

Okay.

Oh, the microphone's on.

That's good.

That's good.

Good to be with you today.

Good to be here with the Walk Through the Bible experience yesterday.

Those who attended did a very fine job.

So you look forward to hearing them in the future.

Well, today, I'd like to wish... Wait a minute.

Are we ready?

I have slides.

At least I hope I have slides.

In fact, start praying.

We have slides.

What does it say?

Let's back up one.

That's it.

Happy Father's Day.

Okay.

If you're a father, that is.

Now.

In the Gospel of John, God is addressed or referred to as Father 120 times.

So God is spoken of as a Father and refers to himself as a Father.

And when we think of Father, we think of him as a creator and a sustainer.

So in our human fathers, there's a similar pattern.

They have...

contributed to our existence in a similar way.

And also they have sustained us and provided for us and counseled us and nurtured us over the years.

So on this Father's Day, if you're a son or a daughter, make sure you thank your father and tell him you love him and express your appreciation.

Now, if God is our father, how can we express our appreciation to him as our father?

So we're going to look at a particular passage of scripture.

It's in the book of 1 Peter, which was written in the early 60s.

I don't mean the 1960s.

I mean the 60s, 60s.

And it was written by the apostle 1 Peter.

He just called himself Peter for the sake of it.

Now, in verse 3, he tells us how to express our appreciation.

He says this, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It can also be translated, Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a formula that's sort of Jewish in origin, but the Apostle Paul uses it in Ephesians and in 2 Corinthians, where praise for God is evoked, and then it's followed by the reason why.

So in 1 Peter 1,

Same, follows the same pattern.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has caused us to be born again.

That's why we're praising him or blessing him.

Now, there's a handout in the program if you want to follow along, that's great.

And so here is the big idea of this paragraph.

It says, God should be praised for our rebirth.

God should be praised for our rebirth.

Now, when hearing that, probably most of you would agree with that and say, yes, God should be praised for our rebirth.

So my question might be, well, how many times today did you do that?

How many times this week?

How many times this month?

Well, and so you see, sometimes if we just say we believe something, it may just not be it.

We think we believe it.

But we know we believe something when we act like we believe it.

So wherever your count would come up with how many times we praised God in the last month, we all need to do it more frequently and also more fervently.

Now, Peter helps us because he gives us reasons.

And if we understood the reasons why God should be praised for our rebirth, we should find ourselves doing it more frequently and more fervently.

So this is the whole paragraph.

It says this, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

So here we have two reasons why God should be praised for our rebirth.

And the first is this.

God blessed be the Godfather of our Lord Jesus Christ who has caused us to be born again.

So we can say God should be praised for our rebirth because he caused it to happen.

Now in saying that, we can say three things about that.

The first is we were incapable of causing it to happen.

I don't remember a lot from science class in high school, but I guess I remember my teacher more than the subject, Mr. Jordan.

And he would sometimes repeat things more than once.

And I think if he repeated it enough, I finally got it.

So from ninth grade science classes, I'll show you some of the things I remember from Mr. Jordan.

He said this, heat expands and cold contracts.

And for the longest time, that's why I thought the days were longer in the summertime than they were in the winter.

I wasn't the best student.

Then we had, another one he said is, light travels from the sun to the earth at 186,000 miles per second.

And I said, big deal.

It's downhill all the way.

But something he said maybe most frequently is this.

He says, life always comes from previously existing life.

You don't find corpses giving birth to healthy children, unless you're a frequent reader of the National Enquirer or happen to be chatting with Elvis Presley's four-year-old son.

Life always comes from previously existing life.

And what is true in biology is also true in theology.

What's true in the natural world is true in the spiritual world as well.

Life always comes from previously existing life.

Well, what did the Apostle Paul tell us about it in Ephesians chapter 2?

He said, you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

Yes, we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

So we couldn't birth ourselves.

We were incapable of causing that to happen.

Well, let's look at a son.

This is little Reese Epstein.

And he came into the world at 12 pounds 9 ounces.

Yeah, I always hear, you'll hear mothers go, whoa, because that's a big baby.

Anyway, it's a good backdrop for this staying.

