

Adoring God for Our Eternal Inheritance, Part 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:4-5

Code: 60-6

So let's look at 1 Peter 1:3-5. Let me read them to you. "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. This marvelous promise is protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Now there is a great statement, a sweeping statement by the apostle Peter, with regard to the wonder of salvation. The key word in this portion of Scripture is in verse 4. It is the word "inheritance." The inheritance is defined in verse 5 as "a salvation ready to be revealed." The section, then, calls us to bless God for our eternal salvation. And that is at the heart of worship: Blessing God, adoring God for our eternal inheritance. That's really why we come together. That's why we're here on the Lord's day. That's why we worship. We are praising and thanking God for our eternal salvation.

It was important that Peter start out this way in writing this epistle because he is writing to scattered Christians, persecuted. They have been blamed for the burning of Rome. There is tremendous rejection of Christianity, tremendous hostility toward individual believers. They are being blamed for a massive holocaust in the city of Rome. It's a very hard time for them, and yet in the middle of it Peter says your focus has to get off the problem and onto God. Stop looking at what's going on around you, and start looking at who's in charge above, namely God.

So in writing to these persecuted, somewhat battered, hostilely treated Christians, he calls for praise, and he calls for adoration to be given to God. Instead of starting out by saying, "I want to give you sympathy, and I understand your plight," and a kind of "woe is me" approach, he starts out right away by calling believers to praise God. What a tremendously important thing that is. In the midst of adversity, in the midst of trials, in the midst of tribulation, trouble, persecution, hostility, disappointment, anxiety, to learn to praise God, to adore God.

And if things down here are falling apart, be confident that things up there are absolutely secure. So, while you not may not be the friend of the world, you are the child of God. While the world may reject you, God never will. While you may be losing your earthly inheritance, your eternal one is absolutely secure. So, get your focus where it belongs, that's his message. The whole idea of this hymn of praise is to lift their souls from the difficulty of the present to the adoration of the greatness of their

God.

And what he focuses them on is their eternal salvation which he calls their "inheritance." It is that salvation, he says in verse 5, which is ready to be revealed in the last season. In other words, the fullness of final salvation of body and soul and the presence of Jesus Christ, of which the salvation they have and we have now is only a taste. He says get your focus on the eternal glory that is to come, when Jesus we see. That's the cause for his praise. And that's what causes him to say, "Blessed be the God and Father." That's a call to praise, a call to worship, a call to adoration, to God who has granted us salvation.

Now, beloved, in the church of Jesus Christ, this should continually be our ringing theme. And I have to confess to you, and I pour out my heart in prayer on this this morning in the earlier service, that it appalls me as I look at my own heart and the hearts of God's people, to see how indifferent we are about this reality of salvation, how sort of ho-hum it can become. And do you realize that you will spend all eternity forever, and ever, and unending, and the occupation of all of that eternity will be to praise God for your eternal salvation? You will do it, and the angels will do it on behalf of what God has done for you. All the redeemed of all the ages forever, and ever, and ever, and ever will exalt, and rejoice, and be glad, and praise the living God for the glories and wonders of salvation that will occupy you forever, and ever, and ever. You will never grow weary of it. Your rejoicing will never be diminished. And yet here on earth when we think about it it's a yawn because we're so familiar with it.

What commentary on the fallenness of our souls, is it not? What a commentary on our sinfulness that we would even need to be exhorted to glorify God for our salvation, that we would need to be instructed to bless God for an eternal inheritance. It speaks to us of the ugliness of our fallen condition that that is not the occupation of our heart incessantly.

How is it that we can get to the place where we take that for granted? How is it that we can come to the place where we no longer occupy ourselves in ongoing and constant praise to God for redeeming us like we once did in the first hours after our conversion? How can we grow stale on something that we'll do forever and never grow stale of doing in a perfected state? And the answer is it's because we're still in an imperfect state and it's our fallenness that makes us treat this surpassing reality with apathy, indifference. So may it be that Peter somehow this morning in this hour of worship calls us to a little bit of a taste of what we're going to spend forever doing, blessing God for His eternal salvation given to us, His children, as an inheritance.

Now, as we think about worshiping God for our eternal inheritance, Peter outlines for us in this doxology the elements of that inheritance which elicit praise. First, the source of our inheritance, the motive of our inheritance, the means of our inheritance, the nature of our inheritance, and the security of our inheritance. Each of these and all of these collectively should draw praise from our hearts.

