

Hope of Resurrection

Introduction

- If you have your Bibles...
- Is everyone comfortable? Focused? Tuned in?
 - A preacher has a difficult job, trying to take hundreds of people, all in different Places and help them draw closer To God.
- So much of church is a balancing act dependent on people's tolerances.
 - There are things I could say... True things... that would offend or anger you. Each of us has certain thresholds of offense.
 - Crossing these lines causes the preacher to be dismissed. whatever I say next falls on deaf ears.
 - But on the opposite end there are thresholds of distraction as well. The moment your brain checks out and mentally wanders off to something more entertaining.
 - Perhaps I have already lost many of you before the Sermon even started.
 - The music didn't meet your expectations, or the greeting team didn't do a good enough job, or the temperature in the room isn't quite right, or the clothes you are wearing are too uncomfortable. Or your mind is stuck on the logistics of Easter Dinner
 - It's just too late now. Perhaps next time, you will be able to hear the message God has for you.
 - It is a balancing act for sure. How do you present the most dire, the most needed medicine in the world to people who think they are healthy? "I don't need it, give it to the next person."
 - As a pastor, I am both alarmed and disturbed at how we as a culture approach church. Let me just say, a preacher is not a salesman. I am not here this morning to sell you Jesus. But to simply remind you that this life is bigger than you and your preferences.

1st Peter 1:3-5

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, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

Context

Now of course, the good news of these few verses suggest that things are by nature not good with us. God's mercy is spoken of because it sounds like we need it. Being born again suggests that something has gone wrong with our first birth. Having a living hope makes it sound like something now isn't good and we want it to end. The mention of a future inheritance that is imperishable and uncorrupted, brings to mind that everything in this world is perishable, and defiled and fading. We are guarded, as Peter says here, because we are under assault.

Friends, the only people who need to be saved are people who are lost. This is God's teaching on Depravity. It means that all of us are morally corrupt. We have been stained with sin. We are all lost. Is it even possible for we who are lost to be saved? Peter argues yes. But only through God's mercy.

A Living Hope (Vs 3)

- Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - Paul starts with worship. It is a praise! why should we praise God? Because he has been merciful.
- He has shown you and I great mercy.
 - In what way have we been shown mercy?
 - We didn't get the punishment we deserved, we got favor we did not deserve
 - Should remind us that salvation is rooted in God's unmerited favor, not human effort.
 - Now if you are here today, and you are not very religious, you are not normally in church... I just want to point out that In a world where you cannot Un-Sin, (once you have sinned you cannot take it back) you have no hope. Apart from relying wholly on God's mercy. God's mercy must be the first stop on the path to salvation. Without that first stop, there is no journey at all.
 - It is through his mercy that God brings us back to spiritual life. It is not about what we deserved, but what someone else has deserved for us.
- Caused us to be born again
 - We were once dead, God made us alive again!
 - Some of us think that being born again is a decision we make, "I have decided to be born again, to be changed" and in one sense that is certainly true. We do make that decision. But that is not the way this text describes it. According to Peter, This second birth is something God caused to occur. Consider Nicodemus...
 - John 3:3-6 - Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
 - God gives it to us, he stirs our hearts, through His spirit, to respond to Him. Perhaps even now, some of you in this room are feeling this stirring from God. This calling to repentance, and new birth. God is initiating your salvation, and now you must respond.
 - At Easter, we're reminded that the resurrection isn't just about Jesus—it's about us being born again into a fresh, vibrant relationship with God, full of purpose and possibility.
- Living Hope
 - Our hope is alive because Jesus is alive. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead, causes us to be born again as well!
 - A.T. Robertson - Hope rose up with Christ from the dead!

- This is why the resurrection matters. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, we have no reason to believe, we will rise from the dead also. Paul even tells us that if Jesus didn't rise, We are of all men to be pitied because we have nothing to hope in.
 - We could get into the overwhelming evidence of the resurrection, but we would be here all day. If your struggle is with the historicity of the resurrection, let me assure you it is there, and let me encourage you to dive deeper into that study. Libraries worth of books have been written on the subject, with all unbiased research pointing to its validity. As we said last week, our faith need not be blind.
- Church, this kind of hope, should have an effect on us in our day to day lives. If you are placing your hope in your job, or your relationship, or your bank account... then you are placing your hope in that which you know is rotten. You are choosing to walk across the most terrifying chasm on the most rickety bridge that was never meant to hold you!
 - Your hope must be in the living and breathing Jesus Christ. Who is, at this moment, at the right hand of God, interceding for his people.

