

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time***

### **Adoring God for Our Eternal Inheritance, Part 1**

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3

Code: 60-5

Tonight we come again to the joy of studying God's Word. And as I was thinking about the message tonight from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 through 5, I recognized that for most of us what we will learn tonight is something that may not be immediately useful but maybe somehow stored in our hearts and minds and used in those times most appropriate when we face difficulty in life, hostility, persecution and rejection. Because that is specifically the issue as Peter writes this great first epistle. He is writing to a church that is undergoing persecution, hostility, rejection, animosity and hatred. And as he begins this wonderful letter of encouragement to them and exhortation, he bursts forth in verses 3 through 5 in a great great paean of praise. And in a sense he teaches them that praise is really a very fitting way out of the dilemma of handling trouble, persecution, hatred and hostility.

And so if we ask ourselves why Peter begins the way he does in verse 3 after his salutation, remember that he is writing to scattered believers who are aliens in this world. The Christians who are scattered in the Roman Empire have been blamed for the burning of Rome which has happened just before this epistle was written. They are there for the target of tremendous persecution which is beginning to mount. He reminds them in the letter that it's to be expected because they are foreigners in the earth, they are citizens of heaven in fact, they are a royal aristocracy, they are children of God, they are residents of an unearthly kingdom, they are living stones, they are a holy priesthood and they are a people of God's own possession. As a result, the world can't tolerate them. So they are the object of the world's hostility. But nonetheless they are not to fear the threats of persecution, they are not to be intimidated, they are not to be troubled by the world's animosity, they are not to be afraid when they suffer and they are not to be ashamed when they are ridiculed and attacked.

In order to try to lift their spirits, in order to try to lift their souls and sweep their hearts upward, he begins with a joyous paean of praise that we can properly call a doxology. Notice verse 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, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and 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."

Interestingly enough, the main verb which describes the main course of action in this passage is only implied, it isn't even here. It is the verb "be" in verse 3 which doesn't appear in the Greek. The Greek

says, "Blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the verb "be" is implied and that is the main verb. What he is saying here is, "Bless God." It is both a doxology on his own and in a sense an imperative for others to bless God as well. It is intended, as I said, to sweep their hearts upward in exalted praise to the Lord, to sweep their hearts upward in the joy of adoration and the joy of anticipation of the inheritance that is waiting for them. It is then in one way, at least, a hymn of praise, to encourage believers in the throes of difficult living in this hostile world.

Peter then is calling for jubilant worship, for enthusiastic joy no matter what may be going on around them. That joy comes because they know their God and they know what their God has provided for them. They may be strangers in this world, they may be aliens, they may be foreigners, they may be outcasts who do not belong and are not appreciated, but there is a place where they do belong and there is a world where they fit and there is coming inheritance which they will receive and in it will be all that God has promised them and provided them in Christ.

Thus, Peter gives us what really is a very practical and helpful perspective on learning to live, looking past earthly trouble to eternal inheritance. In fact, we might even title this message, "How to see past your trouble to your eternal inheritance," because that's really what's on his heart.

In order to capture the whole beauty of this, let's take a look at that one word "inheritance" in verse 4. And the idea is to bless God, to praise God, to adore God for the inheritance He has promised us. Now the key word is "inheritance." You know what that word means, it's...it's that which is passed down to you from your father, it's that which you receive as a gift, a legacy given to you because you are a member of a certain family. It is not something you really earn, it is not something you buy, it is something you receive as a gift because of the family you were born into. And the word here, *kleronomia*, means not just the title to a promised inheritance but a realized inheritance not just a title to something in the future but the possession of something in the present.

