

## What Difference Does it Make, Part 2

Last week we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord Jesus! He didn't stay in the tomb; He is risen! We heard the simple Good News of God's Son, Jesus. And we asked the question, "What difference does it make that Jesus rose from the grave." This morning, I want us to continue asking that question but focus on some insights from Peter about the results of Jesus' resurrection.

1 Peter 1:3-9 (NLT). <sup>3</sup> All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, <sup>4</sup> and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. <sup>5</sup> And through your faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

<sup>6</sup> So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. <sup>7</sup> These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

<sup>8</sup> You love Him even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. <sup>9</sup> The reward for trusting Him will be the salvation of your souls. <sup>1</sup>

You may want to keep your Bibles open this morning as we work our way through this passage from Peter's letter to God's chosen people who were living in Turkey. Remember that God's chosen people are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And we have been adopted into the family, grafted into the vine, our Lord Jesus. So, what Peter wrote, is to us also. Verse 2 reminds us that the Spirit of God has made us holy. And as a result, we have obeyed Him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus the Messiah. If you have not experienced that, today is the day to experience it!

Peter, begins verse 3 by saying, "all praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead." Peter is telling us that because God raised Jesus from the dead and in God's great mercy for us, we have been born again. Don't miss that truth. It's very easy for us to focus on the cross and all His suffering, taking our sin upon Himself. But Peter tells us that we receive this new birth because God raised Jesus from the dead! One other thing before we move on, let me remind you that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, but they did not believe in Jesus, nor did they believe in His resurrection. They were blinded by their disdain for Jesus. In their minds, He was taking their power and creating chaos, not bringing life and peace. Make sure that you're on the right side of that thought.

Now the New American Standard Bible translates verse 3 this way, "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." <sup>2</sup> We need to remind ourselves that we have "a living hope". Our hope is not dead, it is alive! The NLT calls it a great expectation. It is *a living hope* or great expectation because it is grounded on the living Word of God (1 Peter 1:23), and it was made possible by the living Son of God who rose from the dead. A "living hope" is one that has

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<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers, [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 1:3–9.

<sup>2</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Pe 1:3.

life in it and therefore can give life to us. Because it has life, it grows and becomes greater and more beautiful as time goes on. Time destroys most hopes; they fade and then die. But the passing of time only makes the believer's hope that much more glorious.<sup>3</sup>

Then Peter tells us that this living hope/great expectation we have, is our inheritance. Not just "an inheritance", but a priceless inheritance that is being kept for us in heaven. This inheritance is perfect, pure, and undefiled. And since it is being kept in heaven for us, it cannot decay. Everything on this earth is in the process of decay. Our bodies, our possessions, and everything we see in this physical world. Earthly inheritances will disappoint us and can vanish. But our inheritance is not of this world! And because it is eternal, it cannot wear out or disappoint us in any way.

And recognize that our inheritance comes to us because we are His family. We are part of the covenant that Jesus initiated through His blood. Jesus said in Matthew 26:28 "for this is My blood, which confirms the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many." And as joint heirs with our coming King Jesus, we share in the inheritance given by God. Paul writes it this way in Romans 8:17-18 (NLT), "And since we are His children, we are His heirs. In fact, together with Christ, we are heirs of God's glory. But, if we are to share His glory we must also share His suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later." There's a lot we could say about that, but we must move on.

Now look at verse 5. "And through your faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see." What's Peter trying to tell us? He is making it very obvious that we must hold onto our faith in our Lord Jesus. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see." The Greek word that is translated as "faith" means "to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance—to believe in, to have confidence in, to have faith in, to trust."<sup>4</sup> This faith is not something we just say. It is something that causes us to take action. You've heard the definition of "believe" which is to be so convinced that it changes our behavior. That's this faith. Because you hang onto God in faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive the salvation that God will reveal on the last day for all to see. So, what's that talking about? Remember that this inheritance is for those who endure to the end, for those who, despite the pressures and difficult situations, choose to stay true to God. That's intentionality.

But what is the salvation? Salvation means to be delivered. We are delivered from the consequence of sin – death – eternal separation from God. So when Peter writes that we will receive the salvation of God that will be revealed, Peter is telling us that because we have placed our faith in Jesus the Messiah, and because God raised Him from the dead declaring that Jesus is the Son of God, we will escape/be delivered from/be saved from the wrath of God that will be poured out on all who refuse to accept God's gift of mercy and grace, Jesus Christ the Righteous. So Peter writes that we will be saved on the day of judgment from the wrath of God.