First of all, let's notice the source of our inheritance. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The very fact that we are blessing God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very fact that we are adoring Him and praising Him indicates to us that He is the source. "The God who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ," the one true God; the almighty God; the God of the Old Testament; the true and living God; the only God, the God who said, "I am;" the God who said, "There is no other God beside Me;" the one true God who came into the world in the form of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is therefore one with His own Son; that is the true God who is the source of our inheritance.

The beauty of that name, the Lord Jesus Christ, is that it sums up all of redemptive truth, all of redemptive fullness. The God who is the source of our salvation is the God who is one in essence with the Lord, the sovereign Jesus, the human, the incarnate one, Christ the anointed King, the one who came to redeem us.

So the source of our inheritance is none other than the true God, the God who is revealed in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source. And that is to say that that salvation which we have received, He gave to us. Would you notice, please, back in verse 1, Peter says to those who reside in the various countries as aliens that they are "chosen - " verse 2 " - according the foreknowledge of God the Father"? And Peter reminds his readers and us that we are what we are in Christ because God as the source has chosen us.

We had a wonderful series on those Sunday nights talking about being chosen by God. He is the source of our inheritance. God in His graciousness, God in His goodness, God in His love, God in His sovereignty has chosen you and chosen me to be the recipient of eternal salvation. Can I not offer Him a life of praise in response to that?

What was the motive? Why did He do it? Second thing I want you to see is that motive. And it tells us in 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, and " - to obtain an inheritance - " and a " - salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." It was mercy that did it. It came out of the heart of God because God has an attribute called "mercy."

Titus 3:5 says basically the very same thing, that it was " - by His mercy that He redeemed us, that He washed us, that He regenerated us." Ephesians 2 says the same thing, "God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, came after us to save us." And we can be thankful that the eternal God has as an attribute mercy.

What is mercy? Well, "mercy" is a word that makes reference to a person's condition, a person's miserable, pitiful condition. It focuses on the condition of an individual. That is why, for example, in

Mark 10, you have a person coming to Jesus and saying out of misery, physical misery, "Lord, have -" what? " - mercy on me." Because mercy was a reflection of a miserable, wretched, pitiable condition.

And that is precisely the condition of sinners. We need mercy. We need someone to show compassion toward our pitiful, desperate, wretched, miserable condition as sinners. The gospel is all about mercy. It's all about God's compassion toward people in a miserable condition. And what is that miserable condition? It is being dead in trespasses and sins. It is being cursed. It is being fallen. It is being deprived of the life of God in the soul. It is being naked in terms of any good thing. It is that pitiful condition of the sinner damned to hell, unable to do any good thing at all, and unable to change the course of his life by himself. It is a leprosy that is far surpassing in its terrible consequence, any physical disease or physical leprosy.

Here we are in the pitiful condition of being lost in sin, damned to hell, captive to sin, slave to sin. Our minds are corrupt. Our hearts are corrupt and deceitful. Our desires are wicked and wretched. And in that pitiful condition we need mercy. That is God's gentle, compassionate, patient concern for us.

You might look at it in contrast to grace. Mercy has respect to man's wretched, miserable condition. Grace has respect to man's guilt, which has caused that condition. When God gives us mercy, it is to change our condition. When God gives us grace, it is to change our position. One takes us from guilt to acquittal. The other takes us from misery to glory.

And that's what's behind salvation. God looked at you and had compassion, isn't that wonderful? There wasn't anything in you that was desirable in and of itself. It's just that God is compassionate. God is merciful. God's heart grieves over people's misery. That's why when Jesus came into the world, He healed people with diseases as an expression of the compassion of God. Jesus could have proved His deity a myriad of ways other than that. There are many kinds of miracles He could have done, but that demonstrated the compassionate heart of God. God is merciful.

Exodus 34:6 says, "The Lord merciful," almost as if it were His name. Psalm 108:4 says, "God's mercy is far above the heavens." In other words, it is voluminous. There is enough for all conditions. Micah 7:18 - I love it - he says, "He delights *in* mercy." Lamentations 3:22 says that "*It is the* Lord's mercy that we are not consumed." The very fact that we're alive is mercy on our pitiful condition. And then for those who know and love Him, His mercies are new every morning.

Thomas Watson said, "It is God's mercy that sweetens all other attributes." He wrote, "God's holiness without mercy and His justice without mercy were terrible. When the water was bitter and Israel could not drink, Moses cast a tree into the waters and then they were made sweet. How bitter and dreadful were the other attributes of God, did not mercy sweeten them?"

