

Week 2 - The Security of Salvation - 1Peter 1:3-5

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 6:13-20

Introduction

Being a sojourner is hard

Admittedly, it is harder at some times and in some places than it is at others

But, if you are living as a follower of Jesus Christ, you are bound to generally find yourself at odds with the world because this world is not our home; we're just a passin' through

Peter's original audience were experiencing that disconnect with the world and were becoming discouraged by it
Christian slaves were being mistreated by their masters, Christians were being mistreated by their unbelieving spouses, many Christians were being spoken against by their former friends, and others were being openly threatened with harm

And we see parallels to all those circumstances today as Christ-followers continue to suffer all those things

Often, becoming a Christ-follower is the start of a whole lot of trouble in this world and many believers are facing being overwhelmed by doubt

Honestly, it's enough to get a person down because it's hard to remain positive when you don't feel secure

Peter understood that so he began his letter by giving his readers the four keys to maintaining hope that we looked at last week:

The fact **God chose us**, the fact we are **being sanctified by the Holy Spirit**, the fact that we are continually having our sins removed by **the sprinkling of Christ's blood**, and the fact that everything we experience is **according to God's plan**

Now, in the passage we're considering today, we are going to see that Peter gives his readers reason to feel secure in spite of their difficulties that contrive to make them feel insecure

And what is the solution to our feelings of insecurity? Our salvation!

Our salvation should give us hope and having hope defeats insecurity

Remember, biblical hope isn't a wish against the odds that something good will happen; it's the assurance of gain that is so certain we can count it as ours even though we don't yet have it or haven't actually experienced it

And Peter begins this section in verse 3 with by praising God [**1Peter 3a**]:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

This blessing echoes a frequent Old Testament word of praise

We see it in **Genesis 14:20** where Melchizedek says "Blessed be the God Most High"

And in **1Samuel 25:32** where King David says "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel"

The same formula is also found frequently in the Psalms and elsewhere

God doesn't need to hear our words of praise in order to feel good about himself or to remain motivated to do good

In the strictest sense, we aren't even able to bless God because blessings, by their nature, flow from the greater to the lesser

What we do when we bless God is give him praise as we declare that he is the most blessed one

And we should declare God's excellence because it's good *for us* to do so

Hearts that are burdened with care and discouragement and feelings of insecurity that comes from suffering benefit greatly from turning their eyes heavenward and giving praise to God

And in offering his praise of God, Peter uses a name for God you will not find in the Old Testament - Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

I want to show you something interesting and significant about the phrase “our Lord Jesus Christ”

Working backwards, Christ means that he is the promised Messiah; Jesus means he is Savior (Jesus means Yahweh saves); Lord means that he rules all things supremely; and beyond that he is ours and we are his

And we have salvation because of who Jesus is and our relationship to him

Of course, God is worthy of praise and we can offer our praise to God anytime - even while sojourning in a hostile world

In a way, I find it humorous that people fret over whether or not they are “allowed” to pray in public venues

God remains at hand even in the most restrictive of environments and no one can keep anyone else from offering praise to God if they have a mind to do so

God, by his nature alone, is worthy of our praise but Peter says God is specifically to be praised for our salvation and he gives us three reasons we can rely on our salvation for our security as we sojourn here:

Its **provision**, its **properties**, and its **promise**

First –

We can be secure in our salvation because of:

I. Its Provision

Let’s look at verse three in its entirety as we begin to look at the meat of today’s message [**1Peter 1:3**]:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

First, we see that God has caused us to be born again - God is the author of our salvation

Being born again isn’t according to any desirableness on our part and we haven’t done anything to merit it

We see this in the fact that Peter refers to God’s mercy as “great mercy” and says that God isn’t stingy in his giving - our salvation is *according to* his great mercy which indicates the extent and magnitude of God’s mercy

Second, our new birth is according to God’s great mercy

“According to” means “in proportion to”

If a billionaire were to give you ten dollars you would say that he had given you something out of his riches

But if he were to give you a million dollars you would say he had given to you “according to” his riches

God’s supply of mercy is infinite as he is infinite and there is no sin so great or sins so numerous that his mercy cannot cover them and he caused us to be saved in spite of our sin that separated us from him

God had pity on us because of our great need that we could not possibly meet and resources sufficient to meet our need

Third, we see that our salvation is “*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*”

Our salvation has its basis and foundation firmly established on the solid rock of the resurrection of Christ

