

Second Sunday of Easter, Epistle, Year A

A BLESSED OUTCOME

1 Peter 1:3-9

Second Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Glenn L. Monson

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

DIAGNOSIS: Will this be the end of us?

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Preoccupied with the End

We are often preoccupied with our end: Will we achieve our goals? Will we make a difference? Will we be secure in retirement? Will we have a blessed death? Will we be able to leave our loved ones anything? What will be our legacy? This anxiety causes us to gather all things to ourselves, living in a posture of scarcity, afraid to share ourselves with others.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Seduced by False Promises

Because we are preoccupied with our end, we are seduced by voices that promise us wealth, security, status, and power. And when we encounter “various trials” we are even more likely to doubt God’s love for us, tempted even more to follow the voices that falsely promise to take us out of these times of trial and secure a good end for us.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Scammed by the Powers
Having set our minds on earthly things, and being given into the power of the god of the belly, whose end is destruction (Phil. 3:19), we are lost. Too late we realize that it’s all a scam. The end of those who follow the powers of this world is the same that it is for those powers—deep darkness.

PROGNOSIS: Our End Upended

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Saved by the Cross
Christ, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, upends the powers of death that have claimed us. His end on the Cross becomes the beginning of the life of the world. Having divested himself of all things, and becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, God has highly exalted him (Phil. 2:8-9), and in his resurrection we are given a new birth into a living hope and an inheritance that is imperishable. Even though we have not seen Christ, we love him and believe in him, and we are saved. The outcome of our faith—the blessed end that we hope for—is assured; it is the salvation of our soul.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Hearing the Voice of Christ Alone

Being assured that our inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us, we are freed from anxiety

about our end. Our faith, now tested, is genuine, and centered on Christ. The voices that seemed so compelling earlier have lost their power over us. They will not be the end of us!

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): No Longer Pre-Occupied

Our preoccupation with our end has been put to death and we have been raised to new life wherein we have been given an interest in the lives of others. We now see the trials of our neighbors as our concern. We see that Jesus loved his own to the end, and we make it our goal to do the same. The outcome of our faith has also become “the works which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Eph. 2:9).