God's mercy He gives to whomever He will. Romans 9, He said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Out of His compassion, He has chosen to be merciful to you, and to me, and to grant us eternal salvation. He is the source, and He did it out of His mercy, not out of anything that we did or deserved. Is it any wonder that Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3 calls God "the Father of mercies"?

And this great saving mercy of God is free. It is abundant. It is eternal. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. It is His mercy that caused Him to give you an inheritance. Can you be thankful to Him? Can you be thankful enough to so live as to bring glory to His blessed, dear name?

The greatness of that mercy is seen in the difference between what we were and what we've become in Christ. The source of our eternal inheritance is God and the motive is mercy. What is the means? The third point. How do we appropriate this? You say, "God is the source, and mercy is the motive, how do we receive it? How do we appropriate it? How do we make it ours? How does that mercy touch us?"

It says, "According to His great mercy - " verse 3 " - He has caused us to be born again." Mercy had to have a means to effect what it longed to accomplish. Mercy had to have a means to dispel wretchedness. Mercy had to have a means to eliminate misery. And the means that mercy chose was new birth.

And so, God, because of His mercy, caused us to be born again. To change our condition, He had to give us a brand new birth, because we were born in sin. We were born dead in sin. We were born dead in trespasses and sins. We had no life in us. We were alienated from the life of God. That condition of misery could not simply be touched up. We had to be begotten again, born all over again. And so He caused us to be born again.

The prophet Jeremiah said, "The leopard cannot change his spots and the Ethiopian cannot change his skin and neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil." So there has to be a change in your nature and that's why the Bible says if you're in Christ, you're a new creation. You become heirs of God by birth, new birth, spiritual birth.

You're an heir already, by the way, even before you were a Christian. You're heirs of wrath, Ephesians 2:3. Heirs of eternal flames. That's an inheritance all right, and that's an eternal inheritance, and that's also an inescapable eternal inheritance. But that's not a desirable one.

When you come to Christ, and put your faith in Him, there's a total transformation. There's a new birth, a supernatural new birth. There's new life that replaces the old life. There's a new nature. There's a new love. There's a new compulsion, a new desire. God recreates, regenerates, gives rebirth, a marvelous truth.

In verse 23 of the same chapter Peter writes, "For you have been born again, not of seed which is perishable - " not like human birth, not like human birth that has death built in " - but you're born again of seed which is imperishable, that is through the living and abiding Word of God." And verse 25 says, "The Word was preached to you." By God's grace the Word was preached, you heard the Word, God activated faith in your life, you believed, and you were born again by an imperishable seed which will never die. That's the new birth. You have new life.

The discussion of this comes so clear to us in John chapter 3. Would you turn to it for a moment? When Jesus encounters Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a man of the Pharisees, highly esteemed member of the Sanhedrin, respected rabbi, leading scholar, Pharisaical legalist, who had no doubt externalized religion and was living by an outward code. He had come about as far as you could in a Judaistic system. He had come as far you could in a religious orientation. He was a very religious man, eminently prominent as a teacher of that religion, mature, able to dispense its truths and its traditions to others.

And he comes to Jesus, and Jesus says to him in verse 3, "Unless one is born again, he can't see the kingdom of God." You know what He said to Nicodemus? "Nicodemus, as far as you've come, as old as you are, as much as you know, you've got to start all over again." And I'm sure in the mind of Nicodemus, the thought was there something like this, "Well, I know so much, and I've experienced so much, and I'm so deeply entrenched in religion, and my comprehension is so far reaching, and yet there's something missing. I wonder what He will tell me to add to my life." And Jesus, in effect, says, "Don't add anything. Dump it all and start all over again." Incredible. Shed it all. Get rid of it.

In fact, Jesus said that prostitutes who were irreligious and immoral were closer to the kingdom than Pharisees. Amazing. Prostitutes didn't have any religion to shed. Nicodemus did. He was in a group that believed you were saved by works. That's a curse. And Jesus was saying to him, in effect, "Start all over again. Be born all over again." That's what God wants to do in the life of the sinner when He places His mercy upon that sinner. That's what salvation is, it's new birth. And you get a new nature, and a new heart, and a new spirit, and a new love, and a new power that results in a new walk and a new obedience. That's what it is.