Now this word has a very Jewish origin in thought. Peter says to these scattered Christians, "You should be adoring God, blessing God, praising God, extolling God, worshiping God, rejoicing in God because of your inheritance." And saying that to them would trigger in their mind the fact that the Jews in the Old Testament also had an inheritance. In fact, this very same word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, and it is used to describe the appointed portion of the land of Canaan that was given to every one of God's chosen people. In fact, the Old Testament repeatedly refers to the land of Israel which God apportioned out to every tribe and every family, and thus every Jew, and gave to them, it says, for an inheritance. You can read Deuteronomy 15:4, Deuteronomy 19:10, many other places and you will find that under the old covenant the people of God, Israel, were given an earthly inheritance. Okay? The key is an earthly inheritance, namely a portion of the land of Canaan. Every tribe had a piece, every family in the tribe had a piece, therefore every individual had a piece.

The inheritance then of an earthly nation was an earthly land. The inheritance of an earthly Israel was an earthly Canaan. It was promised originally through Abraham and they waited and waited and waited through seasons of bondage and seasons of wandering in the wilderness and finally entered the promised land that had been promised them many many years before through Abraham and the patriarchs.

And so, Peter capturing the understanding of his readers who were Jewish, says, "You, as the people of God, a spiritual people, also have an inheritance, a spiritual inheritance." Just as an earthly people, Israel had an earthly inheritance, Canaan, you a spiritual people, the church, have a spiritual inheritance, heaven...heaven...laid up for you in heaven. And you, even though you're persecuted and troubled, can wait patiently and in the process of waiting you can praise God for the inheritance He has promised you. And he intends to do what the psalmist did, he intends to give them songs of sweetness in the night of despair as they are under severe persecution.

Now he wants to remind them of their inheritance. They need that reminder and so do we, beloved. We're going to go through trials, we do all the time. It's so essential that we focus on our inheritance, thus our recent study of heaven which was such a blessing to all of us. But think of it like this in an analogy, okay? In this life we are children of God, we are always children, we never stop being children. We'll be children as long as we're here. And that metaphor is rich. One of the things it means is that we will never in this life come to full understanding. We will never come to full maturity, full adulthood. We will always be children.

But as children of God, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. But, says John, it does not yet appear what we shall be. We cannot in this life fully comprehend our inheritance. It is analogous, for example, to a child prince. Imagine a child prince, just a child. Before his years of maturity and adulthood he is limited in his understanding. This child prince cannot really grasp what he will inherit because he's the son of the king. He doesn't understand the enormity of the inheritance. He really has no comprehension of what he will become and what will become his. Consequently he does not think like a king, he does not act like a king, he does not behave like one who has an immense inheritance. He will some day come into possession of a noble estate, but he does not live according to that nobility. He is not truly kingly. Although his inheritance will be rich, although it is filled with tremendous honor, although it is sweeping in its vastness, the child prince doesn't understand it. And he may even throw silly little temper...temper tantrums over some earthly bobble that means nothing in comparison to the unlimited inheritance he will some day receive.

The child prince is held under strict discipline. His parents are concerned to discipline him, probably more strictly than they discipline any of their servants because they want him to get to the place where as a king he will be under control and will properly deal with that immense inheritance that is his and not treat it irresponsibly. So the child prince is probably more sharply corrected and more

strictly disciplined than anybody else in order to fit him to the behavior that will suit his inheritance and his kingly estate.

As the child grows up he begins to understand little by little what the inheritance really means. And he begins to come to grips with what it's all about. He's just like we are. We're like a child prince. We are heirs of God though it does not yet appear what we shall be. We are heirs of God though we don't fully understand what we will inherit and the things which God has prepared for those who love Him are for the present time hidden from our eyes. And like children, we often throw those silly little temper tantrums because we can't get some little bauble in this world that we think we want. And we fuss and fume like a child when we don't get our way. We put too much of our attention on the menial things because we don't understand our inheritance. And, the Lord disciplines us more than He disciplines those who aren't His children, is that not true? Because He is in the process of fitting us for the nobility of our inheritance that we might be mature sons, able to behave in a way consistent with our inheritance.

So, Peter is giving us some help here, to move us along in this childhood time of our existence to a fuller understanding of the inheritance that is already ours. This echoes, I think, Paul's call to the Colossians to set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth. It echoes Jesus instruction, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and don't be worried about all the rest of the stuff." It echoes John's call, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," calling us also to a higher level of adoration. And Peter here is saying, "I want you to adore God for your eternal inheritance and get your eyes off the world you're in." Very very important matter.

