

Canceled
A Roadmap for Living In Exile
Legacy (1:10-12)

Introduction: Many people in our region mistakenly assume that Venture is a recently planted church. It's not. Venture, to most people's surprise is a 100-year-old local church started in the very small former mill village of Hardin, NC. We are going to highlight this more in November, but for now I just want you to realize that the ministry of this church to you, your family and this region exists because people before you were committed to love Jesus, and as such, encourage each other's faith in Christ, support one another in life, and engage those far from God with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to know and follow Him – AKA The Great Commission! The legacy of their obedience to Christ is still impacting and changing lives in a way I'm sure none of them ever imagined.

Now, as cool as that is, we have a legacy WAY bigger, and way more important than those who gathered in a mill village in Hardin, NC to form what is now called Venture Church. It's a legacy that Peter wanted to make sure the churches he was writing to in Asia Minor were aware of as well, and he wanted them to be aware of it not for self-serving prideful reasons, but for very practical reasons related to their spiritual health and vitality.

As a reminder, the five specific churches Peter wrote this letter to (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia) were going through "various trials," (1:6) which certainly included various degrees of persecution. Loving Jesus and laboring in His cause were not easy for these people. In some cases, it was costing them their livelihood and homes, and in other cases it was even costing people their lives.

Therefore, one of the things Peter does in this letter to help equip and encourage them to keep moving forward was to briefly orient them with some of the important aspects of their spiritual heritage; that is, to make sure they understood what they had in Christ and each other, wasn't some new idea that just showed up out of nowhere, but rather something God had been using people for 1,000's of years to build and prepare for them! They were the recipients of a legacy!

With that, let me read today's passage to you, then I want to spend the rest of our time helping you sink your teeth in to this little bite out of First Peter. Like the other little bites we've taken so far, it's rich with flavor and incredibly filling, but you have to chew on it a minute to really experience it. Peter wrote,

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 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, things into which angels long to look.

So, the general context here is the salvation, that is, the literally gift (grace) of being adopted by God as His children and as such given an eternal family called the church. There are a ton of elements Peter could have reminded them of concerning all that went into this salvation coming to them, but at this point in time the Lord led Peter to encourage the churches in Asia Minor with four.

Proposition: 1 Peter 1:10-12 points us to four key elements of our spiritual heritage.

The 1st key element I want to point out to you is actually in verse 11. We are going to come back to verse 10 in a minute, but what's stated in verse 11 is essential to everything ... Peter wrote,

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

The 1st key element I want to point out to you is

(1) The Holy Spirit specifically inspired the Biblical authors on what words to write. (1:11)

- A. Now some of you are saying, hold on, Peter just said it was the Spirit of Christ in them telling them all this stuff. Good job if you noticed that, but you also need to know that the Bible uses "Spirit of Christ" and "Spirit of God" interchangeably when referring to the third person of the Trinity – The Holy Spirit. For instance, in Romans 8:9 we see both,
- B. **9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Romans 8:9)**
- C. But second, and more to what I'm talking about, Kistemaker and Hendriksen noted,
- D. **"In brief, we draw the conclusion that in this passage Peter teaches the doctrine of verbal inspiration."¹**
- E. By inspiration we mean that the Holy Spirit divinely led the writers of Scriptures to write the specific words of Scripture, and as such, Scripture is God breathed. It was the Holy Spirit in the prophets telling them about the Christ. They weren't astrologist prophesying about what they thought the stars were telling them, nor were they witches trying to consult with the spirits of demons or the dead, instead, they were being inspired by God Himself!

¹ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude* (Vol. 16, p. 54). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

- F. God The Father sent God The Holy Spirit to literally breathe His words into them, and as such, we believe the Bible is literally the “Word of God.” Listen to some other Scriptures on the subject,
- G. **30 Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. (Nehemiah 9:30)**
- H. **13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13)**
- I. **16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**
- J. **21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)**
- K. The point being, what you have in your hand is the literal legacy of God’s Words in the prophets and apostles. It’s not a representation of it or alternate version of it – it’s the real deal words of God given over millenniums of time before you and I were ever on this earth.
- L. As a result, our spiritual heritage is not some fad on social media, it’s not something some guy thought up while walking around the desert, it wasn’t dug up in somebody’s back yard or put together by a committee trying to formulate a system to control culture, but rather it was God Himself speaking in and through people from all kinds of different backgrounds, in all kinds of different era’s of history, with all kinds of different skill sets and social standings, but yet all pointing to the same thing, which takes me to the 2nd key element of our spiritual heritage in this passage.