Speaking to Martha on the occasion of the death of her brother Lazarus in **John 11:25-26**, Jesus said –

“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

The only thing God requires from any person is their faith, their active trust, in his Son and his completed work of salvation through his death, burial, and resurrection to everlasting life

The resurrection of the Son is God the Father’s stamp of approval of his offering and it’s on the basis of the resurrection that God is able to stamp “PAID” on the debt of sin of anyone who puts their faith in his Son

The resurrection is the agency or means of God’s provision of our salvation that births us into “*a living hope*”

And what is a living hope but the confident expectation of our own resurrection to full and complete participation in a new life of our own in the future?

The fact that the hope is living and not dead means that it grows and increases in strength over time

That means we can rightly say that a useful measure of growing spiritual maturity is an increasing confidence and looking forward to the life to come that is prefigured and guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ

Recognizing and remembering God's provision of birthing us again into a living hope of our future life with him is a reality that will enable Christ-followers to face anything, even death itself, without fear

Because we know that because of God's great mercy toward us, death is not the end for us but a new beginning

Moving on, Peter next describes our salvation to a living hope and we see that –

We can be secure in our salvation because of:

II. Its Properties

In verse 4 we read that we will be resurrected [**1Peter 1:4**] –

...to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you

First, we see that what we will receive is an inheritance and an inheritance is a gift based on a relationship; not a wage for a performance or something that is given to a stranger

The idea of an inheritance harkens back to the Old Testament when Abraham was promised an inheritance which was the land of Canaan [**Genesis 12:7**]

And that promise of inheritance became fundamental to Old Testament theology as we see in passages like **Genesis 50:24** where Joseph told his brothers:

"I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob"

And **Deuteronomy 34:4** where God told Moses:

"This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring.'"

And **Joshua 1:2** where God told Joshua:

"Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel."

However, the understanding of "inheritance" in the New Testament has to do with the reward that the godly will receive on judgment day

Peter's point is that even though a follower of Christ may suffer in this world and have no future here, there is an inheritance waiting that is as real as the one promised to Abraham

And, as we are going to see next, it is an inheritance that is far greater than any earthly inheritance

It's not a family share of the land in Canaan as in the Old Testament but an inheritance in the eternal city of God

Thus the inheritance is the believer's portion in the new creation and all the blessing it brings - which includes a partial present enjoyment of it even as we continue to live as sojourners longing for it

Let's look at the three adjectives that Peter uses to describe this heavenly inheritance

Actually, the inheritance is so wonderful that Peter had to resort to telling us what it isn't in order to describe it

First, he says it is ***imperishable***, meaning that it isn't subject to death and decay

It's an inheritance that is unable to be destroyed; it won't die and decompose as all things in this world do because it is permanent

Then he says it is **undefiled**, meaning that it remains unpolluted and is morally and religiously pure

It is completely unstained by sin and contains nothing that is unworthy of God's approval

And unlike some earthly inheritances, the heirs don't need to worry about its origins and whether they can rightly receive it without spiritual compromise

Then Peter says our heavenly inheritance is **unfading**

By this he means that it will never lose its brightness - it never loses its beauty or glory - never suffers decline

Peter here is referring to the idea of a flower that withers in time and must be discarded as he says the inheritance of the follower of Christ will never diminish with the passage of time

On Friday, December 27, 2021, historians opened a time capsule that was located under a statue of Robert E. Lee that had been sealed and buried in 1887 [TimeCapsule.png]

And when the 36-pound copper box was carefully pried open the best that the conservation team was able to say was that the condition of the warped and waterlogged contents was "not as bad as it could have been"

While many of the articles removed could be identified others could not because of their condition and the teams had to quickly work to stabilize the artifacts to prevent their complete disintegration

Everything falls apart in this world and nothing is permanent here no matter how diligently we try to preserve them

It's quite difficult, actually it's impossible, for us to truly envision a world that is permanent and undefiled by sin because even the most beautiful things we are able to actually see and touch in this life are defiled and diminished by sin

Even something that is perfect would be diminished by our understanding of it because we see and interpret all things with eyes and minds and hearts that are corrupted by sin and deceitful

So we can only conclude that, according to Peter's description, the inheritance that is waiting for those who love the Lord is beyond our wildest imaginations and better than anything we could want for ourselves

Peter then says it is "*kept in heaven for you*"

Peter uses the perfect past participle, *kept*, to indicate that this is an activity that has been completed in the past with results that are continuing into the present

And his switch from the plural pronoun "us" to "you" emphasizes the personal nature of this promise

God has reserved this inheritance in heaven for each follower of his Son and it remains there for them

Peter's description brings to mind **Matthew 6:19-20** where Jesus taught –

"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."