Now the question comes, obviously, what is our inheritance? What is it? It is described to us at the end of verse 5. Our inheritance is a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Our inheritance, he says, is the fullness of eternal salvation in its consummate form. The fullness of eternal salvation with all that it implies in its fullness, that is the settled inheritance of the Christian. So Peter is saying, "Look, why don't you look away from your trouble and just bless God for the eternal salvation which He has promised you." The word "salvation," by the way, means rescue. It means deliverance. And here it indicates that full final eternal deliverance and rescue that has not yet been revealed. That's very clear from verse 5. It will be revealed in the last time. He is saying your inheritance is that full final salvation from the curse of the law, from the power of sin, from the presence of sin, from all decay, from every stain of iniquity, from all temptation, from all grief, all pain, all death, all punishment, all judgment, all wrath...eternal full salvation.

Now there is a sense in which salvation is past. We were saved when we believed in Christ. There is a sense in which salvation is present, we are continually being cleansed from all sin, 1 John 1:9, so we are being saved. We have been saved in the past tense, our sins forgiven and we've been given eternal life. We are continually being saved, rescued and delivered as we move through this world of

sin and He keeps on cleansing us. That's why Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace you have been saved," and the Greek says, "For by grace you are having been saved," past with continuing results.

But salvation is also future. We will be completely fully forever delivered from sin and judgment in the fullest sense in the future...in the future. And that's our ultimate eternal inheritance. Paul said we will, in 1 Thessalonians 1:10, be delivered from the wrath to come. We are waiting for His Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. In Romans 13:11, a verse you perhaps are familiar with, it says that your salvation is nearer than when we believed. What salvation? And we thought we already had it. Well the sense of its eternal full final form is nearer now than when we believed. That makes sense, doesn't it? We're nearer to that than we were when we believed in the past.

In Hebrews chapter 1 verse 14 it says of angels, "They are ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those...here it comes...who will inherit salvation." We have salvation from the past. We hold it in the present. We yet are to inherit it in the future. Also in Hebrews chapter 9 it is mentioned as a future inheritance. Verse 28, it says, "Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time for salvation, without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." So there is a future aspect to our salvation still to come...still to come. It is ready to be revealed. That means it hasn't yet been revealed but it is ready for its revelation. And when will that come? Notice again in verse 5, "In the last season...or, in the last epoch...or in the last period of redemptive history," that is to say the return of Christ...the return of Christ.

So Peter is saying to these believers, "Look to the future...look to the time when Christ returns, the last time, the time, if you will, when you are in His presence." Focus on the fullness of your final salvation that will not be revealed until the last redemptive epoch which is the return of Christ. Peter says, "Bless God, bless God for that eternal inheritance." The world may not accept you, the world may not appreciate you, the world may be hostile and persecute you, the world may not count you as its own, the world may not grant you its rights and privileges but you have an eternal inheritance to be revealed in the last epoch which God has promised to you, an inheritance which is heavenly not earthly, which is glorious not mundane, which is pure not impure, which is holy not sinful. That's the promise.

It goes all the way back, doesn't it, to the teaching of Christ in Matthew, for example, chapter 25 verse 34, "The King will say to those on His right, Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." There is a Kingdom that has been prepared for us which we will inherit. It is our inheritance.

In Acts 26:18 Paul says that he was sent by God to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. The words of Christ to

Paul at the time of his conversion. An inheritance, Jesus says, they will receive.