But how? How did Nicodemus hear that you were to receive that? How does that new birth take place? Well, the whole emphasis of the gospel record, obviously, was not given in its complete fullness to Nicodemus, but enough was said. Look at verse 14. Jesus, drawing from Numbers 21, uses an illustration that Nicodemus would have known very well.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

He said, "Nicodemus, here's how you receive this new birth. You look to the Son of God who is lifted up, and you believe in Him. And by believing in Him, the new birth occurs." And He used an illustration that Nicodemus would understand. It's just like happened in the wilderness in Numbers 21. Do you remember that because of the rebellion, and because of the godlessness, the unfaithfulness of the Israelites, God sent snakes to bite them, poisonous snakes? The poisonous snakes were biting them.

And do you remember in that in Numbers 21:7 they began to cry out, "We have sinned. We have sinned. We have sinned." In great shame, they acknowledged that this was the judgment of God, justified judgment on their sin. And then God said, "All right. Put up a pole with a serpent on the pole and tell those people that if they'll look at that serpent, they'll be healed." Looking at that serpent acknowledged their sin, and it acknowledged the desperation of their condition, and it acknowledged that God had provided a means to deliver them from the snakes. It was a turning from sin and acknowledging that God had lifted up a means of deliverance.

And Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, "If you want new birth, turn from your sin and your heart saying, 'We have sinned. We have sinned. We have sinned.' And look to the means which God has lifted up to bring you deliverance. This time, not a wooden pole, not any kind of a pole, but a cross. And not a snake but the Son of God."

It was a turning from sin to see the Savior. And the deliverance was not a physical deliverance from snakes, but a spiritual deliverance from the snake, Satan, the serpent. Nicodemus had to acknowledge that the religion which made up his life was nothing but a snake bite from which he needed healing.

How does one come to know the new birth? By looking at the Son of God lifted up on a cross and believing in Him. And so Jesus cut at the very core of Nicodemus' self righteousness and said, in effect, what we need to hear, that we are begotten again through faith in Christ. That's the new birth.

Now let's go back to 1 Peter. Peter says that the means by which we receive the mercy of God which gives us the eternal inheritance is the new birth. And the new birth becomes ours through faith in Christ. He says that. We are "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

I wish, beloved, we had the time to go into the new birth in more detail. The Bible has so much to say about it. In John 1:13, it says it is "the will of God, not of the will of man." The new birth comes by the will and power of God. As we saw in John 3, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are born of the Spirit. It is also the work of the Word, the washing of regeneration by the Word. It changes the new man by giving him a new nature. It makes him a whole new creation.

James says we become the firstfruits among His creatures, a new creation. The new birth is irreversible. The new birth is eternally, gloriously triumphant, unchanging. That is that which God wants to do in the life of one on whom He places His compassionate mercy.

Stephen Charnok, writing in that great classic on *The Existence and Attributes of God*, said, "Regeneration is a universal change of the whole man. It is as large in renewing us as sin was in defacing us." Regeneration. What's the result of it? Look back at that third verse.

The result of it is we are "born again to a living hope," a living hope. What does he mean by this? Well, a hope which is perpetually alive, a hope which has a quality of life. You say, "Why does he say that?" In contrast to the hope of men, which is always a dying or a dead hope.

You realize, don't you, that all hope that men and women have in other than Jesus Christ is a dead or dying hope. The world knows only dying hopes. At best, all the hopes and dreams of men will die when they die, if they haven't died long before. That's why the Scripture says, "If in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most - " what? " - miserable." You're a miserable person if your only hope is in this world because it will all die. They all die. Death cuts the nerve of all hope.

But we have an undying hope. We have a living hope, a hope that never dies, a hope that comes to complete and total, final glorious, eternal fulfillment. That is our hope. A hope as Peter says it in 2 Peter 3:13, "For a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." That's our hope, an eternal hope. That is the hope that sustains us. That is the hope that God in His wonderful grace and through His marvelous promise will fulfill.

And that's what causes Paul to say, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is - " what? " - is gain." How can it be gain to die? How can that possibly be true? Because then your hope becomes reality. To die is gain, to gain the glorious sight of God, to gain the glorified presence of Jesus Christ, to gain the full, and uninterrupted, and unhindered fellowship and enjoyment of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, and saints. Death is gain because we gain a room in heaven's glorious splendor.

