

Thursday of the Third Week of Easter - I Peter 1:13-25

¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” ¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the 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 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding 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,
²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Peter wrote to people who were being persecuted long ago. But his words seem sometimes to be tailored for our situation. Look at his exhortation in vs 17 above, “conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile...” I have spoken to several people who have lost their jobs and are feeling exiled from the productive lives they were leading just a few weeks ago. The job market for their skills has locked up. Will some of those jobs and businesses come back? I don't know.

What I do know is what Peter goes on to tell us. We were ransomed from the futile ways of those who went before, the idolaters who imagined that God was manipulated, as if his favor was for sale. God's love has never been for sale, it has always been freely given and has been fully given in the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. This is a wholly other sort of economy than the one we are used to. In a sense, God is a bit of a socialist. He really will give the people everything. It may not work in the way we organize our human society, but, awesomely, it works in God's heavenly kingdom. He just gives it away in Christ. My productive life, my job, my value in this world is not connected to my status in God's kingdom.

But that holy awe we feel in seeing Christ's gift to us emboldens and empowers a new life for us today. As a Pastor I sit at home, unable to conduct the services which I believe my people need. I too am feeling a little exiled. That is frustrating. But Peter reminds me of something. I have been redeemed to a sincere brotherly love. I can still do that. I have been born of an imperishable seed, the living and abiding Word of God. All things human fail, like flowers and grass they pass away. But that Word does not. This is the good news we need to hear today.

God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf