

## 1 Peter 1:3-5

“A Living And A Lasting Hope”

The great work of God’s salvation: that’s the topic that’s on Peter’s mind as we approach this particular passage still being at the beginning of his letter. Here we are falling into the flow of Vs 3 and already he’s taken us out into the deep doctrinal waters with topics like *election*, the *foreknowledge of God* being the basis of His election, he’s spoken to us of the sanctification of the Spirit for the purpose of obedience. Meaning God has a plan for you, He has an objective that He wants to accomplish through your life and He’s set you apart through the power of the Holy Spirit that you might walk in those good works that He’s prepared beforehand for you specifically. When God called you unto Himself that wasn’t the end, it wasn’t like “Mission accomplished he’s now in Christ, she’s now in Christ,” no it wasn’t the end, it was merely the beginning.

Now God wants to use you, wants to glorify Himself through you, He wants to work in you that you might be salt and light in this otherwise decaying and dark world. That people might see Him *in* you and be drawn to Him by His work *through* you; Jesus said it like this, *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Matt 5:14-16 To the Corinthians Paul said it like this, *“...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”* 1 Cor 6:19-20 Believe me when I tell you that we could go on and on with regard to God’s work making it very clear that when God saved you it was by no means to simply see you in heaven He wants to use you, He has a plan *for* you. The question is are you submitted *to* Him and leading your life in according with that plan? It doesn’t mean that God’s called everyone into vocational ministry, however do the people at work even know that you’re a Christian and if so is it because they see Christ *in* you, or simply because you mentioned church one time or something? To me it’s pretty convicting because when a light comes on in a dark room it doesn’t need to be announced, it’s just apparent, people notice a difference. Our lives are to make a difference in the room (so to speak), it should be obvious where we stand based simply upon the way we lead our lives. Beyond that as Peter said we should always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks us a reason for the hope that’s in us. “Man I notice you never cuss when you get frustrated, what’s up with that?” “Hey, I know you’re going through some real hard times right now yet you still seem to have grip, I’d be losing my mind, how in the world can you cope?” The door opens for you to share Christ, God wants to use you, but we have to come that place whereby we’re actually *willing* to be used (as reflected by the life we lead [in humility and obedience to His word]).

Peter has spoken to us of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ the redemption we've received in Him... Now he says (beginning in Vs 3)

Vs3-5

Again the substance that Peter packs into even this brief passage of scripture is staggering.

He says in Vs 3, "*Blessed* be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." It wouldn't be too difficult to spend all of our time right there reflecting *on* and rejoicing *over* those words would it? Peter, as he reflects *on* and thinks *about* so great a salvation as what God has provided for us in Christ can't help but burst forth in praise to God. The word "Blessed" there isn't the standard, "Makarion" that's used some 50x in the NT, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" kind of a word that simply means "O how happy." The word "Blessed" here is the word "Eulogetos" from which we get our word "Eulogy," and it's only used 8x in the NT each time in reference to God and offering Him the praise and the worship that He alone is worthy of. Peter is more or less overwhelmed by the reality of what God has done on behalf of him and can't help but praise Him and worship Him for the work of salvation on our behalf.

Peter knew where he'd been, he knew the things he'd done. There in Vs 2 where he says, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you." He was a personal recipient of the multiplied grace of God even to his own life, he was readily familiar with the grace of God. He'd denied the Lord, felt like he'd blown it so bad that he was probably out of heaven, much less would ever serve the Lord again. Yet here he is, an apostle of Jesus Christ a living illustration (like so many of us) of the far reaching grace of God who gave all that He had, even the life of His own dear Son that we might know Him, walk *with* Him and then beyond that to be used *by* Him in His reaching out to this lost world with the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the hope that's found therein. How can he not just praise the God and Father of his Lord Jesus Christ? How can I not, how can you not just well up with praise, and bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? I don't know but we somehow manage don't we? Even when we come into this place of safety, freedom from ridicule where we can worship the Lord openly, lift our voice and praise Him yet we manage somehow to hold back. God is worthy of our praise, may God help us to praise Him in a manner that's worthy of Him, with all of our heart, and all of our soul.

He has *begotten us again* to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That alone should be enough to release the flood gates of praise from our heart, but it goes beyond even that. Because what we learn here is that in our being begotten again (as we mentioned last week) it wasn't due to any particular quality of our own that was found somehow within us that made us particularly appealing to God. We learned last week that God makes decisions and does what He does according to His foreknowledge. However we come to realize here that there was more than simply God's foreknowledge at work as it pertains to His salvation visiting my life, or your life (if you can call God's foreknowledge "simple"). There was also involved in the equation His what? His *abundant mercy*; note the emphasis, it wasn't just God's mercy that was involved in my salvation, man it was His *abundant* mercy. It took way more than a little bit of God's mercy to manifest what would become salvation for you and me. It took an *abundance* of God's mercy; the word speaks of *an extensive quantity*. I'm sure it's something you're readily familiar with but our salvation (along with our sanctification) demand an *abundance* of God's mercy.