And death is gain because we gain the unreserved and full fellowship and service that God designed us for. To die is gain because we gain the perfection of eternal holiness, eternal perfection, eternal righteousness, freedom from sin. To die is gain because we gain the royalty, the honor, the glory of heaven. We gain the pleasures that are at Thy right hand forever more.

And so, William Gurnall (sp?) says that "Death - death is not something that a Christian fears. In fact," he says, "hope is the saint's shroud, wherein he wraps himself when he lays his body down to sleep in death." Hope. Hope for the resurrection of the spirit, hope for the resurrection of the body.

And what has given us that hope? Back to verse 3, it's "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from the dead." The means, then, of our receiving this inheritance is the new birth, which gives us this living hope in the coming of that inheritance, and that hope is built on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

John 14:19, Jesus said, "Because I live, you shall live also." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." And what a wonderful thing, He then proved it by raising Lazarus from the dead to demonstrate that indeed He was. And He said, "Whosoever believes in Me shall never die."

In 1 Corinthians 15:17, the great resurrection chapter, it says, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." That's it. And even if you hoped in Christ in this life and that was it, you're damned. But Christ came through the grave, and took the key, and unlocked the door of the treasure house of hope. The resurrection of Christ, then, is the crown of His atoning work. He shows us that He in His death has canceled the sins of the world, satisfied the righteousness of God, conquered death, and thus our hope is a living hope.

He came out from among the dead to give to us the same incorruptible life that we might have a living hope, a hope that never dies. And all of that is ours through the new birth, through regeneration, the transforming power of God.

So, the inheritance, then, has as its source God, as its motive mercy, as its means new birth. Let's look at its nature. This is so wonderful. Verse 4 says we will through the new birth "obtain the inheritance which is - " three things " - imperishable, undefiled, and unfading."

This causes us great joy to know that we have an inheritance which, first of all, is imperishable, imperishable. *Aphthartos* means basically "not corruptible, not subject to passing away," or "not liable to decay or passing away." But beyond that, it has been used in secular language, secular Greek, to speak of a very interesting concept, and that is to refer to something that was unravaged by an invading army, unravaged by an invading army.

That's an interesting thought. If you take that thought back to the Old Testament, you will remember that when God gave to Israel their inheritance, their inheritance was the land of Canaan. Do you remember that? The land of Canaan was the inheritance of Israel. "I will give you this land, the land that flows with milk and honey," and so forth. They had, then, an earthly inheritance, but many, many, many times that earthly inheritance, Canaan, was plundered by invading armies, plundered by enemies, ravaged by enemies. The holy city alone, Jerusalem, was devastated and leveled at least 17 different times throughout history.

And there may be a sense in which that word is enriched to us if you understand it in that kind of connection, that the Old Testament inheritance, the land of Canaan, an earthly inheritance given to Israel, was plundered, and ravaged, and devastated, and destroyed, and leveled; but you have an inheritance that will never be ravaged, plundered, devastated. It's imperishable. A fortune that can't be spent, and so it can't be diminished; a treasure that can never be taken, stolen, robbed, plundered.

You see, that's exactly what Jesus had in mind in Matthew 6 when He said, "Lay your treasure up in heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal." Put the treasure where it is safe, where it is imperishable. Listen, there's no place on this world where you can do that. You think you're covered, you've got your treasure over here and over there, and you've got your goods, and your bank accounts, and your bonds, and your stocks, and certificates, and whatever else you're storing it up.

It's all perishable. And if it happens to survive this world until you die, it will all perish when you die because you won't be able to claim any of it. All the people you love will fight over it. And then when they go, they'll leave it for the next group.

But the treasure that God has given us in the eternal inheritance of salvation yet to be revealed in the last time as our full and final glorious salvation is a treasure that will never be ravaged by an enemy, will never be touched by an invading army, will never be taken by a thief, will never be moth eaten or rusted. It can't be touched.

Second word is "undefiled." *Amiantos* means "unstained, unpolluted." Unstained with sin, evil, decay. Everything in this world is defiled. Everything in this world is stained. Everything in this world has been touched by sin. Everything in this world - do you get this - is defective, everything.

Everything fails. That's why the Bible says in Romans 8, the whole creation groans waiting for its adoption, waiting for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God. The creation is stained. It is defiled. There is moral leprosy that has corrupted everything in this world. I mean everything.

We live in a polluted world. We breathe infested and infected air and we transmit it to everything we touch. And the pollution isn't smog, and the infection isn't AIDS. It's sin, it's sin. All earthly inheritance is defiled.

