

Our Resurrection Treasure
1 Peter 1:3-6
Reading: Luke 23:44-46; 24:1-8

Bethany Baptist Church
April 12, 2020 (Easter)

....*pray*...

In the NT's *Letter to the Colossians*, the Apostle Paul offers this exhortation to Christians (3:2): *Set your mind on things above, **not** on the things that are on earth.*

That might **not** sound much like an *Easter verse* to you...!

But my concern is that in this current season of *pandemic* and *recession* and *social distancing* and the constant *barrage of bad news*...

...the Church could lose track of "*things above*" and become overwhelmed by "*things on earth.*"

And this *trial* we all face could suck the *joy* and *hope* right out of your *soul* and your *Resurrection worship*!

Let me *assure* you this morning that **God** is still *on His throne* and **Christ** is still *risen from the grave*...

And our *gracious* and *merciful* God has blessed us in the resurrection of His Son!

Please join this Resurrection Sunday in the NT *Letter of 1 Peter*. My Easter text is from 1:3-6 - a Gospel greeting that celebrates God's goodness.

Peter wrote this letter to be *circulated* among a string of churches in modern day *Turkey*.

Suffering and *persecution* were just on the horizon.

People needed a *strong dose of hope*, distilled in a *pure formula* of *gospel truth*!

Peter *makes his point* immediately: **God** *blesses* and *protects* His children through the *resurrection* of **Jesus**, His Son. I'll *outline Peter's message* like this:

***Five truths* that Easter calls you to remember:**

1. Remember your *God* (3).
2. Remember your *rebirth* (3).
3. Remember your *inheritance* (4,5).
4. Remember Christ's *resurrection* (3).
5. (*Conclusion*): Never forget your *joy* (6).

**Is this *too simple* (?): You can't celebrate *Easter* without celebrating *God!*
*Blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

1. Peter's *celebration salutation* is so emphatic that it's a little difficult to translate, but Peter's *point* is to *point us to our great God* in the midst of our *greatest trials!*
 - a. **I.e.**, to remind us of *who* God is, and *what* He's done for us.
2. The apostle's **first reminder** is that our **God** is the *Father* of our **Savior**.
 - a. We are so *thankful* that Jesus' teachings *underlined* for us that our *Creator* is also our *Heavenly Father*...
 - b. But the point *here* is that **first**, God is the *Father* of our Lord Jesus.
 - i. That *reminds* us of the biblical *Doctrine of the Trinity*; that God exists eternally as *Father, Son, and Spirit*.
 - ii. And so it reinforces Jesus' *deity*: if God is Jesus' Father then the *Son* has the *Father's* divine nature. *Jesus is God!*
 - c. And Peter joyfully honors our Savior with His *full Gospel title*: the *Lord Jesus Christ*.
 - i. As **Lord** He is our *master*...our *boss*.
 - ii. As **Jesus** we hear His *human name* (angels/parents), a reminder that He is the **Incarnate** God, the *Word become flesh*, truly God, and **truly man**.
 - iii. And as **Christ** Jesus is the long *promised*, long *anticipated* *Messiah-King of Israel ... and the world*.

3. This *Resurrection Day* we remember that *our God, who is **our Father** because He is **first the Father of our Lord**, is **merciful** and **gracious**.*
- a. To have *mercy* is to have *pity* and *compassion* on someone who is in a *desperately low condition*.
 - b. Make **no** mistake, friend, when you *compare* yourself to God, God is *way above your pay-grade* in every imaginable way!
 - i. Here's how God puts it (Isa 55:9): "*For as the heavens are **higher** than the earth, so are My ways **higher** than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*"
 - c. Multiply that *spiritual distance* by the reality of our *spiritual poverty* (Isa 64:6):
 - i. *For all of us have become like one who is **unclean**, and all our righteous deeds are like a **filthy garment**; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*
 - ii. *Unclean, unrighteous, ... withered, and wind-struck!*
 - d. You & I need *mercy*...God is *merciful*!
4. Indeed, God is "*great in mercy*," and motivated by *mercy*, God acts in *grace*.
- a. "*Grace*" is rooted in the idea of a *gift*. Something *good* we **didn't** *earn* or *deserve*.
 - b. But here is a more developed definition of *grace*: "*Grace is the undeserved favor God **pours** on you, simply because He **loves** you, and **that favor from God** results in your spiritual life & spiritual health.*" (2X)

Take hope in this, beloved: the Father is *merciful* and *gracious*!