Ultimately, we are no more responsible for our spiritual birth than we are for our physical birth.

Right?

We were incapable of causing it to happen.

Now, you rarely find somebody bragging about their physical birth, do you?

You know, 20 years ago, I was born.

Yes, sirree, that's me.

I came right out.

That was me.

Talk to a doctor quickly, because it's quite abnormal to brag about our physical birth.

But we sometimes come close to it when we're talking about our spiritual birth.

You might have some younger boys talking about when they believed in Jesus.

And one says, I believed in Jesus when I was 10 years old.

Oh yeah?

Well, I believed in Jesus when I was nine years old.

Oh yeah?

Well, I believed in Jesus when I was six years old.

You win.

Or it might be something that, hey, you know, before I came to Christ, I was into A and B. Oh, yeah?

Before I came to Christ, I was into A, B, and C. Oh, yeah?

Before I came to Christ, I was into A, B, C, D, and E. You win.

Or...

You know, I had a lot of intellectual demands that needed to be satisfied before I could embrace the Christ of Christianity.

But after examining all the evidence and pondering all the alternatives, I came to see that Jesus alone was worthy of my dependency and devotion.

Now, there are some truths in all of those testimonies.

I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as a young child.

My father had a lot of intellectual demands that needed to be satisfied before he did.

And then I had dear friends who had a long walk on the dark side before they came to Jesus Christ.

But you see, it's not so much, look, there is something that's true in these things in that although you are not ultimately responsible for your physical birth, you are certainly an active participant in it.

Ask your mom.

And though we are not ultimately responsible for our spiritual birth, we are active participants in it.

Because it'll mention this paragraph, faith.

We have to exercise faith.

We have to place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's the only and sufficient savior from sins.

We have to do that.

But you see, be careful of your testimonies because it's a matter of emphasis.

It's not so much, I believe in him,

But he saved me.

Not so much I asked Jesus to come into my heart, but he asked me to come into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

See, we'll put the emphasis where it belongs.

God should be praised for our rebirth because he caused it to happen.

We were incapable of causing it to happen.

Now what motivated God to do that?

He caused it to happen, and here we find in the verse it says,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again.

Now, why does Peter use the word mercy?

He could have used the word love, he could have used the word grace, which is frequently used in 1 Peter, or other words, but he used worthy, which speaks about God's kindness in bringing in the unworthy.

It speaks about the desperate need of a recipient who's in a hopeless situation and utterly helpless to change it.

And this was all we were before Jesus Christ.

And so God caused us to be born again on the basis of his great mercy.

The cry of the practicing atheist, you can be a Christian and a practicing atheist, is, I don't need God.

And the...

Cry of the, I would say, misinformed theist is, God needs me.

Now, in the reality, both are reversed.

God doesn't need me at all.

He can get along quite well without me, and he's done so for many years.

But I desperately need God.

And so he rebirthed us, not on the basis of my labors, but on the basis of his love.

Not on the basis of my goodness, but on the basis of his grace.

Not on the basis of my great merit, but on the basis of his great mercy.

As Paul would say to his friend Titus, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

God should be praised for our rebirth because He caused it to happen.

Now, how did God cause this to happen?

The verse goes on to say, 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.

Yes, He caused us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Peter sometimes says in sentences,

what the Apostle Paul parlays into paragraphs.

So if you want to know more about this, you can check on Romans chapter six.

And he says you were all baptized into Jesus Christ.

Well, you're baptized into Christ, you were baptized into his death, you were also baptized into his resurrection.

And so some wonderful, mystical, marvelous way, God unites us with his son Jesus Christ when he was raised from the dead.

And it's a good symbol because both speak about the infusion of life.

Like resurrection, life came back.

My birth, life is there too.

So however wonderfully he arranged it, he caused it to happen through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So God should be praised for our rebirth because he caused it to happen.

Now let me tell you a story about my upbringing.

My mother had two sisters that were nearby, and so there was a master schedule around the holidays.

Ladies, I don't know if you go through this, but it's like, okay, you'll come over our house for Thanksgiving dinner.