But there is an inheritance that is not. All the best of this earth is dung, rubbish, manure, to Paul. But not that treasure which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, he says in Philippians 3:7-9. That's an inheritance that is not stained and not defiled in any way.

How wonderful. Everything you have in this life is corrupted. Your new car will rust. Your new house will grow old and decay. Even the money you stash away somewhere will be the victim of a shifting

economy. Or your greatest treasure might be stolen from you. It all winds down. It all decays. It all corrodes. It all corrupts. But not that which you place in heaven.

Where's your focus? Where's your treasure? Are you storing it up there to add to the joy of that eternal salvation? Or are you so foolish as to be pouring it into that which is defiled?

The third term he uses is one word, "unfading." The New American translates it "will not fade away." It's the word "unfading." It's basically used of flowers that decay, that wither and die. And it suggests to us here that we have an inheritance that will never lose its supernatural beauty. It will never fade. It will never grow old.

You see, the kingdom of heaven has no decaying elements. It has no sin. Nothing perishes. Nothing is defiled and nothing fades away. All the strokes of time can't touch it because it's in a timeless place. All the taint of sin can't touch it because it's in a sinless place.

Peter says that when the chief shepherd shall appear, we will receive a crown of glory that is unfading, unfading. Oh, how wonderful, how wonderful. And because of our inheritance which can never be corrupted and never be defiled and never fade away, Peter says we ought to rejoice, we ought to bless God, we ought to adore God.

The last point that Peter makes, and a rich one, is the security of our inheritance. You know, you'd say to yourself, "Well, it would be wonderful if we could enjoy this inheritance, if we could really rejoice and bless God. But I'm afraid we might lose it. How do we know we won't lose it? How do we know that somebody won't come and take it? How do we know that it can't be plundered or stolen?"

Peter wants to answer that. He wants us to enjoy the inheritance without that fear. So in verse 4, at the end of the verse, he says, "Reserved in heaven for you." Did you get that? Somebody might say, "You know, somebody else might get this. What happens if under this persecution, and under this hostility, and under this rejection, and under the difficulties of the time in which I'm living, what happens if I somehow fall into sin and I forfeit this and somebody else gets it?" And so Peter says it is "reserved in heaven for you." Wonderful.

The word "reserve" means to guard. It's guarded in heaven. And the idea of the - it's actually a perfect passive participle here - means the already existing inheritance is presently under guard in heaven, presently being and continually being guarded for you. Wow.

And where is it being guarded? In heaven. Is that a safe place? That's the safest place there is, safest place there is. That's the place "where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal," Jesus said. That's the safest place there is.

Do you remember in Revelation 21:27 it says about heaven, "Nothing unclean, and *no one* who practices abomination, and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Hey, nobody's going to go in there and take your treasure. Not Satan, not demons, not anybody. In 22:14, "Blessed *are* those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city - " that's heaven, that's the new Jerusalem " - outside *are* the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the immoral, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and those who love and practice lying." They're not up there. They're outside of that kingdom, that domain.

Heaven will never know any invasion. Heaven will never know any spoiling of its treasure. Heaven will never know any laying waste, any defacing of its beauty. Heaven will never have armies tramping into it to fight against its inhabitants. Heaven will never experience some coming and taking away its glories as booty, not heaven. The treasure is secure.

Beloved, may I tell you by the mercy of God, God our gracious God, who saved you and me when we did not deserve it, that He has granted to us by the new birth an eternal salvation, which is reserved in heaven and cannot under any conditions ever be plundered? It's secure. And as you serve the Lord Jesus Christ here, and as you live a life of adoring praise and worship, you continue to add to the reality of that treasure and the joy of eternal heaven as you invest in eternity. The treasure is secure.

And somebody's going to say, "Yeah, but I know the treasure is secure but how secure am I? Maybe I could blow it." There are some, you know, who teach that you can lose your salvation and somebody else gets the whole thing. Maybe I can lose it. So he says, "It's reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God." Not only is the treasure guarded, but you're protected. Isn't that wonderful? You're protected.

I'm protected? Yeah. What am I protected by? The power of God, the omnipotence of God, the sovereign almighty power of God, continual military divine protection. You are in the process of being "protected by the power of God," the text says. Satan can't storm heaven. Satan can't come up there and condemn you. It's God that's declared you righteous. How can Satan condemn you successfully? Romans 8 says.