The 2nd key element about our spiritual heritage is in verses 10 and 11 ...

- A. **“10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”**
 - B. That is ... **The 2nd key element about our spiritual heritage is that ...**
- (2) The Prophets put tremendous effort into understanding what God had revealed to them! (1:10-11)**

- A. Who are the prophets? Well, it's a sizable list of people in the Old Testament like Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc. that all came to a marked end with Malachi. I do believe we could also include "John The Baptist" in the context of this Scripture. He is technically a New Testament personality; however, he is also a prophet that lived prior to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ who spent his entire ministry pointing the people to the coming of Christ. However, unlike the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist is the only one who got to see and know the Christ!
- B. The point is, they (including John the Baptist) "Searched" and "inquired" to know the person of Christ – who he was going to specifically be and when he was going to come!
- C. The words "searched" and "inquired" both emphasize the intentionality and level of effort. It means you are looking with a specific purpose and you're doing so with a marked level of energy and priority.
- D. The word "carefully" further emphasizes the search with the intensity and priority of their efforts. For instance, persons handling explosives or doctors performing surgery are extremely careful! They are considering each move before they make it, their entire focus is on what they are doing, and it is so intense that potential distractions are easily repelled so that they can maximize their mind and body on the task at hand.
- E. The point being, the prophets didn't just get a vision of the Messiah, write it down and move on with their lives, but rather, they labored with intensity and persistency to know everything possible about the one they were prophesying. They knew the Messiah was not only the only hope of salvation for the Jewish people, but also for themselves as well. As such, they longed to know who this Christ was going to be and the exact time He was going to be born.
- F. They saw the Jewish people rebel against God over and over again and they knew their own sinful flawed hearts as well; therefore they prayed, they fasted, they read and meditated on the writings and teachings of God's prophets before them. They were not satisfied with the knowledge they had because although that knowledge pointed to the Christ, it didn't take them to Him! It's why Jesus said,
- G. **"17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." (Matthew 13:17)**
- H. But nonetheless they labored, and they preached, and they did so in the face of persecution themselves! They refused to treat the knowledge of the Christ that they had been given as something to lay aside or hide. They understood there was no one more important, nor would there ever be one more important than

the Christ! Furthermore, they knew there was no purpose more important, nor would there ever be a purpose more important than the purpose of Christ!

- I. The point I'm trying to make is this, the information about Jesus known as the Gospel, was so important to the Prophets that they spent their lives trying to understand it and preach it. It is literally the most valuable information in all the world and thousands of years later we are the benefactors of the work!

The 3rd key element you need to see about our spiritual heritage is in verse 11, and its huge!

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

(3) The Old Testament not only points straight to the person of Christ but also to what He was going to do! (1:11)

- A. The "he" in verse 11 is the Holy Spirit who is speaking in and through the prophets about the sufferings and subsequent glories of Christ.
- B. Furthermore, I don't have time to address it deeply here, but I just want to mention that it had to be significant to the readers who were experiencing all kinds of trials to know the sufferings of Christ were prophesied and as such His sufferings were totally a part of God's plan. They had to be encouraged that their sufferings for living and proclaiming Christ's Gospel were indeed a part of God's plan as well. This had to be particularly encouraging when they read that Christ's sufferings resulted in "GLORIES." I don't know if you caught it but the word "subsequent" necessarily links Christ's sufferings as the price for His glories; as such the believers in Asia Minor had to be encouraged that their sufferings in Christ would lead to basking in the glories of Christ as well (i.e. Philippians 3:10!). To read more on this visit our website and read my notes. I've included two very insightful quotes from two great commentaries on 1 Peter.
 1. "In essence, these words show us that the prophets were given a particular insight into salvation's mystery—that the Christ would be a *suffering* Christ—and that only after suffering would he be given "*subsequent*" glories. For the typical first-century religious Jew, this thought was simply unacceptable. They wanted a Christ of glory. They had no time for a Messiah given over to suffering. Yet Peter's early readers had been saved by just such a gospel. For the discouraged believer in Peter's audience, this reminder would have been greatly encouraging. The life they were living, filled as it was with trials and difficulties, mirrored the life of the Messiah, in whom