Then we'll come over your house for Christmas dinner, and then we'll go over to Agnes' house on the Fourth of July picnic.

They had the schedule for the year.

Now my father and my brother and I didn't care.

Just point us to the food.

and we'll eat it.

So that was okay with us, but they had the schedule worked out.

Now, I'll tell you the truth, though.

I particularly liked it when we were having Christmas dinner at our house, just because I wouldn't have to leave.

I could play with the toys that I got.

I didn't have to get out so early.

Well, here's a composite scenario of a typical one of those occasions.

Christmas morning, open packages and stuff, that was good.

And then I look out the window and see Aunt Harriet pull up in the green Chevrolet.

Ooh, I'm looking.

She goes to the trunk, opens up, and takes out a box wrapped in red paper with gold ribbon.

And I said to myself, that's got to be for me.

It's because I was the youngest one in the family and very cute.

No.

No, I mean, it was true.

I was adorable as a little child.

So... I have pictures.

Anyway... She comes to the door with the box, and before I even say Merry Christmas or hello, I say, Is that for me and Harriet?

Yes, it is, Roger.

Oh, boy.

Can I open it now, Mom?

No, dear.

You have to wait till after dinner.

Oh, please.

Oh, no.

Oh, okay.

And so...

I said, could this be like a wood burning set or some air rifles or train tracks?

And so I got the package.

You can put underneath the tree.

Okay.

And as I was going there, I was trying to shake it, feel it, get an idea of what's in there.

So I could see it.

And then I went to the dining room and sat in the chair that I got a clear view of the package.

And I was always wondering what kind of great stuff was in that.

And that was when the cream corn was going down my shirt because I wasn't paying attention to what was happening.

So the dinner was done.

Mom, can I open it now?

No, dear, wait till after dessert.

And the mince pie followed the trail, the cream corn down my shirt.

Finally, dessert was done.

And I said, can I open it now?

Yes, dear, you can.

I ran to that tree so quickly the suction cleared the dining room table.

I got to the box, ripped the ribbon, shredded the paper, opened it up, and there it was.

Two dozen socks.

I didn't want socks.

I wanted an air rifle.

I wanted wood burning.

I wanted train tracks.

They gave me socks.

That wasn't the worst of it.

Then Mother gives me one of those tasks of Hercules when she says, now go thank Aunt Harriet, dear.

And so with all the sincerity of a stewed prune, I said, thank you, Aunt Harriet.

Now, let's be fair.

Should Aunt Harriet have been thanked for my socks?

Yes, they were good socks.

Yes, they cost her something.

Yes, I needed socks.

But I didn't feel like thanking Aunt Harriet because I wasn't impressed.

It didn't thrill my soul.

Now, should God be praised for our rebirth?

Yes, it was a good rebirth.

Yes, it was a costly rebirth.

It cost him the death of his son.

Yes, I needed the rebirth.

But sometimes I don't find myself thanking him because I'm not impressed.

It doesn't thrill my soul.

So Peter comes to our rescue by giving us a second reason why God should be praised for our rebirth.

And this is it.

God should be praised for our rebirth because being born again is awesome.

Now, sometimes that word is overused, but this is a perfect context to use it.

It really is awesome that we've been born again.

Now, if we look at the paragraph we've read before,

You lose, well, English translations are great, and they're good, and they're dependable, but sometimes there's things in the original language that we see that we don't see just by looking at the English.

And there's a particular preposition that pops up three times.

Now, we're going to show you, let's add that in there.

It's translated differently each time, but it's called ace.

You were born again ace, or into a living hope.

Next, you're born to obtain, or ate into an inheritance, and at the end,

Protected by the power of God through faith for, ace, a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times.

So, translated differently, but it's the same word, and it gives us three aspects of why being born again is so awesome.

Here's the first one.

We have a living hope.

Being born is awesome because we have a living hope.

Now,

Once born people don't have any hope and are dying for lack of it.

Why else would that university student, who had money, friends, adoring parents, suddenly leap from his dormitory window and meet a tragic death on the pavement below?

When they got to his room, they found a note that said, there's utterly no hope.

or the case closer to where I used to live near Philadelphia, Robert and Paula.