In Ephesians, do you remember that wonderful passage? Chapter 1 which has so much richness, we go back to it all the time, but it says in chapter 1:11 we have obtained an inheritance. Verse 14, "The Holy Spirit is the pledge of our inheritance." Verse 18, "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." We have a glorious inheritance. Colossians 1:12 says we should give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints. Basically saying the same thing Peter said. We should thank the Father who has qualified us to share in the eternal inheritance granted to the saints. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 15 says we have the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Well you know that. And that's talking about the full final salvation. But let me dig a little deeper, all right?, and show you something that I think is fascinating. Look in your Bible to Joshua chapter 13. This is an insight that might...you might miss if you're not careful. Joshua 13:33 and here we reach back to the promise of God in an ancient time, nonetheless a promise that we can claim. When they came into the land, verse 32, the territories which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan of Jericho to the east, but to the tribe of Levi, it says, they were the priestly tribe, "Moses did not give an inheritance." No land was given to Levi. "The Lord, the God of Israel is their inheritance."

Now because they were...what?...what were they? Priests. The Lord Himself was their inheritance. They would literally inherit God. And if we could come over to 1 Peter again and be reminded that we are a kingdom of priests, we too are a royal priesthood, chapter 2 verse 9, we can then know that God who is the very possession of the priests of Levi is the possession of the royal priesthood of Christ as well. We inherit God. God is our very inheritance. What a tremendous thought.

In Psalm 16 I think David captured this. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance," Psalm 16:5. He would inherit God before he would inherit anything else, nothing could stand alongside the richness of that reality. In Psalm 73:23, "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee. Thou hast taken hold of my right hand. With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And beside Thee I desire nothing on earth." And verse 26, "God is the strength of my heart and my inheritance forever, my portion forever." And so again the psalmist knew that he would inherit God.

Jeremiah grasped that thought in Lamentations chapter 3 and verse 24. "The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him." What a tremendous thought. Beloved, when we go to be with the Lord to inherit our eternal salvation, at the same time we inherit God. God comes to pitch His tent with us. God takes up residence with us. We inherit Him just as much as He is inheriting us. We live in His house, is one way to put it, He lives in our house is another way to put it.

We also inherit Christ. We also inherit Christ. First John says that when we see Him we'll be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. It says we are joint heirs with Christ. Christ becomes our portion. We enter into an eternal oneness with Him. We literally possess Him as He possesses us. We are like Him in sum and substance of existence. He becomes us and we become Him in a very real sense...without either of us losing our identity.

Thirdly, it should be noted that as we read in Ephesians 1:14 the Holy Spirit is the resident guarantee of our inheritance, the arrabon which means engagement ring, down payment. And the Holy Spirit is that engagement ring, down payment, that first installment. And His living in us is the guarantee of our eternal down payment. So we have already inherited the Spirit. We will inherit likeness to the Son and we will inherit God Himself in our eternal inheritance. It seems to me that no matter what we may have or not have of this world's good, it's a small thing.

We also must recognize that we will leave this world naked but if we love Christ we will become clothed with all that God could possibly give, far beyond our wildest imaginations. And that's why Paul said, "It does not yet appear...the things that eye has not seen and ear has not heard will be revealed to us." That is cause for praise...that is cause for praise. And it is because of that inheritance that salvation not yet revealed, waiting for the last season or the last epoch, when we see God in Christ in glory that Peter calls for praise. Back to verse 3, "Blessed be the God." We can stop at that point. "Blessed be the God who provides such an inheritance."

For a Jew, by the way, the commonest of all beginnings to prayer was to say, "Blessed art Thou, O God." In fact they said it if they were faithful to their prayer patterns day in, day out, over and over and over again, many many times a day. "Blessed art Thou, O God." And so it's fitting for us to say the same thing. It should be noted, however, that the Jew typically defined God as "Blessed be God the creator and redeemer from Egypt." Those were the two most common ways to identify God. The God who was creator and redeemer of His people from Egypt. Here God is identified as the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is His unique identity in the new covenant.

Now the term "blessed," we don't need to spend much time on that, it simply means worthy of blessing, worthy of adoration, worthy of praise, worthy of worship. And because God is so worthy we should bless Him. Because of His gracious goodness we should bless Him. There's a sense in which even when we bless Him we seem to come far short of what He deserves. Robert Layton(?) writing in 1853 said, "All this is far below Him and His mercies. What are our lame praises in comparison to His love? Nothing and less than nothing but love will stammer rather than be dumb," end quote. I like that. Even though our praise falls short, love will stammer rather than be dumb.