While our adversaries might take away or destroy everything we have on this earth, we can be secure in the knowledge that there is an inheritance preserved for us in heaven that nothing can touch

Like most inheritances, this one belongs to the believer by virtue of their birth

It's a gift but God says we have a right to it because he has chosen us and caused us to be born again into his family

And because we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of his Son into God's family, we know that our inheritance is assured and safeguarded by God and we can rest secure in that knowledge

But there is one more reason that we can be secure in our salvation that we find in verse 5 [**1Peter 1:5**]:

Speaking of the believer, Peter says: "*who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*"

Therefore,

We can be secure in our salvation because of:

III. Its Promise

Peter's original audience may well have been concerned about whether or not they would have the strength and the stamina to remain faithful to Christ in the event that their persecution persisted or intensified

So Peter makes it clear that the security of the Christ-follower is not dependent on them but on God

Not only is the inheritance guarded by God but the heir is also guarded so that we see a balance between God's action in heaven, protecting their future, and his action on earth, protecting the Christ-follower in the present

Guarded has a military connotation and we can envision an encampment or a column surrounded by opposing forces from without but shielded from harm by the overwhelming force of God

I don't know about you but my mind goes immediately to the account of Elisha and his servant that we find in 2Kings 6

The king of Syria wanted to seize Elisha who was in Dothan so he sent horses, chariots, and a great army to surround the city

And when Elisha's servant got up early the next morning and saw that they were surrounded by the enemy he was naturally afraid

Picking up the account in verse 16 we read [2Kings 6:16-17]

[Elisha] said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

We too are surrounded by God's protection as we sojourn in this place and he will see us safely home

Because, again, the word Peter uses indicates that we are continually being guarded by God's ever present power

Look with me at **Psalm 121** as we see this truth beautifully expressed:

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Still, we need to notice something - God's power doesn't act apart from the personal faith of those being guarded

Our text says we are being guarded by God's power ***through faith***

That means Christ-followers are protected by committing themselves in trust and obedience to God

The key to understanding this is that God's protection is the active part of the process while ours is passive

We benefit from God's protection as we put our complete trust in God's protective power and don't look to anything else to protect us

Then in the last phrase of verse 5 we see that God's protection isn't just to get us through some temporary crisis; it's *for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*

God will protect those who are his and bring them into full possession of all the blessings or their redemption

That means there is no end to God's protection for the believer

God's all-powerful protection will continue to surround the believer until the end of the church age when Christ returns to resurrect the godless to judgment and the people of God to reward

That means God will continue to guard believers until they receive the final, complete fulfillment of their salvation in heaven

We can be secure in the knowledge that God will accomplish his purpose and our final salvation will be attained

Because we know that that attainment is only dependent on God's power as we rely on him and his work through Christ

And all the preparations for this final unveiling of salvation is complete and it is only awaiting God's signal that it is time

Imagine a surprise party where the celebrants have everything ready at the venue but someone has to deliver the guest of honor at the appointed place and time

God fulfills both roles in this scenario as he has already prepared the place and he will deliver us to it

Our salvation is secure and God will see to it that we attain it [**Philippians 1:6**]

Conclusion

This morning, we have seen that Peter doesn't focus on the past, that is to say on the new birth of believers itself, but on the future

He shows that the goal of new birth isn't the birth itself but to start us, as children, on the path to maturity

The goal of regeneration is "a living hope" as it points to a sure, bright, imperishable future ahead

This understanding allows those who are presently suffering to look beyond their pain and deprivation and mistreatment to focus on that vision of certain reward

A living hope that is grounded in reality because it is founded on the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

A living hope that will not diminish or disappoint prepared and guarded by God himself and to which he is escorting us securely by his power

Whatever difficulties we may be facing or have faced or will face in the future as we sojourn here, we can praise God for the security that we have because of the provision, properties, and promise of our salvation

Next week, our focus will be on the experiences of salvation as we study verses 6-9

Let's pray

Hebrews 6:13-20 (page 1004)

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.