they had put their trust. The encouragement Peter has already given them would only continue to swell as they read the opening line of verse.”²

2. “The order is to be noticed; he mentions sufferings first, and then adds the glories which are to follow. For he intimates that this order cannot be changed or subverted; afflictions must precede glory. So there is to be understood a twofold truth in these words,—that Christians must suffer many troubles before they enjoy glory,—and that afflictions are not evils, because they have glory annexed to them. Since God has ordained this connection, it does not behoove us to separate the one from the other. And it is no common consolation, that our condition, such as we find it to be, has been foretold so many ages ago. Hence we learn, that it is not in vain that a happy end is promised to us; secondly, we hence know that we are not afflicted by chance, but through the infallible providence of God; and lastly, that prophecies are like mirrors to set forth to us in tribulations the image of celestial glory. Peter, indeed, says, that the Spirit had testified of the coming afflictions of Christ; but he does not separate Christ from his body. This, then, is not to be confined to the person of Christ, but a beginning is to be made with the head, so that the members may in due order follow, as Paul also teaches us, that we must be conformed to him who is the first-born among his brethren. In short, Peter does not speak of what is peculiar to Christ, but of the universal state of the Church. But it is much fitted to confirm our faith, when he sets forth our afflictions as viewed in Christ, for we thereby see better the connection of death and life between us and him. And, doubtless, this is the privilege and manner of the holy union, that he suffers daily in his members, that after his sufferings shall be completed in us, glory also may have its completion. See more on this subject in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, and in the fourth of the first Epistle to Timothy.”³

- C. But more to the point I want to make here is the fact that what you and I have inherited is not a series of coincidences nor was it God’s Plan B because somehow his plan A didn’t work! What I want you to see is that the spiritual heritage we have inherited was clearly God’s Plan A. God gave the details of the sufferings and subsequent glories of the Christ LONG before Jesus was ever born in the manger!
- D. The following are just 8 examples of the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled by Christ:

1. **OT Prophecy of His trial.**

² Helm, D. R. (2008). [*1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ’s sufferings*](#) (pp. 49–52). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

³ Calvin, J., & Owen, J. (2010). [*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*](#) (pp. 38–41). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- a. **7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)**
- b. We see this fulfilled in Matthew 27:12,
- c. **12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. (Matthew 27:12)**

2. OT prophecy of the manner of His Death.

- a. **23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. (Deuteronomy 21:23)**
- b. This is one of the OT laws God gave Moses that prophetically paved the way for the clarity of Christ's substitutionary death to pay the penalty of our sin but also the manner in which Christ would die. That he would be hung in some way, which turned out to be on a cross! Paul wrote,
- c. **13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)**

3. OT Prophecy of Him being pierced.

- a. **10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10)**
- b. In the New Testament we read,
- c. **33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 36 For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced." (John 19:33-37)**

4. OT prophecy of His substitutionary atoning Death.

- a. **5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ... 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ... 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:5-6, 8, 11)**
- b. In the New Testament the writer of Hebrews explains,
- c. **28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)**

5. OT prophecy of his burial.

- a. **9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:9)**
- b. The Bible, as well as other sources tells us this was fulfilled. For example,
- c. **38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. (John 19:38)**

6. OT prophecy of His resurrection.

- a. **10 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. (Psalm 16:10)**
- b. **15 But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah (Psalm 49:15)**
- c. Obviously, this is fulfilled in the New Testament. Without it there is no Christianity! But for those who are new to the Bible, I want you to know it's in there! Therefore, listen to a couple of the many references to the resurrection of Christ,