And they were wealthy and socially affluent, middle-aged.

And one day, the state police got a call from Paula that said, my husband begged me to kill him, and so I did.

I shot him.

Well, the police tried to keep her on the phone to dispatch a patrol car to the home.

But she sensed something that was going on and said, oh, no, no, you're not going to keep me on the phone.

We made this agreement, and I intend to keep it.

Click.

Ten minutes later, the police arrived at the house, scene of a murder and suicide.

Beside them was a note that said, we have no hope for the future.

Let's think about this.

People, once-born people, don't have any hope.

But not only did God give us a hope because we've been born again, but he gives us a living hope, a living hope.

This is the only time I found that living modifies hope in the New Testament.

So what could this mean?

Well, I have like four ideas, and probably it can all be there.

A living hope is a hope that is real.

A hope that is real.

It doesn't seem to be any higher quality of reality than something that's alive.

If you went to some flowers and said, oh, my goodness, they look so real, I thought they were alive, even if they weren't.

It seems to be a quality of reality is being living.

And so this hope that we have is not just based upon some of man's optimism or some philosophical speculation of immortality or any anticipation of blessedness that someone entertains apart from Jesus Christ.

It really is real.

Secondly, a living hope is a hope that will last.

It will endure.

It never fails in any situation.

Now, I think I figured out a reason why this is the case.

If we look in a verse from 1 Timothy, it says,

For this we labor and strive because we have fixed our hope on the living God.

See, our hope will last because it's in God and he'll be around forever.

The object of our hope will stay there.

It is a living hope.

Another thing about a hope is a hope that makes an impact.

It's vigorous and vital in our life.

And then a good translation by commentator Bo Reiche said this.

He said, he calls it a hope by which we can live.

It sustains the soul after the new birth with the nourishment needed for a higher life.

And we like this because we look around today, you know, it may be crime, it may be substance abuse, it could be wars and rumors and roars, and sometimes we don't find a lot of hope in that.

That's why he said, I'm giving you a living hope, a hope by which you can live through your days.

So we have a living hope.

Now there's another reason why being born again is awesome.

And it's translated in the verse this way, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away.

Not only do we have a living hope, but we have a lasting inheritance, a lasting inheritance.

Now let's look at the words they used.

And you might notice here, Peter doesn't tell us what the inheritance is, but he does tell us what the inheritance is like.

He doesn't so much give us the content as its characteristic.

He doesn't really define it, but he describes it.

Now, what happens here is it doesn't reduce the anticipation of the inheritance, but actually raises it.

I'll give you an example.

Dad buys Billy a bike for his birthday and skillfully hides it somewhere in the complex of their property.

Well, Billy knows he's going to get something for his birthday from his dad, but he doesn't know what.

So he tries to find out.

And he comes to his father and says, Hey, Dad, did you get me a birthday gift?

Oh, of course, son, I got you something.

Well, what is it, Dad?

Well, I can't tell you, but I can tell you it's big.

Oh, boy, big.

What is it, Dad?

Well, I can't tell you, but it's shiny.

Oh, boy, big and shiny.

What is it, Dad?

Well, I can't tell you, but I can tell you nobody in this whole neighborhood has anything quite as good as that.

Oh, boy, big and shiny and awesomely unique.

What is it, Dad?

Well, you're going to have to wait till your birthday.

Oh.

Now, did Billy find out what he's getting?

No.

Was his anticipation lowered?

No.

Actually, it was increased.

Why?

Because he found out what it was like.

So let's do a little exploration of what these words tell us.

They can be translated different ways than are in different translations, but the first word refers to its durability, the second one has the idea of its purity, and the third one has the idea of its appearance.

It's been translated by the New International Version saying, something can never perish, spoil, or fade.

And that's good.

F.W.

Bear renders this way.

Untouched by death, unimpaired by time,

and unstained by evil.

He does it that way also because it's sort of repeated in Greek.

It's an alliteration that's going on here too.

Anyway, here's how I'd like to render it.

It could be a lasting inheritance which is indestructible, imperishable, and unfading.