And because all of this is true, we can be very glad. It's almost an imperative – a command. "Be truly glad!" Why? Because there is wonderful joy ahead even though we will have to endure many troubles and trials for a little while. You know, sometimes we think that the troubles and trials go on way too long, but when we look at those problems from an eternal perspective, we realize that it is really just

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<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 392.

<sup>4</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 375.

a little while. And as we choose to persevere, it shows that our faith is genuine. Many people declare that they are followers of Jesus, but when troubles come, they let go of Jesus and take off on their own tangents. Peter urges everyone who declares themselves to be a Jesus-follower, to hold on to the very end, no matter how hot or difficult the situations/trials/tests. Just as gold is purified by the fire, we are purified as we go through the hard times. God allows us to see what is inside of us so that we can let Him clean it out. And sometimes He uses bleach, and sometimes He uses fire, and sometimes He simply uses time to show us what we need to see. God is the refiner of hearts! He knows how to do it in a way that draws us up closer and closer to Him so that we reflect Him more faithfully and clearly. Your faith is more valuable than the purest gold. It is more valuable than the most beautiful pearl. It is more valuable than the most perfect diamond. So hang onto God, no matter what you are facing.

Then verse 7 talks about us receiving praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus is revealed to the whole world. Can you imagine that? Peter tells us that when our faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring us much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to everyone! What a powerful thought! And we will bring that praise and glory and honor to Jesus the Messiah. We will lay it down at His feet and praise Him because He held us and protected us all the way through.

Just as the assayer tests the gold to see if it is pure gold or fools gold, so the trials of life test our faith to prove its sincerity. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted! Too many professing Christians have a "false faith", and it will be revealed in the trials of life. The seed that fell on shallow soil produced rootless plants, and the plants died when the sun came up (see Matt. 13:1–9, 18–23). The sun in that parable represents troubles or persecution. The person who abandons "his faith" when the going gets tough is only proving that he really had no faith at all. And we don't want to be part of that.

Think about Job who went through many painful trials, all of them with God's approval; and yet he understood some of this truth about the refiner's fire. "... And when He tests me, I will come out as pure as gold." (Job 23:10). And he did!<sup>5</sup>

Look at verse 8. "You love Him (Jesus) even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him and you rejoice with a glorious inexpressible joy." Our love for Jesus is not based on physical sight, because we have not seen Him. It is based on our spiritual relationship with Him and what the Word has taught us about Him. The Holy Spirit has poured out God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5), and we love Him in return. Hopefully, when you run into a hard time, you remember to turn your mind and heart to our LORD God and begin to worship and praise Him. That's really something that we need to practice. And as we practice it and build that pattern, we find that He comes to us and fills us with more love for Him and the joy of His salvation. Just taking that action will drain the sting and pain from the difficult time. Now, does all that pain just immediately leave? Probably not. However, as we continue praising and worshiping, just like David, our eyes will be fixed on God and all that He is. Then we get a fresh perspective and find rest in our God! <sup>6</sup> The devil wants to use the troubles and trials to bring out the worst in us; but God wants to use those same things to bring out the best in us!

Remember that we live by faith and not by sight. Our faith in the Lord Jesus, His death and resurrection is the true faith. We weren't privileged to live when Jesus lived. However, it is very

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<sup>5</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 393–394.

<sup>6</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 394.

possible that we will be living when He returns! And although we can't see Him right now, we trust Him and rejoice in Him with inexpressible joy!

And as a result, the reward for trusting Him will be the salvation of our souls! All of this is a result – because God raised Jesus the Messiah from the dead!

With all of that being said, what difference does it make in our everyday lives? God is faithful and true. Everything found in His Word can be counted on. As we move down this road toward the return of our Lord Jesus, we can begin to realize that nothing that comes into our lives has come there without the permission of our God. That's hard for some of us to accept because we have some hard things going on right now. But even when we move through those very tough times, He is working everything for our good, to bring about the purity that He so wants to shine out for the world to see. He is working to build our faith, our trust that He hasn't left us to just handle it ourselves. We must get our eyes on Jesus instead of watching the waves that seem to want to drown us. And He is so ready for us to be with Him! We just have to wait for a little while. And as we wait, let's do everything we can to allow Him to chip away those things that don't reflect Him. Let's do everything we can to allow Him to pull out the heavy sandpaper and work on those sharp corners in our lives. And let's do everything we can to allow Him to use whatever He pleases so that in our trusting Him, we will experience the salvation of our souls!