- d. **7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. (Matthew 22:7)**
 - e. **3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)**
- 7. OT prophecy of His ascension to the right hand of the Father to intercede for us.**
- a. **18 You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. (Psalm 68:18)**
 - b. **1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." (Psalm 110:1)**
 - c. **12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12)**
 - d. The New Testament documents that Jesus Himself claimed these prophecies about himself.
 - e. **41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? 45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:41-45)**
 - f. In Peter's first sermon he made this real clear,
 - g. **32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he**

has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'" (Acts 2:32-35)

8. OT prophecy of His return, our resurrection and His eternal reign.
 - a. 13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)
 - b. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)
 - c. Obviously, this hasn't happened yet, but to those who don't believe Jesus taught that He is coming back, you need to know he taught it a LOT! For instance,
 - d. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:27-29)
 - e. 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:31-34)

This leads to the fourth key element about our spiritual heritage in 1 Peter 1:10-12 and it leaps off the page in verse 12.

- A. 12 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, things into which angels long to look.

- B.** Real quick, when Peter writes, “things into which angels long to look” he’s not suggesting the angels don’t know the Gospel, but rather they haven’t experienced it. They are literally looking to the Church to see the impact of God’s gracious plan to save! Check out my notes to read some more on this.
1. “They are not participants in the salvation but spectators of it. Paul writing in a context of this mystery says, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). The principalities and powers are of course the holy angels. The manifold wisdom of God as seen in the context is the truth of the Body of Christ. “Might be known” is passive and is more properly rendered “might be made known.” “By” is the translation of *dia* (διὰ), the preposition of intermediate agency. That is, this truth is to be made known to the holy angels by means of the instrumentality of the Church. The Church is the teacher of angels. Paul says that the apostles “are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (I Cor. 4:9). How the angels watch the saints. How they wonder at creatures once totally depraved, now living holy lives that glorify God. It is in the Church that they catch the supreme view of God’s love, sinners saved by grace, raised to a seat in the heavenly places in Christ. The Church is God’s university for angels.”⁴
 2. “*Which things the angels desire to look into.* It is indeed the highest praise to the gospel, that it contains treasures of wisdom, as yet concealed and hidden from angels. But some one may object, and say that it is not reasonable that things should be open and known to us which are hidden from angels, who always see the face of God, and are his ministers in ruling the church, and in the administration of all his blessings. To this I answer, that things are open to us as far as we see them in the mirror of the word; but our knowledge is not said to be higher than that of angels; Peter only means that such things are promised to us as angels desire to see fulfilled. Paul says that by the calling of the Gentiles the wonderful wisdom of God was made known to angels: for it was a spectacle to them, when Christ gathered into one body the lost world, alienated for so many ages from the hope of life. Thus daily they see with admiration the magnificent works of God in the government of his church. How much greater will their admiration be, at witnessing the last display of divine justice, when the kingdom of Christ shall be completed! This is as yet hidden, the revelation of which they still expect and justly wish to see. The passage indeed admits of a twofold meaning; either that the treasure we have in the gospel fills the angels with a desire to see it, as it is a sight especially delightful to them; or that they anxiously desire to see the

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, pp. 31–32). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

kingdom of Christ, the living image of which is set forth in the gospel. But the last seems to me to be the most suitable meaning.”⁵

- C. As much fun as it would to talk about that for a while, that’s not the element of our spiritual heritage that I want you to see in verse in 12. So look at it again,
- D. **12 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, things into which angels long to look.**

(4) The Prophets labored for future generations to know Christ. (1:12)

