

**PRAISE INTERNATIONAL**  
**THE WOOD THAT RESHAPED THE WORLD**  
**1 PETER 3:18-22**

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**Welcome - Prayer Needs**

The title that I have given the message this morning is based in the lectionary epistle but for me is also from the title of Brian Zahnd's new book The Wood Between The Worlds.

There are many days that I will include an extended version of the Lords Prayer in my personal prayer time often with a cross in hand that concludes something like this:

**Lead us not into trouble, trial, tribulation or temptation.**

*Be mindful of our frame, we are but dust,*

*We can only take so much.*

*Lead us out of the wilderness into the promised land that flows with milk and honey,*

*Lead us out of the badlands into resurrection country.*

**Deliver us from evil and the evil one.**

*Save us from Satan, the accuser and adversary.*

*So that no weapon formed against us shall prosper.*

*So that every tongue that rises against us in accusation you will condemn.*

*So that every fiery dart of the wicked one is extinguished by the shield of faith.*

*So that as we submit to you and resist the devil, the devil flees.*

*So that as we draw near to Jesus Christ lifted up,*

**His cross becomes for us the axis of love expressed in forgiveness, that refounds the world;**

*And the devil, who became the false ruler of the fallen world, is driven out from among us.*

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

This is the 2nd Sunday of Lent and our text comes from 1 Peter 3:18 - Peter now as old man writes

***For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.***

Lent – comes from the Latin word for 40 – 40 days of penance – Invitation to Repentance.

It was in March of 2020 that the Lock-down was about to go into place in Paris one family decided to move in with family in Vendome about 2 hours southwest of Paris anticipating the needs of their near 10 year old boys. Their decision proved to be wise as it gave their boys room to be boys. On one day in May the boys parents encourage them to use whatever they could find in their grandmothers home to build a fort in the backyard. Finding some old bed sheets in a closet they set off on their adventure. Now when they unraveled the sheets something fell out of the sheets - unfazed they carried out their mission and had a grand time. Sometime later they told their 40 year old father about the bars that had fallen out of the sheets. When their father found the bars he realized he had seen them before - they had been used in the kitchen by his mother as a knife holder for years. But something seemed different as he looked at these 2 bars each weighing exactly 2 Kilograms....so he decided to have them looked at by an appraiser who verified his suspicion that these were not just knife holders but gold bars purchased by his grandparents in 1967 - they sold for right at 100,000 Euros in June.

What a fascinating story - boys being boys building a make believe fortress to feel secure and no doubt playing out roles of significance - all healthy and important for children to know they belong. Yet how secure and safe is a fortress made of old bed sheets? The captivating element of the story is how these children held a greater value for their find of old bed sheets than what fell out of them.

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***And the secret is simply this Christ in you!***  
***Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.***  
***Col 1:27b JB Phillips***

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**Two observations I want to make.** The first is how many of us have grown up with a theology of bed sheets - while sincere yet a clear misrepresentation of the Gospel. You see many of us have heard versions of how our Heavenly Father looked in our backyard and saw us in our pitiful state - pretending - failing and in such real need and finally Jesus agreed to do the work of cleaning up our mess! Beloved that is a misrepresentation of the the Fathers Heart for you!

- It was NOT your broken weak and pitiful condition that moved God to pay such a ridiculous price for humanity! It was His knowledge of our value....made in the image and likeness of God for relationship and representation.
- You were the treasure hidden in the field!
- Your restoration and redemption was worth what He paid!
- You were the Joy set before Him!
- He decided you were worth the lamb!

**When we begin to understand the beauty and value of His completed work....its a different kind of repentance!**

- Repentance is no longer about my effort to quit messing up...
- Repentance is about discerning the work of the cross
- It is a Repentance unto God and faith in Christ Acts 20:21  
*Any doctrine that distracts from the success of the completed work of the Cross is a waste of time. Fancious Du Toit*

**The second observation** I would offer was in the mind of the 40 year old father.

- Whose best imagination was their use as knife holders...why this happened who knows.
- Two gold bars being used as a prop for daily chores in the kitchen.

**Yet isn't that exactly what religion has often left us with?**

- **Using the Cross as a prop for an endless list of chores to hopefully get us ready for Heaven? Do better and try harder....**

**The Power of this story is in its simplicity;**

- whether dismissed or overlooked the bars did not loose their value!
- The gold never needed to repent....**but those who encountered it had to change their mind about its worth.**

**Beloved the Good News we proclaim today is that in a world distracted overwhelmed and even sinking towards hopelessness the Hope of the Gospel has not changed - repentance is our invitation to surrender to the Love of the Father.**

Peter the Jesus rebuking, sword bearing, and fort building wanna be has his focus on one thing - **the work of Jesus!**

We are now a full generation since the resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the Church. What began as rejection and pushed many followers of Jesus all over the Roman empire is now moved into full out persecution under Nero. Peter writes to *'pilgrims'* all over the Roman empire - the sentiment of the empire has gone sour against Christians.