Bros/sis, the *ultimate outpouring of God’s mercy and grace is your rebirth (3): “according to His great mercy, God has caused us to be born again to a living hope.”*

1. I just read from **Isa** that all of us are born spiritually *unclean, unrighteous, dying* and *doomed*. You can *add* to that *sad diagnosis (NT): “you were dead in your trespasses and sins!”*
 - a. We need *mercy*, we need *hope*, we need a *new life!*
2. In the Gospel of John (3), *an aging Jewish teacher* named *Nicodemus* came to Jesus, searching for the *way to heaven*.
 - a. Jesus *immediately* offered the answer, then said it *again*:
 - b. “*You must be **born again!**” 2X*
3. Your need is **not** to *rewind* your life or to *retread* your soul, you need a *new life*. You need to be *spiritually born again* by the power of the *Holy Spirit*, because of the *mercy* of God through *faith* in Jesus Christ.
 - a. “*You must be **born again!**”* is the most important instruction you’ll ever hear, and Jesus *further explained* it like this:
 - b. “*...whoever believes [in the Son of Man] will have eternal life.*”
 - c. And then Gospel writer immediately *underlined* Jesus’ words with the world’s most beloved promise (**3:16**): “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*”
 - d. Resurrection Sunday *trumpets that truth* that our great God is saving God, a God of *life ... life everlasting!*

4. Peter then goes on to bind *spiritual rebirth* to *living hope*.
 - a. We are living in a *season of history* in which, for many, *hope* is *blighting* on the *vine* ... the victim of *pestilence*.
 - b. But God's gift of *new life in Christ* offers *eternal hope* for all who *turn* to Him and *trust* in Him.
 - c. Here is the substance of that *hope that lives*, even when *threatened* by *death*; *hope* means...
 - i. The certainly of God's *complete forgiveness* of *all your sins* (so a *clear conscience*).
 - ii. Your *new identity* as God's *child* (*rebirth*; *adoption*).
 - iii. The experience of a supernaturally & conspicuously *new way* of *feeling, wanting, thinking, speaking* and *acting*.
 - iv. The *assurance* in **this** life that you will *enter heaven* in the **next** *life*... The Bible promises that you can know that *now*!
 - v. And when you arrive in *heaven*, God's guarantee of an *unimaginably fabulous inheritance* – an *incalculable spiritual treasure*!

There is a *treasure* waiting for you in heaven! God's "*born again*" children are *adopted* into His family to *receive* an eternal *inheritance*. Read v.4, 5.

1. Our *inheritance* is a part of the *living hope* we just read about in v.3.
2. An *inheritance* is what *fathers* prepare to bless their *children*. The Christian's *inheritance* is the *blessings* that come with *new life*, **especially** the blessings we'll enjoy in *heaven*:
 - a. Here is a *foretaste* of your inheritance: ***heavenly dwelling, heavenly city, no sin, no suffering, no mourning, uncountable fellowship, unimaginable worship, angels!, ... the presence of Jesus – forever!***
3. We've seen **this month** how *financial disaster* can *drop through the roof* like a *meteor* and *smash* all our careful attempts to build a *good life*, a *comfortable retirement* and a *handsome estate*.
 - a. But the **NT** writer **James** has already warned us that **this** *life is like a vapor...*
 - b. Yet Peter goes to great lengths to assure you that **nothing** can *smash* the *eternal inheritance* God has *prepared and protects* for His children (*that's us!*).
 - c. He *triple-dips* the guarantee! The *inheritance* God has for you is *imperishable, undefiled, & unfadable...*
 - i. ***Imperishable*** – won't *diminish* or *disappear*. Jesus promised that when your *treasure* is in *heaven*, it is safe from *moth* & *rust!*
 - ii. ***Undefiled*** – Originally – *to paint, to stain* → *to corrupt w/ moral stain*. But everything in *heaven*, incl. your *inheritance* is *perfect* and *pure!*
 - iii. ***Unfadable*** – The Gr. word $\alpha \mu \alpha \rho \alpha \nu \tau \omega \nu$ pictured a beautiful flower that **never faded...never** lost its *beauty*. Beloved, I can promise, *heaven will never lose its beauty...never* grow boring!