Aren't you glad this morning that the bible makes you and me aware of the fact that God is *rich* in mercy? Man I am, because if He were poor in mercy, if He didn't have much of it, odds are I wouldn't make it. But because He's *rich* in mercy there's an abundance available not only for my life, but for yours too... The bible says, "*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*" Eph 2:4-5

Or as we have it here, we've been *begotten again* to a living hope. Let me underscore the reality here that if you are or I am to enter the kingdom of God than without exception we have to be *begotten again*, or another way to understand that we must be *born again*. It's an absolute essential and no one will be exempt, it's a non-option. The other night Dennis Miller was on the Tonight Show talking about this whole controversy that's surrounded Miss California because she said that she believed that marriage was to be between 1 man and 1 woman. He pointed out how it had worked out for her to be a platform for sharing her faith because of the media circus that's swarmed her and given inadvertent voice to her. Then regarding himself he said, "I'm a believer but I'm not a born again Christian." Well, then with regards to eternal life we have a problem because Jesus said that unless a man be born again He shall by no means see the kingdom of God. I'm not sure what was meant by "I'm a believer", maybe the fact that he believes in God, that's great the bible says that demons believe -- and tremble! (Jas 2:19) But if you're to enter into the kingdom of God you've got to be born again. It goes beyond a mental assertion that there's a God out there somewhere who created all of this. The question comes up then, "What does it mean exactly to be *born again*?" Leave 1<sup>st</sup> Peter and find your way to the familiar passage of John Ch 3. Vs1-6

You see Nicodemus struggled with the idea of being born again. Couldn't figure out how he could have a new lease on life, how he could enter again into his mother's womb so as to start all over. Jesus corrected his misguided notion, He said, "Nick, you're thinking in physical/material terms, I'm talking to you in spiritual terms. You've got to be born of the water (that is a physical birth) and of the Spirit (speaking of a spiritual birth)."

Vs7-8

Jesus is dealing with this, "How can I believe it if I can't see it" mentality. He says, "You've never seen the wind have you? You may see dust or debris in it, but you've never seen it. However you see its effects as it rustles through the trees, sometimes its impact is even devastating. Even so although you've never seen the Spirit you can tell when someone has been born again of the Spirit because their life will change. You'll see His effects in their life, the impact He makes is unmistakable, irrefutable."

Vs9-18

Or to understand all of that another way, we're born again of the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ We put all of our eggs in His basket, our full trust, we believe in Him exclusively for the forgiveness of our sin, the salvation of our soul. and As we turn *to* Him and trust *in* Him God responds according to His abundant mercy and though we were dead in trespasses makes us alive together in Christ...by His grace He saves us. He imputes Christ's righteousness to us. Notice what it is that we've been begotten again unto...a *living hope*.

If you've been with us for any length of time you're familiar with the biblical principle of hope, if not here it is. When you come across the word "hope" in your bible, you need to understand that it's not utilized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century American culture kind of way. Today when we use the word hope what we generally mean is, "This is what my desire would be, however I'm uncertain if it really *will be* realized." It's used like a wish, "I hope it doesn't rain today." "I hope I get \_\_\_\_\_ for Christmas." "I hope I get a raise, or get to keep my job." Biblical hope is not a wishful desire laced with uncertainty. The word "hope" in your bible speaks of an *assured expectation*, a *confident anticipation*, and a *guaranteed certainty*. So that when you read of Christ in you, the *hope* of glory; understand it's not saying, "The wishful desire of glory mingled with a degree of uncertainty." No, Christ in you is the guaranteed certainty, the concrete realization and the assured expectation of glory.

Now Paul tells us in the book of Eph Ch 2 that non believers have no hope being with out God in the world. They have nothing that anchors them, no guarantees, no confident expectancy, why? They're with out Christ. You however (being in Christ) have hope, a blessed assurance. Not in the things of this world, our hope isn't in the things of this world, this world is passing away, our hope, our confidence is in Christ.

You see we have a *living* hope *through* the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our hope isn't in a philosophy, it's not in a premise, it's in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. Which causes us to focus on the fact that not only do we have hope, our hope is *living*, it's coursing with life, because our hope is in a Savior who Himself has conquered death. Whatever kind of pseudo sense of hope the world is able to somehow conjure up with in themselves is at best fading like a flower; it's dying. The hope of the believer has overcome death, it's a living hope anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But check it out, not only is it a *living* hope, it's a *lasting* hope.

Vs4

In Christ we've been begotten again to a living hope *and* a *lasting* hope. "...to an inheritance *incorruptible*." I suppose that I would do well to emphasize once again the fact of the *inheritance*, what is an inheritance? Is it something you earn? No, it's something that you freely *receive* simply by being a member of the family. Paul tells us in the book of Romans, "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,*" Rom 8:16-17 and One of the things that's so interesting about what Peter has to say here about this inheritance that we're going to receive is that it's so awesome, it's so incredible, it's so beyond description that he never really tells us what it *is*, only what it *isn't*.

