

## *The Outcome of Faith*

*“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”*

1 Peter 1:8-9

Peter writes as an eyewitness of what Jesus said and did while his audience has never had the privilege. Yet, Peter sees no disadvantage here. He later expresses that even witnessing Jesus' transfiguration does not have the power of the words conveyed in the New Testament. *“And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 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 1:19-21). These words carried along by the Spirit have the same life-giving power when God said, “Let there be...” and it was so. The question has never been if God is able or whether he is willing but if we are believing.

How is it possible to have assurance beyond what we personally can see and touch? Peter suggests that it is one thing to see the transfigured Christ but it is entirely different to see him transfigured in us. To put it more simply, when we follow his word without changes or additions, his words carries the same life-giving power it did so long ago. Peter looks to his audience. It is *“a lamp shining in a dark place”* molding hearts so they are fit for an eternity with God. We can count on God because he has always kept every word and promise he has made. We have seen the history of this word in the world—how it has impacted humanity. When people truly follow his words without hidden agendas or seeming improvements, goodness has followed. We do not need to see God to see that his work is good. We know his goodness through what he has done.

God works through faith—whether we truly trust him. He works relationally so we have a share all that is his. It is a trust that can only be gained through our trust in him. We cannot trust the trust but the one who gives the trust. Too often we keep our eyes on the prize never seeing that the one who gives the prize is greater than the prize. Do we love God for what we see he will give us, or do we love God for who he is? Do we want others to love us for what we can do for them, or do we want them to love us no matter what? The issue has never been whether God works (i.e., that his ways do us good) or not but whether we love him more that what he gives. For God to trust us with his trust we must earn his trust; and this, we can only do this through our faithfulness.

Since the very essence of God is that he is beyond us, we cannot believe enough, obey enough, love enough or do enough to merit our salvation. Salvation is merely the outcome or finished product of our faith—it is the final lot or fate of those who believe. For faith to save it must push beyond merely wishing God were there but trusting him completely. While trials and temptations may shake our lives, we must cling to God and wait—wait for salvation. Please remember that God answers the problem of suffering by sending his one-of-a-kind, darling Son to suffer. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”* (2 Corinthians 5:21). God answers all the spite and hurt in the world through Jesus Christ. What is most difficult is believing it—really believing it.

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