As I mentioned earlier, the verb "be" is implied is the key verb to the whole text. It assumes the action is to bless God. It is not only something Peter is doing, it is something that he is instructing others to do. It is a call for adoration...a call for praise.

Now, we're going to look at one of five points tonight and then we'll leave the rest for two weeks from tonight, because next week is our special message. But I want you to notice that there are components of this doxology that explain our inheritance in detail. We want to praise intelligently. We want to adore God with understanding. And so the better we understand our inheritance, the better able we'll be and the more anxious we'll be to praise Him. So Peter gives us the source of our inheritance, the motive for our inheritance, the means by which we appropriate that inheritance, the nature of our inheritance, that is what it is like, and the security of our inheritance lastly.

And for tonight let's look just at the source of our inheritance...the source, verse 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...and so forth." Now let's dig into this for a moment. The source of our inheritance is God. The source is God. What's...what is God's title? God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know all of that. We're not really left in the dark about that but let me just remind you what that means.

To say that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to give God a new identity to the Jewish mind. Because God was always known as creator and redeemer from Egypt. He created and He redeemed His people out of Egypt. His creation emphasizes His almighty sovereign power. His redeeming His people His saving power, His saving work. So the Jews would bless God as creator and redeemer from Egypt. But we bless God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That was instructed to us really by Jesus. Go back to John chapter 4...John chapter 4 verse 21. Jesus talking to the woman at the well in Samaria said, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know, we worship that which we know for salvation is from the Jews but an hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." So in verse 21 He mentions worship the Father and twice in verse 23.

Now what does He mean by "the Father?" Does He mean the Father of men? No. He means the Father not in relationship to men, not in relationship to believers, follow this, but in relationship to the trinity. Very important point. Every single time Jesus addressed God in the entire gospel record He called Him Father with one exception, and that's when He forsook Him on the cross and He said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Every other time He ever addressed God in a prayer He called Him Father. It is not that God is being described as your Father and my Father, but the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, during the life of Jesus, no individual Jew would address God as "My Father." God is very very seldom called Father in the Old Testament and always in a collective sense as the Father of a nation, not a personal Father. Certainly not "Abba Father," which means papa, a term of intimacy.

When Jesus uses the term Father personally and calls God "My Father," as He often does, He is breaking with tradition. And He is identifying God as His Father. In John's gospel chapter 5, for

example, in verse 17, Jesus said, "My Father is working until now and I Myself am working." Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Jesus said when Philip said, "Show us the Father," He said, "You've seen Me and you don't know that you've seen the Father."

Now the point is this, by calling God "Father," Jesus was saying, "I am of the same essence as God," for like produces like. If God was His Father then He had the nature of God. In John chapter 10, the Jews of course knew that that's why they accused Him of blasphemy, chapter 10 verse 29 Jesus said, "My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all and no one's able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." And then He said, "I and the Father are one. And the Jews took up stones to stone Him." Why? "For a good work we do not stone You," verse 33, "but for blasphemy. You being a man make Yourself God." Why? How did He make Himself into God? By saying God was His Father. He was saying, "I'm of the same essence as God." Jews didn't say that. And the only way that you can ever say that God is your Father is because He's planted His life within you.

In John chapter 17 Jesus again points to the fact that God was His Father. Jesus says in the prayer beginning in verse 1, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son that the Son...that the Son may glorify Thee." In other words, "You're My Father and I'm Your Son." Verse 5, "And now glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." In other words, bring Me back to the equality we had before I came into this world. Jesus again is affirming that He is God. And every time He calls God Father He is affirming that He has the same nature as the eternal God and that is what infuriated the Jews because He was claiming to be God and they saw that as blasphemy.

Verse 27 of Matthew 11 says, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." In other words, they're just mutually bearing the same life, one is connected to the other, you can't know the Son except the Father, you can't know the Father except the Son, they know each other in an intimacy that no one else can understand.