It's incorruptible, undefiled, doesn't fade away, reserved in heaven *for* you, that is, it can't be taken *from* you. But words can't really describe what's waiting for you in Christ. Paul said that when he caught a glimpse of heaven, the words he heard, the things that he experienced were so beyond the human vernacular that it would be sin to even try to describe it. Because there's no words that are anywhere near adequate. In the book of Corinthians we read it like this, "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*" 1 Cor 2:9 Here's what I'm trying to tell you, heaven is going to blow your mind perpetually, throughout eternity. So many people perceive heaven as like an eternal church service, no way. Things are going to be so *kickin* in heaven, so euphoric we can't even imagine.

It'll never be old hat, never be business as usual, never be "common" in the sense of overly familiar; with all that the bible tells us there's so much more that the bible *doesn't* tell us about what eternity holds in store for us. We've received the teaser trailer, it's like seeing a few presents under the tree but not being able to unwrap them yet and knowing that there'll be even more on Christmas morning. God's given us hints, we've got to shake a couple, feel the packages, but we have no clue what's awaiting us, not really. Only that it'll be an eternal experience that's beyond description.

It's an inheritance that's *incorruptible*. Meaning it will never rust, it'll never breakdown or grow old over time. Remember Jesus said, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" Matt 6:19-21 The point being that whether it's the inheritance that *awaits* you, or a personal investment *from* you, if it's in heaven it's incorruptible.

What else? It's *undefiled*. Meaning it's unstained, it's pure and untainted in anyway. It *does not fade away*, it's not like the stock market, could be worth something today and nothing tomorrow. It never depreciates or devaluates in anyway, it's guaranteed to never fade away. Remember when Paul was speaking to the Corinthians about pursuing the prize, giving it all you got this side of eternity knowing that you'll never regret it on the other side of eternity, and he said that the athletes of this world compete for a temporal reward, but your reward is eternal, they do what they do to obtain a perishable crown, but we do what we do for an imperishable crown that will not fade away.

*Reserved in heaven for you*, it's as eternal as is heaven itself (as opposed to an earthly inheritance). Notice that it's *reserved* for you, there's no chance of someone else getting it, it's being held for you, God Himself is keeping an eye on it, guarding it for you. It's an inheritance that is insured.

But here's the catch, you can only receive the inheritance if you've been what? Born again, if you've given your heart to Christ, you see in speaking to those who don't know the Lord we shouldn't tell them only of the agonies of hell that they will experience, but also of the glories of heaven that they'll miss. God has such good things planned *for* them if they would only surrender *to* Him.

Ok, these are things that speak of what God *has* done, they're past tense, He has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away and is reserved in heaven for you...notice

Vs 5

Here is what God *is doing presently* and what *will be done ultimately*. What's happening presently? God is *keeping* you, "...you who *are* (presently) *kept* by the power of God." That should be encouraging to you, why? Because again it's not something that's predicated upon *your* power but upon God's.

Jesus said, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.”* John 10:27-30 He holds *onto* us and refuses to let go *of* us.

The psalmist said this, *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.”* Ps 37:23-24 Paul said it like this, *“...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”* Phil 1:6 Not only is God keeping your inheritance, He’s keeping *you*, His power is forming a garrison around you.

“So what’s the deal then is this *whole* thing predicated upon God, do I have *any* part *whatsoever* in it?” Well, yeah there is one thing that’s required of you. So far everything that’s been mentioned in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is predicated upon God. Elect according to His foreknowledge, sanctified by the Spirit, cleansed by the blood of Christ, begotten again to a living hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away but is reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God. All of that is His doing? “Well then, what’s my part?” The next 2 words, did you see them there? “Through *faith*.” It’s yours to *believe* God for what He has said, to rest fully, in a manner that will impact and change your life obviously (John 3) in what God has said concerning His Son Jesus Christ

One day Jesus was teaching the people and they asked Him, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” That is, what is it that God requires of *us* that we might lead lives that are approved by *Him*. Jesus said this, *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”* John 6:29 Your part is to *believe*, it’s through *faith* that these things will come into fruition for you. The bible tells us that with out faith it’s impossible to please God because the one who comes to Him must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Here’s the point, the person who is “kept by the power of God” is a person who is abiding in a continuing relationship of faith with God. You might say that faith activates the preserving power of God in/toward the believer.

For what purpose? “Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” He saved us in the past, He keeps us presently and will reveal to us what we might consider the culmination of salvation ultimately. It’s ready *for* you, it’s waiting *on* you, abide (through faith) in Him, let His word abide in you, and praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has begotten us again to a living and lasting hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Prayer Points:

Father so much to rejoice in and be blessed by as we meditate on the living and lasting hope that we've been born again into through the death and resurrection of Your Son. You've caused us to be heirs of an eternal incorruptible inheritance in Him. and Not only do you guard our inheritance, you guard us as well. Father we praise You, we offer up our thanksgiving *to* You and bless Your name.

If you're still kicking against the call of God upon your life to truly come to Him, surrender your life fully to Him, to quit leading a life that's in the world and allow Him to set you apart for His purpose and His plan for you and today you're willing to lay your life down that you have truly have life in Him then let me encourage you that you call upon Him even today. You're with out hope being with out God in the world, God wants to give you a living, and a lasting hope through the resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