Now, here's what you want to notice about this.

These are the three most desirable characteristics that anything could possess in the universe.

Yeah, and you know how I know that's true?

Because for over 70 years, yike, I've watched television commercials.

And I'm gonna prove it to you now.

Not that I've watched it, but here.

Think of Indestructible.

I remember American Tourister Luggage.

In these commercials, they put it on a train track and hit it with a train.

They lock it into a cage with a gorilla.

They unleash a horde of second graders on it.

And by the end of the commercial, the kids are exhausted, the train is derailed, and the gorilla has to have psychiatric help.

But the suitcase is in perfect condition.

Now, what is the commercial saying?

Our luggage is indestructible.

Could they say that?

No.

They'd be yanked off the air.

But isn't that what they're saying without using words?

Yep.

Well, I'll tell you what.

You give me an open field and a hand grenade, and I'll show you how indestructible that luggage is.

Because nothing is indestructible except our inheritance.

Another thing that came to mind over the years of watching this is John Cameron Swayze.

He would advertise for Timex watches.

And the commercials would all be something like this.

We're here in Acapulco, high on the cliff, is ready with a, that was his name, with a Timex watch scotch taped to his forehead.

Whoop, he leaps off the cliff.

Oh my, apparently every bone in his body is broken, but the watch is still working.

It takes a licking, but keeps on ticking.

Okay, you see?

What is it trying to say?

It's indestructible, right?

Well, you give me a tree stump and a sledgehammer, and I'll show you how indestructible this watch is.

Because nothing is indestructible except...

our inheritance.

Come on, watch, get back on.

This isn't even a Timex watch.

There we go.

Now, here's another one.

When you think about imperishable, Tupperware.

One of their mottos was, we lock in freshness.

The Tupperware promise.

When you lock in freshness, you set yourself free.

Wow, that's kind of magnanimous.

We set ourselves free, we lock in the freshness.

Actually, I think this foodware is a bit disgusting because women just get through having to burp their babies and not have to burp their cookware.

Did you know there is a Tupperware museum in Orlando, Florida?

Like an idiot, I went to Disney World.

But they said, we lock in freshness.

I'll tell you what, you put some Limburger cheese and summer sausage in that thing and set it out in the August sun for a few weeks and something's going to happen.

Because nothing is imperishable except our inheritance.

This is a scene from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where I went to school, and I have fond memories.

And one of the things, I was staying in the single men's quadrangle because I was a single man.

That worked out well.

And we had those things called communal refrigerators.

It's not for one person, it was for a whole group of 12 people, let's say.

Now there are two mistakes young men made.

One, they would eat food that wasn't theirs.

That was a big mistake.

But maybe worse was the second fault.

They put something in there and then completely forgot about it.

And folks, some of that food was in there a long time.

I don't know how long, but some of the expiration dates were in Roman numerals.

Now, one of those refrigerators started to make a noise.

It was like...

And nobody wanted to open it up.

Nobody opened that refrigerator.

Until an unsuspecting visiting student, a prospective student, came along, popped it open, and the fumes knocked him out.

Fortunately, we were able to drag him out to the open air, and he revived.

But in all seriousness, they didn't clean that refrigerator.

They strapped it shut and tossed it.

Yes, folks, even with the meat keepers and the freshness drawers,

Nothing will keep it from perishing.

Nothing is imperishable except our inheritance.

We have a third characteristic, unfading.

And here's one that comes to my mind.

Final touch fabric treatment.

I remember this commercial vividly.

It had something in it called bluing.

And bluing was supposed to make colors bright, so brilliantly white.

And there was an announcer who was telling a customer, said, Mrs. Johnson, we're going to have to take the bluing out of Final Touch fabric softener.

Oh, please.

Don't do that.

I won't be able to go home and face my family.

We're just kidding, Mrs. Johnson.

We're not really taking the bluing out of Final Touch.

Oh, thank you.

I can live again.

Listen, nothing is unfading except our inheritance.

I bought a shirt one time.

It said, this shirt is colorfast.

That was true.

It came out in no time.