This is picked up in the epistles. And you see it many places. Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God," what God? What God are we talking about? "The God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." That God. The God who is the Father of Christ. Verse 17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory," Ephesians 1:17. In 2 Corinthians, we find it in chapter 1 verse 3, "Blessed be the God." What God? "The God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." John in his second epistle writing in verse 3, I believe it is, "Grace and mercy and peace be from us from God...rather...be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father." Now get that because that ought to be filed somewhere in your biblical understanding file. Whenever you see God called Father, it is not primarily that He is your Father and my Father, it is primarily that He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ which then says Christ is God. And that's why Jesus said, "No man comes unto the Father but by Me."

So, what God is the source of all of our inheritance? The God who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God who is one with Jesus Christ, the God who is known only through Jesus Christ. And by the way, Peter chooses to use the full redemptive name of Christ in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," all three names. Lenski calls that "a concentrated...a concentrated confession...a concentrated confession." All that Scriptures reveal for our Savior God is crowded into that name, Lord...means sovereign; Jesus...incarnate; Christ...the anointed King, Messiah. It's a confession, a concentrated confession, just to say Lord Jesus Christ. And I...I love to say all three and we should say all three, the full name in whom our salvation is bound up.

But would you please notice? The little pronoun "our" in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of...not just the Lord Jesus Christ but...our Lord Jesus Christ." And Peter thus with that simple little word personalizes everything. The divine Lord of the universe is ours. The Jesus of incarnation, death and resurrection is ours. The Christ, the anointed King and Messiah is ours. Not a distant deity to be appeased but a personal Lord and Savior. He is ours now and the fullness of all that He is will be ours in the future when we are like Him. The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is ours connects us with God because if we're one with Him, we're one with God. And 1 Corinthians 6:17 says, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." We're one with Christ, we're one with God. That's why Jesus says, "Come and sit with Me in My throne as I sit in the Father's throne." In eternity Christ will be in the Father's throne and we will be in Christ's throne, therefore in the Father's throne. We will in a very real sense be lost in a relationship of eternal intimacy with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Who is the source then of our inheritance? Who is the source? The one to whom we give the praise. We wouldn't bless God if He hadn't given it to us. If you had earned your inheritance by works, why would you bless God? If you had gained your inheritance through a preacher, why would you bless God? If you had been given your inheritance through somebody who witnessed to you, why would you bless God? If you had received your inheritance by your own ability to understand Scripture, why would you bless God? We bless God because He is the source and He is the source who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and apart from the work of Christ God couldn't be the source because we couldn't get the inheritance.

So, we have a gift, an inheritance given to us as a free gift because we have been made children of God. How so? The end of verse 1, "We were chosen according to the predetermined love relationship of God the Father through the sanctifying saving work of the Spirit." God chose us to be children and when He chose us to be children, He therefore chose to give us an eternal inheritance. He's the source.

And, you see, that's why Peter calls for praise. Praise the God who's the source of your eternal inheritance. Let me tell you something, it isn't right, it is a sin, I believe, of massive proportions to live a thankless life. It is a sin not to be ever and always praising God, blessing God, adoring God,

honoring God, extolling God, worshiping God for your eternal inheritance of which He is the sole source through Christ. Do you have a thankful heart? I mean, a constantly thankful heart? I hope you do. Let's share together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the way in which You have revealed to us Your generosity and Your goodness. We thank You for the absolutely unending and eternal mercies which You have poured out upon us due to nothing which we have done. And we want to come to You in praise. We want to come to You in adoration. We want to thank You for the gift that You have given to us. We praise You, Lord, for our eternal inheritance.

And, Lord, we pray that our praise might go beyond just a moment's thought, that it might go beyond just a breath or two as we leave this service. We pray, Lord, that it might linger with us so that we remember day in and day out to offer You our praise. And, Lord, if there is in any of our hearts a spirit of ingratitude, a spirit of discontent, a spirit that rejects praise, forgive us and cleanse us, fill our hearts with joy.

Lord, help us to be faithful to render to You what You are due, no matter how deep the trouble, no matter how anxious the heart, may we be filled with praise. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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