If God is for us, who can successfully be against us? If God, holy, infinitely righteous God says that all is well with us, and we belong to Him, who is a higher court than that? He that has begun the good work will perform it until the day of Christ. He is "able to keep you from stumbling and present *you* faultless," Jude 24 says. Supreme power, supreme omniscience, supreme omnipotence, supreme sovereignty not only keeps the treasure, but keeps the believer. Wonderful thought.

You don't have to fear. Beloved, we might as well rejoice. Do you understand that? You might as well rejoice. Nobody can steal your treasure, and nobody can disqualify you from receiving it. You say, "Don't I have any part in this at all? What if I just turn my back, and curse God, and walk away?" Well let's look what the verse says.

"Who are protected by the power of God through faith." That's your part. God works that in you. Your continued faith in God and Christ is the evidence of God's keeping work. God didn't save you apart from faith and God doesn't keep you apart from faith. When God saved you, He energized that faith in you, and as He keeps you, He energizes that faith. So we are kept by the power of God and the power of God works through our faith. It's a wonderful thought.

"Faith is kindled," says Lenski, the Lutheran commentator. "Faith is kindled, and preserved, and made strong by grace alone, even the faith is by grace. Grace," he says, "reaches into the heart, and the soul, and works spiritual effects." Boy, that's wonderful. So that while you have on the one hand God in His power shutting the lions' mouths and protecting Daniel, you have Daniel's faith at its peak. The two always go together. They always go together. The protection of omnipotent power and the perseverance of faith.

It isn't apart from faith. It's through faith. So that the true believer is not only protected by God, but is given a sustaining, persevering faith. As I said before, you weren't saved apart from faith, and you aren't kept apart from faith. You were saved through faith, and you are kept through faith. That's why it's so ludicrous for people to say you can be a Christian even if you don't believe. Not so. God doesn't protect you through sovereign act independent of anything that you do. He saves you through sovereign act by activating by grace your faith so that you continue to believe.

Beloved, what has God given to us for which we should adore Him? Peter says He's given us an eternal inheritance. He's given us a salvation ready to be revealed in the last season. What he means by that is we haven't yet entered into the fullness of it. We haven't yet experienced all there is of it. That still waits, the revelation, the revelation, obviously, of Christ in all His glory that comes in the last time. We have a taste of it now but not the fullness.

But God has granted it to us. It is now an inheritance. It is an inheritance which we possess in some measure, but not yet in all its fullness, but which is guaranteed to us. God is the source. Mercy was the motive. And that's so wonderful because He gave it to us not because we deserved it, so we don't have to keep deserving it to keep it, He gave it to us because we were so miserable He had compassion on us. And no matter how miserable we'll be after that, we'll never be as miserable as we were before that. And so, He will continue to have that same compassion, and His mercy will be new every morning.

And the means by which the inheritance came to us, the new birth which has given us this “living hope based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from the dead.” And this inheritance can never perish, never be stained, never fade, and is secured to us and we to it. And Peter says, “I don’t care what your physical circumstance, I don’t care what your earthly condition, you ought to praise God for that. You ought to bless God for that.” May our hearts do that very thing. Let’s pray together.

Forgive us, Lord, for taking for granted that reality for which we will spend eternity in constant praise. O, how that speaks of our fallenness, the ugliness of our sinful hearts that we can get so indifferent to that great salvation You’ve given us, and we can become so preoccupied with useless inconsequential trivia, that we can lose our joy, that we can get our focus off of You and off of eternity and off of heaven and onto this passing, fading, perishing, defiled earth.

God, help us. Help us to transcend and live in the heavenlies. O, how it speaks to us of the ugliness of our sin. We would, on the one hand, justify ourselves and say we have not committed this sin, and we have never committed that sin, and we haven’t done this sin, and we haven’t done this other, and tell ourselves that we’re noble. And then we look at the indifference of our hearts toward our eternal salvation, the sickening lack of gratitude, the self-centeredness, the ugly indulgence of our own will and our own way, which we so viciously pursue, the waste of time, and money, and resources on this corrupting world is nothing more than an ashen princess. And when the sarcophagus is finally opened in the last time, it all crumbles.

Lord God, how this shows us the sinfulness of our own hearts. Thank You for unmasking that. Give us a new compulsion to live in the heavenlies, to invest in eternity, to long to be with You, and to endure anything in this life for the sufferings here are certainly not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be ours in that day when we see Christ face to face. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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