- A. It was literally REVEALED to them by God that their labor wasn’t for themselves but us!!!!
- B. Now listen, when God has you on easy street, that is everything you are doing is going great, then doing something that brings no immediate return isn’t a huge sacrifice. Think about it, when your close relationships are blessing you, your finances are prospering, your work/life balance is great, then sacrificing to do something that gives you nothing in return isn’t that big of deal. I mean, your tank is full and there isn’t room to get blessed anymore anyway!
- C. But when you are giving everything you have and getting little to nothing in return, the idea that you are going to add a massively intense commitment to your life that’s going to be an additional fruitless effort is absurd!
- D. And this exactly the case with the prophets. As they labored for you and I they were not at all on easy street! Most of the prophets lived extremely frustrating never seeing any earthly rewards for their efforts.
 - 1. Moses never got to go to the place he had passionately and sacrificially labored to lead Israel. His reward was he had to lead Israel around the wilderness for 40 years until the faithless people who refused to go into Canaan died. God let him stand on a mountain and see the land of Canaan but then he died never getting to set foot in the promise land!
 - 2. Jeremiah did everything he could to get Judah to repent and his reward was he had to live out the latter years of his life in pagan Egypt instead of the city and land he loved - Jerusalem.
 - 3. Elijah was so depressed about the rebellion of the people he just asked God to take him!

⁵ Calvin, J., & Owen, J. (2010). [*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*](#) (pp. 41–43). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

4. In short, most every prophet lived with the constant reality that the people they were preaching to were going to refuse to listen to them and as such few prophets ever got to see any fruit from their labor.
- E. So again, why did they keep on? Well Peter just told us the answer; they did it for you and me! God revealed to them that it was for generations after them! They knew what they were ultimately prophesying of was going to happen after they were dead and gone yet they kept going. They could have easily just quit. These were highly talented men who could have made a fortune in business, they could have become political leaders with huge influence, but they kept preaching a message nobody wanted to hear and pointing people to a savior they themselves longed to see and know, but nonetheless, knew they would never see him this side of eternity! They did all of this, obviously out of their love for God, but Peter very bluntly says they also did it for YOU and ME! They wanted the people who would live long after them to know the majesty and glory of God! They were driven for people living thousands of years after them to know the gracious and abundant salvation of God that only comes through Jesus Christ, His death and His resurrection – His sufferings and subsequent glories!
- F. To these believers living in exile in a pagan land, suffering rejection and persecution, Peter says for thousands of years prophets, preachers, teachers and faithful followers of God, even Angels have labored to bring you not just a message but a heritage in the Lord!
- G. So listen, the Church is not a place on the corner to go hear some music and a preacher. It is the body of Christ. It is the manifestation of Jesus to the World! It is the visible Kingdom of God. It is the eternal family of God that He has saved, redeemed and called His own and it has come to you by the blood of Jesus handed down from generation to generation. A spiritual heritage that people gave their lives to give to YOU!
- H. There is no family, ethnic or national heritage that has such a high price nor a high prize! There is no family, ethnic or national heritage with greater purpose or worth! There is no family, ethnic or national heritage with a more glorious future. There is no family, ethnic or national heritage with a more pure and humble reason to be prouder than this family called the Church; a humble pride that will passionately praise Christ alone for all eternity for the privileged of being in it!
- I. So let me ask you this. As those who have received this heritage,

Challenge: Will your life pave the way for future generations to know and follow Jesus?

I am by no means suggesting if you aren't doing something big for Jesus that somehow you aren't paving the way for future generations. I'm not even remotely suggesting that. So, what am I saying?

Well, let me tell you about a local church that for 140 years has paved the way for future generations to know Jesus. This isn't a story about a celebrity preacher, but a local church committed to a great God and Gospel; the story of a local church committed to pass on a legacy not of traditions and warm fuzzy stories of times past, but of one totally focused on bringing the eternal life of Jesus Christ to their community and the world; of bringing the spiritual heritage prophesied of by the Old Testament prophets and created by Christ!

Around the time of the Civil War a group of believers living in what at the time was a rural part of Virginia, had been meeting in homes. They kept inviting others to come hear the Gospel and follow Jesus and eventually they had more people gathering together than they had space in any of their small farm homes to meet. It was at that time they decided to make the difficult financial sacrifice to build a chapel, but unfortunately it didn't last long. It got burned down during the "Battle of Big Bethel." The small gathering of believers, undeterred by the total loss of their finances and labor, simply went back to meeting in homes until they could afford to build another chapel. They had to divide up and meet in numerous homes, so there was nothing ideal about the effort, but they made it work because they refused to quit worshiping together, studying God's word together and sharing the Gospel with those who didn't believe in Jesus. They eventually raised enough money to build another chapel and in 1900 they decided to legally constitute themselves as a local church named Liberty Baptist Church.

