth shaking here – no new revelations – no fireworks! Just live like strangers here. Move into the love of God and keep moving forward! The real fireworks come later – next-life later. So for now, keep on keeping on! Grow, learn, apply yourself to your salvation and your relationship with Jesus! Remember what God has done for you – remember where you once were in the eyes of God and where you are now in Christ! Never let that become mundane, boring, colorless to you! This is your life and your future! Always treat your salvation with the attention, respect, and care it deserves!!

OH, I'M SORRY.

I FORGOT
I ONLY EXIST

WHEN YOU NEED
SOMETHING.

Vs 18 – “*It was not with... silver or gold that you were redeemed...*”. We were not purchased by God with something as cheap as gold or silver! And we did not inherit a life that is not supremely satisfying and fulfilling! On the contrary! It is the only kind life on this planet that *is* satisfying and fulfilling! It better be, because the next verse clarifies that we were purchased by God with the blood of His Son! He would not have expended that heart-stabbing, gut-wrenchingly **HARD** price if He was buying some average thing! But He expended the most rare and precious commodity in the universe – the vicarious suffering of Jesus, anointed – topped off – with His own blood and death! It was the penalty we otherwise would have had to pay for our own sins, and which wouldn’t have been enough. The sacrifice needed to be an unblemished sacrifice – like the Law of Moses called for an unblemished lamb to be sacrificed as a covering for sins. Only the Son of God could have carried this off because He was the only sinless/unblemished human that has ever lived! Only *His* sacrifice was enough to obliterate the wrath of God against us and to activate and actualize His love toward us! It was also enough to purchase our undying loyalty!



Vs 20 – This verse is put in here to show that there was an extreme amount of aforethought given to the cross of Christ even before creation – even before the fall of humanity and the curse that altered creation so tragically! By the way. There is this popular American misconception that you and I were “**chosen**” God (for salvation) before the creation of the world. Nowhere do the scriptures say that! They do speak to the choseness of **God the Word** before creation. In that moment that He was chosen, the Word became the Christ, the Chosen One!



- ~ **[John 1:1]**, Here we see Jesus long before He was named Jesus. In the beginning He was “The Word”
- ~ **[17:3-5]** – Here we see Jesus nearing the completion of His mission as the world’s Christ, Chosen One, Promised One, Savior, and ultimately the world’s King of Kings
- ~ **[17:24]** - Who does it say God love before the creation of the world? Jesus!
- ~ **[2 Timothy 1:9b]** the “*grace*” given us “*in Christ Jesus*” before the creation of the world. **HE** was chosen before creation and when we partake in His choseness and in the love God had for the Word since before the measurement of time.
- ~ **[Ephesians 1:13; 1 Timothy 6:12b]** We were included in Christ the Chosen One when? It happened the moment we heard and believed. In **THAT** moment we are joined to the choseness of Christ! But **we** were not chosen before the creation of the world! Christ was! Some of us would like to make it all about ourselves, but, I’m sorry, it is not about your or me. It is about Him! Don’t Americanize your faith. “Me first” just does not look good on Christ-followers. I am saved unto God and then lavished with His love when I, by faith, joined myself to Jesus. The moment **anyone** does that, (and it is open to all) they receive everything Christ has, everything that will prepare you and me for God’s heaven – **EVERYTHING!**

John names “the Word” anticipating a mission where He would take upon Himself first the DNA of humanity, and then the sins of all who would come to Him by faith and who would switch sides and become “strangers” to this world system, part of the resistance to it, nonconformists to this Kingdom of Darkness that shades the earth! As Christ-followers, we are a gently belligerent force against the evil and falsehood that so defines and warps the nations of earth! When we give our heart to Jesus, we become earth’s resistance - its non-conformists. In the **sight** of God, then, we become the inviting light in the darkness, and to His **taste** we become savory - the salt of the earth! He naturalizes us as citizens into the Kingdom of Heaven! Peter is encouraging Christ-followers to become who God has made us to be to take up our place of honor with Christ – to single-mindedly dedicate ourselves to that end!