So ladies and gentlemen, God gave us an inheritance that is forever fresh, eternally colorfast, and comes with an everlasting lifetime guarantee.

Would you buy one of those?

Yep.

Fortunately, if you placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you already got it.

Because if you're born again, you have this kind of inheritance.

Now you might say, wow, where am I going to keep that?

I don't want to get robbed.

Well, God has blessed us.

In the verse it says, which is reserved in heaven for you.

It's reserved in heaven for you, which is good.

Now, this word reserved, the verb form of it is a little distinctive to the Greek language.

It doesn't mean he's going to put it on reserve.

It doesn't mean it's even now on reserve.

It means it has been placed in the past on reserve and it's going to stay in that state of reservation until you get there.

It's similar to making a hotel reservation.

Like the wife might say to the husband, dear, did you make the reservation for our vacation in the hotel?

Not yet, I'm going to do that.

All right.

Then they show up, there's no room because you were going to, but you never did.

All right, next year you learn better.

Said, I'd like to make a reservation.

Okay, you got that down.

Would you like to give us a credit card, you know, to secure it?

Oh no, we'll be there by two o'clock.

Then you had a breakdown, you're not there till eight, and that room that was reserved at one part in time in your life is no longer there.

So you've learned your lesson.

On the third time, you'd say, yes, here's my credit card number.

And they don't care if you never show up.

They're going to charge you for it.

So that room has been put on reserve, and it's staying on reserve until you arrive to get it.

And that's what God is saying to us.

I gave you this inheritance.

It's on reserve for you right now until you are going to get it.

Think of it this way.

There's an inheritance with your name on it.

in the vault of heaven, and God is chief of security.

Well, when are we gonna get it?

Well,

at the grand finale.

Because if you're born again, you don't have a grand fatality, you have a grand finality.

Now let's see how the verses will say it.

It speaks about a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

It's gonna be grand.

Now the salvation doesn't refer to individual redemptions from the penalty of sin.

It refers to something God's gonna do with the future for all his people.

collectively.

Hebrews clarifies this in saying this, Christ will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him.

So it's grand.

And also, it's in the last time, it is a finale.

It's the grand finale.

Paul will tell us this, our salvation is near now.

than when we first believed.

And it's nearer every day that goes by.

It is a grand finale.

Now, another great thing is God has done this.

He's saving the best for last.

I'm going to tell you about an experience eating.

Now, Scott has been a brilliant host to me over these last two days, and we've eaten at some sensational restaurants.

So if you want to know what they were, check with him.

But they were outstanding.

Wow, they were great.

Now, one time in Philadelphia, and I don't think we ever went there, called Le Bec Fin.

I think it was gone before you came.

At one time, though, it was like the best restaurant in Philadelphia.

I owed somebody a dinner for a number of years.

I just keep procrastinating, so I better take them to a good place.

And I went for lunch because I didn't have to mortgage the house.

Most of the times I couldn't afford the tip, you know, on these places.

So it was a superb meal.

You know, the French cuisine, something, and service.

And I said, that was perfect.

Sidebar.

Try to experience perfection frequently in your life.

Because even when I was experiencing a meal, I'm saying, this was perfect.

This is how God is all the time.

He's perfect.

And once in a while, we get this glimpse of what perfection is like when we're watching a performance or hearing some music or eating a great meal.

Anyway, it was great.

Now, then it was time for dessert.

and they had something called a dessert cart, which they would wheel out and you could choose.

Now, I couldn't find a picture because the restaurant's out of business, but I did find something close.

Let's look at this.

Okay, a dessert cart.

The one in Lubeck Finn had four tiers and was twice as impressive.

as what you're seeing.

So wheel that out.

I'm thinking, oh, I'll never decide what I'm going to take.

And the waiter comes out and says, what would you like, sir?

Well, it's hard to make up my mind.

Well, you can have more than one.

Really?

Can I have three?

Oh, yes.

You can have as many as you want.

So I got five on this plate.

And I found out later, if I had asked, he would have come back.

And I could have had more.

And ladies and gentlemen, the best was last.

That dessert was superb.

I can almost still taste it now.

In contrast, I like early bird specials.