An Inheritance Imperishable (Vs 4)

- Doctrine in the days of Greek mythology, involved deities of questionable reputation. They believed in a complete pantheon of morally dubious Gods. And as a result, they inspired morally dubious lives in their worshippers. Peter describes these gentiles and how they live in 1st Peter 4:3 - living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.
 - An afterlife was rarely discussed, and when it was, it was extremely vague and obscure. Nobody really knew what to believe. It is into this world that the christian Gospel came. Jesus Christ taught more about the afterlife than most people were used to hearing. And it was far more specific teaching than they were used to. And it had a very sharp division line after death between the blessed, and the condemned.
 - Jesus taught that after death, some people would come to live with him in houses he had prepared for them. He spoke about a time and a place of unending happiness, where the blessed would be forgiven for their sins. A place of unimaginable goodness that our best parties and feasts can only point dimly to.
 - On the other hand, Jesus spoke about the immoral goats, the cursed, going away into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. This is how Jesus describes the punishment of rejection of him.
 - And yes, it is eternal. The exact same word that Jesus uses for eternal life, is used also by him to describe eternal punishment. It is the same Greek word. "Eternal". So according to Jesus, There is both a lot to be saved TO, and a lot to be saved FROM.

- Our text only speaks of the positive. “An Inheritance”
 - Imperishable - free from death, it cannot be lost
 - undefiled - free from impurity, it cannot be tainted
 - Unfading - free from decay, It cannot be diminished
- “Kept in heaven for you”
 - It is beyond all the harm that Satan could do. This inheritance is not in this world, as some prosperity preachers might claim.
 - We are making bigger claims than those fake preachers on tv are making.
 - They are claiming, you can have some really good stuff, for a little while. And we are telling you that you can have the best thing ever, FOREVER. It is a very different message.
 - Isaiah 40:6-8 - All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
 - Raise your hand if you know the names of your grandparents. Great grandparents? Great Great grandparents?
 - Jobs end, bank accounts empty, families break up, friends leave, children move out, spouses die. Do you realize how passing this life is?
 - What kind of inheritance are you looking for?
 - A perishing one? On an unending one? Because even the poorest christian is more wealthy than the wealthiest men on this earth.
- What is this inheritance? It is life with Christ FOREVER.
 - We get this mixed up far more than we should when we try to use Jesus like a Genie to get all the stuff we want. “Oh Jesus, please give me a better job, give me a better Car, Give me a better House, Give me a better spouse, this ones no good”
 - No, Jesus is the prize. Jesus is the reward. Jesus is the Pearl of great price. Too often we try to sell the pearl to obtain all the worthless stuff of the world!
 - Your inheritance encompasses the fullness of God’s promises—living forever in a restored relationship with Him, in
 - **Presence of God:** Our inheritance includes dwelling with God, where “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain”. (Revelation 21:4)
 - **Glorified Bodies:** Like Jesus’ resurrected body, believers will receive imperishable, glorified bodies, free from sickness or weakness. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)
 - **Restored Creation:** The inheritance includes a renewed creation. A new heaven and new earth where we’ll live in perfect harmony with God and others. (Romans 8:21)

Guarded by God (Vs 5) (Conclusion)

- Earlier I asked the question, “Can the Lost be Saved?” Vs 3-4 Tell us Yes, through God’s mercy, by causing us to be born again to a living hope.
- But Vs 5 deals with the question, “Can the Saved be Lost?”
- God Guards our Salvific inheritance BY HIS POWER.
 - John 10:28-29 - I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
 - Here is what this means. Because Jesus rose from the grave, you have been born again. This second birth will never end. That means that you have eternal life right now. Your physical body will still wither. But your real life, your more significant life, your spiritual life is eternally protected in the hands of God. You can know that God will guard you, no matter the trial, or suffering, or difficulty. It is a promise of preservation from God.
- Gospel Call
 - If you do not have this living hope, if you do not have this eternal inheritance, If you have not been born again. God wants you to come. To receive mercy. To be reconciled. To put your sin to death with Jesus on that cross, and to be raised in new birth, to eternal life.
 - If you have this living hope, then what an awesome time to praise Him, to cry out in worship for what God has done.