As the city of Hampton annexed more and more property, the church eventually ended up in the northern part of the city of Hampton. As the decades went by the population of Hampton continued to grow as did the section of the city where the church gathered called North Hampton. The continued population growth provided all kinds of people for the church lead to Jesus, and they were totally committed to reaching them. By the 1950's the church had over two hundred attenders and by the late 1980's there was over one thousand people gathering every week to worship Jesus.

Hampton Roads, the name of the region around the city of Hampton, now has over 1.7 million residents. Meanwhile Liberty Baptist Church now has 6 campuses with a total average weekly attendance in 2022 (in person and online) of 13,451 people who gather to worship the Lord and labor together for the cause of Christ. This year they have already baptized over 600 people who surrendered their lives to Jesus!

Now listen, Hampton Roads is absolutely full of empty church buildings that refused to do whatever it took to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and as such paved a way for future generations. Make no mistake, Liberty isn't impacting Hampton Roads like this on accident, nor did God quit because a bunch of local churches that bore his name in that area wouldn't sell out to reach people with His Gospel! God doesn't lose! God knew what was coming, therefore long before these churches decided to become clubs for Christians instead of movements of the Gospel, God had already raised up a little group of farmers in a

rural area that nobody even knew about. He planted a fire in a little group of poor farmers that started a church that is now unmistakably impacting a region with 1.7 million people living in it! Lives and families are being changed in numbers never seen or even imagined by the people who started it, but make no mistake, God used their work to lead to it! Make no mistake that every generation along the way had to decide whether or not they wanted to pave a way for the next generation by laboring with Christ to do whatever it took to lead their communities into the joy of life in Christ!

Now here's where it gets personal. Do you want to know how the Lord planted and stirred this fire in me? Do you want to know where this passionate belief in me that a local church can turn the world upside down comes from? Do you ever wonder why I am so everlasting driven to see Venture busting at the seams with people coming to know and follow Jesus, with people growing and prospering in a relationship with Christ; to see Gaston, Lincoln and Cleveland Counties radiating with the love of Christ? Well, it comes from the spiritual heritage I was given that got started by a group of farmers who refused to even let the horrible blood shed of the Peninsula Campaigns in the Civil War discourage them away from loving Jesus, loving each other and laboring to bring their community to Christ! And get this, it comes from a spiritual heritage that those farmers got from another local church; that's right, it was a local church in York County that got those people fired up for Jesus and wanting to turn their area upside down with the Gospel! And get this, that church in York County Virginia was a result of local church, after local church, after local church, that paved a way for the spiritual heritage of Christ to march on all the way from the day of Pentecost, a little more than a month and a half after the resurrection of Christ, when the Apostle Peter preached in Jerusalem and the church was born! It's a story that goes all the way back to Prophets who started laboring for the cause of Christ thousands of years before He was even born into this world. It's a heritage that marches through the millenniums all the way to you sitting in your seat in Dallas or Lincolnton, NC listening to me preach it; to you watching this message on Venture's live stream, listening to it on a podcast or even reading it on our website. It's a heritage that if you will labor with Christ in a local church committed to do whatever it takes to reach people with the Gospel, will not only touch those around you, but transform them and create the momentum that rolls into the next generation!

Without a doubt, this local church can be a movement of the Gospel in this region long after we are dead and gone, that is, if we will live like it now! If we refuse to let obstacles, persecution, preferences, or drama get us off track and instead cling to nothing but Jesus Christ and His mission you can be sure that Hell's gates will be defeated! This local church, started by some mill workers and farmers in 1922, can be an unstoppable force for the name of Jesus long after our names are rightly forgotten.

But it takes people who love being loved by Jesus more than anything, and as such are so driven to know Him and serve Him that they VENTURE to labor together to do whatever it takes to change their community and the world with the Gospel! That's how you pave a path for future generations, you go all in to reach the world around you now!