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- The official Roman position to Christians - watch this - Repent!
- Change your lifestyle and worship.
- Worship our gods and affirm the Emperor as god or face persecution.
- As far as the Roman empire is concerned all Christians are insurrectionist and are treated as such!

**Which is why 1 and 2 Peter are so remarkable - He is likely writing from Rome ( that he identifies as Babylon in Chapter 5) Mark is at his side and we hear a completely different focus from Peter.**

**In the Gospels we see a religious and Zealous Peter convinced he can make a difference**

**A – Mark 8 - Who do people say I am? Peter the Rock answers...**

- *You are the Christ!*
- Peter Star Student award - he got the right answer!
- Something in Peter becomes convinced that being right is what will bring change....

**So when Jesus says I will suffer and die....**

- Peter takes Jesus to the side and **rebukes Him** – Mark 8!

**Why? Peter the Fort builder is leaning into the forces of the world around him...**

- Certainty – Optimism and Control...and it does not stop here

**B- Later in the Garden - Matthew 26/ John 18 - Peter and the Sword**

- Peters got a gun! Well a Sword....but watch he is the only guy who is carrying...
- And he attempts to kill Malchus!

**Why? Peter is convinced that Power/Control is what shapes the world around him...**

- Power over others - Rome bears the sword so he will bear a sword
- I mean is there anything more powerful than the sword that can take life?

**I mean before we look with judgment on Peter - think about the places we have been convinced that the only way to find life is through Power and Punishment over others.**

**C - Now we are looking back at young Peter - again in Matthew 26 - Peter the Hopeless**

- He is in a bucket of utter weakness - denying the very person he swore he would never deny...  
Why? He is living convinced that his only hope is survival and there is **no one to save him.**

**Finally Peter surrenders his Pride His power his weakness in John 21 to the Love of the Father....**

- And its like the gold fell out of the sheets.....
- Now as a older man He is writing inviting followers of Jesus to see what He now sees!

Its like the 40 year old Father – wait its not a prop....?

- Oh my goodness... its the finished work of the Cross of Jesus - 1 Peter 1:3  
*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

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As an old man His confidence, Peace and Hope are not based in Certainty, Optimism and Control - but squarely on the the Cross and it has reShaped everything – He is now surrendered to the more power of the Cross expressed in Faith, Hope and Love.

**1 - Peter the Rock...is no longer focused on being certain but is surrendered in Faith**

- 1 Peter 2:4 *And coming to Him as to a living stone....you also are living stones...*
- Beloved some church tradition has made much of Peter the Rock but have missed that it was Peter who said....Jesus is the real rock and by the way so are you!
- Being built together to become a Spiritual house!
- Peter is no longer struggling to show off as the guy with the right answer but is revealing who we are - living stones
- A chosen race a royal priesthood to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness and into His wonderful light.

Now watch this...

Peter who once feared for his life says to men and women standing by a fire being asked are you a follower of this man Jesus - just like Peter was - 1 Peter 3:14 *...do not fear their intimidation...*

**When you know how valued you are and how valuable this good news is....you no longer have to live in fear – Faith! We have fallen on the Rock!**

**2. So Peter the Sword bearer...is now surrendered to the Hope of the Cross**

- As an old man he now says 1 Peter 2:21....**our example is the Jesus way...**
- Not a sword trying to control... - vs 23  
*while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return; while suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously*

**Peter is describing here and later in his epistle what I would call Cross shaped living...**

- **A Cruciformed life - marked by gentleness and reverence....**

What has happened? **Peter has learned to Trust the way of the Cross over the way of the Sword!**

**3 - Lets not miss Peter the Hopeless....is surrendered to the Power of Love**

- Ss an old man vulnerable living in Rome with the breathe of persecution on the back of his neck....he says...*we have been born into a living Hope to obtain an inheritance that is imperishable and un-defiled....***talk about gold!**
- **The denier is now saying** 1 Peter 3:15 *Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you....*
- Now on some levels this could sound pretty epic - wait you the denier are giving advice about how to be a Christian apologist?
- **The reality is that He encouraging fellow followers of Jesus....don't look at the distractions the bed sheets...look at the gold of the Cross! The living Hope in you!**

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**How does that get lived out?**

- By being a great academic apologist?
- I want to strongly submit that the Hope of Jesus is most visible in our living the Jesus way -
- Peter the old man said it this way

1 Peter 4:7-9

*The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.*

**Prayer - Love and an open life!**

**Beloved the Good News we proclaim today is that in a world distracted overwhelmed and even sinking towards hopelessness the Hope of the Gospel has not changed - repentance is our invitation to surrender to the Love of the Father.**

Close - 1 Peter 1:1-9

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To those who reside as strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

**Closing Prayer**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

**Communion**

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