And in Newtown, you remember that would be, there was a restaurant that was advertising something.

The meal was pretty decent.

But then they had dessert, which was included.

It was a little pie crust circle thing.

What do you call those things?

A small pie crust, right?

Made out of sawdust and LePage's paste.

And it was filled with gloppy canned peaches with more LePage's paste.

It was terrible.

I almost say, you should have not served any, don't offer a dessert if you're gonna say that because it was a letdown after having such a great meal.

God's not gonna do that to us.

He saved the best till last.

And so, if you think you've seen evidence of God's handiwork in creation now, we haven't seen anything yet.

Wait till the curse is lifted and everything we behold breaks forth with Edenic splendor.

And if you think you've seen the forces of evil restrained up until this point in your life, we haven't seen anything yet.

Wait till the devil, the angels are thrown into the lake of fire, they roll back the asbestos cover, and that's where they are for all eternity.

And if we think we see Christ-likeness in the lives of our brothers and sisters, we haven't seen anything yet.

Wait till our sin nature is completely eradicated and each one of us bursts forth with every fruit of the Spirit of God.

We haven't seen anything yet.

And if you think you've seen glimpses of God's glory, we haven't seen anything yet.

Waiter, we are walking on golden streets by the bejeweled Jerusalem with no need of the sun or the moon because he who sits on the throne and on the lamb will illuminate us.

we haven't seen anything yet and if you think you've been part of some meaningful worship services up to this point in your life you haven't seen anything yet because wait till we get there and our voices will merge with the ten thousand times ten thousand angels and all who are in heaven and earth and under the earth and the sea and all them in them and we'll all be singing worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive we haven't seen anything yet

God saved the best to last.

Your next thing might be, am I going to get there?

Yep.

Because it says, we have a grand finale.

Notice what it says here.

You are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

If your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ...

Not only is your inheritance safely guarded for you, but you are protected that you're going to get it.

Now, let me show you this.

Here's a person, I think an actor, Mr. Coffee, I think it is.

What is it?

Mr. T. Well, I knew it was a beverage.

If it wasn't Mr. Coffee, Mr. T would be fine.

Now, before he was an actor, he was a bodyguard.

And he would charge \$5,000 a day.

And that was a few decades ago.

I don't know what it would be now.

But this is his motto he had.

It was, next to God, there's no better protector than me.

Well, I may disagree with that.

Not with him and not in person.

But I just hope he knew how next to God he was.

We're talking really next to God.

In 1974, a farmer digging a well in Xi'an, China, hit something, and it was pottery.

And he kept on digging and called the officials.

And what they discovered was the famous terracotta warriors of Xi'an.

And by God's grace, I was able to go to China.

see these, they dug them up.

Let's look at the next picture.

And what they found were 8,000 warriors, every one different, full size.

This is not the whole land.

They dug up 8,000 and stopped.

There could very well be 30,000 of these warriors, terracotta warriors, in China.

Why did he bury them with him?

Because the emperor wanted protection.

to get, and when he was in, the afterlife.

Isn't it great?

We don't need 30,000 terracotta warriors if we have one almighty God.

Yes, we have a grand finale, and the last thing it tells us about it is it's ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter would later say in his letter, the end of all things is right at hand.

My brothers and sisters, the scripts have all been memorized.

The angels at this moment are waiting in the wings.

And all we're waiting for is the great director of the universe to say, action.

And we feel ourselves being caught up in the air.

We would feel our evil sin nature being eradicated from our body.

We would find ourselves being reunited with our loved ones who have gone before us.

We would see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face.

We would sit down at the banquet feast of the Lamb, and there at our place was our indestructible, imperishable, and unfading inheritance, and then we'd be commissioned to go then and perfectly serve and worship the Lord Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Wow.

It's ready.

It's going to be grand.

God should be praised for our rebirth.

Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your great mercy.

I pray, Lord, that an appreciation of our living hope, of our lasting inheritance,

and of our grand finale will cause us to praise you more frequently and more fervently because you are the one, our Father, that has caused all of this to happen.

In your Son's name we pray.

Amen.

Amen.