4. Your inheritance is **reserved** in heaven. It will be *waiting* for you. It **won't expire** like a **30-day coupon**!
- Peter's grammar is great here! The Gr. verb "**reserved**" is in the Gr. *perfect tense*: that indicates a *past* action w/ *ongoing* results.
 - God *prepared* and *reserved* your inheritance for you in the *past*, and He's *kept* it *reserved* ever since!
5. Consider *this*, beloved: if God is going to all this trouble to **guard** your inheritance, He **isn't** going to **lose** you! **Read v.5.**
- When God wrote your name in the *Lamb's Book of Life*, He wrote it w/ **indelible ink**! You are His *today*, and heaven is *secure*!
 - Does God use a **safe**, locked in a **vault**, hidden in a **volcano** to protect your *salvation*...? **No!** He uses your *faith* to *guard* your *salvation*.
 - "Guarded/kept/secured" (5) was a *military term*, and Peter's present-tense grammar assures you that God is **always on duty**, *securing* your *salvation*.
 - Just *how powerful* is God? **Omnipotent** – *all powerful*; "**Almighty**" → **E.g. Designed**, *created* and still *sustains* all that is. **Judged** to world in the flood (worse than a pandemic). **Lead** Israel out of Egypt across the *parted* Red Sea and into the Promised Land. **Raised** Jesus from the dead on the *third day*! Christian, **that** kind of power *guards* your inheritance!
 - And Almighty God **loves** your *faith*. We were *saved* **by** faith and we are *kept* **through** faith.
 - But is your faith genuine?* → *Trust* only in Jesus? Does it *bear* biblical fruit? Is it *assured* by the Holy Spirit...?
 - ... Then it's the kind of faith God requires! The *Thief on the Cross* made a last minute *reservation* w/ the *currency* of *desperate faith*, and that was *good enough* for Jesus! "*This day you will be w/ Me in Paradise.*"

If your faith is the Risen Christ, eternal life & an eternal inheritance are yours!

Peter has celebrated the blessings of: *mercy, grace, rebirth, hope, inheritance, eternal security ... but how did God do it all?*

1. Let's *rewind* back to **v.3**: *through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead (2X)*. All of these blessings are possible because *God raised Jesus from the grave!*
 - a. ***Here is Easter!*** Peter sources his entire list of blessings with these **two** Easter truths: the *death* of Jesus & the *resurrection* of Jesus.
 - b. Jesus spoke of His ***crucifixion***, long before He *struggled* up Calvary: "*the Son of Man came ... to **give His life** a ransom in the place of many.*"
 - i. That means that as Jesus *died* on the cross He was *paying* for the sins of His people.
 - c. And Christ had also previewed His ***resurrection*** from the outset of His ministry: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will **raise it up!***"
 - i. Jesus' *resurrection* is God's *assurance* that He has *accepted* Jesus' payment on the cross.
 - ii. The *resurrection* is also God's *assurance* that Jesus' followers will *live forever*.
 - iii. Our Lord said (Jn 11:25-26) – *I am the resurrection and the life, He who believes in Me will live even if he dies....*"
 - iv. The Apostle Paul wrote (1 Cor 15): *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*
2. The *crucifixion & resurrection* of Jesus are the *fruit* of God's *mercy*.
3. The *crucifixion & resurrection* provide the *basis* for our *rebirth*.
4. The *crucifixion & resurrection* give us a *living hope*.
5. The *crucifixion & resurrection* qualify us for our *inheritance*.
6. The *crucifixion & resurrection* anchor our *assurance*.
7. **Jesus' crucifixion & resurrection** fuel our *faith*.

This Resurrection Day, I have good news... truth you can find hope in: Christ the Lord is risen today!

When your Resurrection Sunday celebrations are over, and you wake up Monday morning...

The *world* will still be *battling the virus*.

The *economy* will still be *staggering*.

The *community* will still be *under its restrictions*.

But you can still have joy! Read v.6.

Peter wrote to churches that faced all kinds of *trials*, including *persecution* and *death*.

He reminded them that their trials **wouldn't** *last forever*.

He taught them that, *in God's wisdom*, their trials **were** *necessary* (→ *purpose*).

But *first* He called them to **remember** God's *mercy*, **remember** their *blessings*, **remember** their *hope* ... and **remember** Jesus Christ, *raised from the dead!*

In this (no matter what else is going on) ... *you greatly rejoice!*

He is risen!

...pray... We praise you, *Father*, for the gift of your *Son*.

That in Your *mercy & grace* You sent Him to *die* in the place of sinners.

Then by Your *power* you *raised* Him to life.

And by *faith in Jesus* You guarantee *eternal life* and an *eternal inheritance*.

Thank you for *loving* us.

In the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, Amen!

Jesus (Jn 14:27): "*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*"