

FBC POWELL, 4-1-18 AM (Easter) NOTES
"The Resurrection Changes Everything"
1 Peter 1:3-5

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NASB) ¹⁴ "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and might free those who through **fear of death** were subject to **slavery** all their lives."

Hebrews 9:27a (NASB) "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once ..."

I. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a New Birth (v. 3a)

"Worship is when the mind apprehends great truth about God, and the heart kicks in with deep feelings of brokenness or wonder and gladness and admiration and gratitude, and the mouth says something like, 'Blessed be God.' —John Piper

John 3:3 (NASB) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 1:13 (NASB) "...who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NASB) "...and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

II. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a Living Hope (v. 3b)

2 Corinthians 1:20a (NASB) "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes..."

Philippians 1:21 (NASB) "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

III. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a Secure Inheritance (vv. 4-5)

Acts 26:18 (NASB) "...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Revelation 21:27a (NKJV) "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles..."

1 Peter 1:5 (NASB) "...who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Philippians 1:6 (NASB) "*For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Revelation 21:2-4 (NASB) ² "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'"

Sermon Title: The Resurrection Changes Everything

Easter Sunday

1 Peter 1:3-5

Perhaps the greatest fear that people struggle with is the fear of death. Allow me to give you a troubling statistic. Ten of every ten people die! The fear of death is a horrible thing. Hebrews 2:14-15: "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through *fear of death* were subject to *slavery* all their lives." The fear of death puts us in slavery. Many who don't know the Lord boast about how they do not fear death. Often (if not always) they are only trying to convince themselves. Try this experiment (or maybe you better not try it); when you are having a casual conversation with an individual or a group, ask this question: "Say, do you think much about death? Are you ready for it?" Don't ever expect to be invited to any of those gatherings anymore! In our culture it is almost as if we think that if we don't talk or think about death, it will go away. Hebrews 2:15b: speaks of those who, "through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." It doesn't just go away.

A good example of Hebrews 2:15 is the famous British playwright and novelist Somerset Maugham. In his memoirs, he boasted about having no fear of death even though he was not a believer. He said:

There are moments when I have so palpitating an eagerness for death that I could fly to it as to the arms of a lover... I am drunk with the thought of it. It seems to me to offer me the final and absolute freedom... I neither believe in immortality nor desire it. I should like to die quietly and painlessly, and I am content to be assured that with my last breath my soul, with its weaknesses, will dissolve into nothingness.

Did he really mean that? How did he really die? We don't have to guess. His nephew, Robin Maugham was with him when at ninety-one years of age, death crept very close. Robin Maugham wrote of that last visit in *The London Times* on April 9, 1978. Maugham lived in luxury and opulence on the French Riviera. He had eleven servants and very expensive paintings and furnishings. Death was near, and all of his luxuries meant nothing. Maugham said to his nephew, "I've been reading the Bible you gave me... and I came across the quotation: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'... Of course it is a lot of bunk. But the thought is quite interesting all the same." Later that evening in the drawing room, the article told of Maugham flinging himself down on the sofa. He said, "Robin, I am so tired..." The article says that "He gave a gulp... His face was contorted with fear, and he was trembling violently. His face was ashen as he stared in horror ahead of him. Suddenly he began to shriek. 'Go away! I am not ready... I'm not dead yet...' His high-pitched terror-struck voice seemed to echo from wall to wall. I looked around, but the room was empty as before." [Kent Hughes, *Hebrews, an Anchor for the Soul*, pages 76-77]

Wow! I have been at the bedside of many believers as death was immanent and I have watched them as they faced death without fear. Just a few days ago, I sat beside Dorothy Jameson who had been given only a short time to live. Her mind was still sharp. She said something like this, "Phil, I want to go on to Heaven. The doctors said that there is nothing they can do for me, and that's fine." Just a couple of days later, she died. How do you account for the difference between those two deaths? The difference was that one trusted in the resurrected Savior and His payment for her sin, and the other one refused the Savior. Unless the Lord returns, we will all face death. Hebrews 9:27a: "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die..." The theme running through this message is that because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we who know Him can face life and death without fear. Truly, the resurrection changes everything. A so called "savior" who died and was buried and stayed dead is no savior at all. There is no "living hope" (v.

3) in a dead savior. We have a Savior who literally, bodily, rose from the dead – Hallelujah! Those who are in Christ will also rise from the grave. Let’s dig into this text and be blessed.

I. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a New Birth (v. 3a)

The language of verse 3 is the language of worship. As Peter meditates on the Father raising His Son and our Savior from the dead, giving us a living hope, taking the initiative to give us a new birth, and to pour out His mercy on us, he says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”! The truths we are going to examine today are not just cold theological facts; they are worship initiators! What is worship? John Piper describes it like this: “Worship is when the mind apprehends great truth about God, and the heart kicks in with deep feelings of brokenness or wonder and gladness and admiration and gratitude, and the mouth says something like, ‘Blessed be God.’” [John Piper, *Desiring God*, Sermon, 10-10-93]. Never, ever separate theology from worship that comes from the heart.

Let’s talk about this new birth in verse 3. To Christians who know their Bible, the new birth is one of the greatest and most glorious truths we can know. Some people however, are a little unsettled about the new birth. The phrase certainly is biblical in its use. Jesus said to Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews who came to Him by night, in John 3:3: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The new birth is necessary because man’s sinful nature and his state of spiritual death make self-reformation impossible. That is one reason some people have problems with the doctrine of the new birth. Proud man doesn’t like the fact that he is in a state that he can do nothing about through his own effort. That is why salvation in every world religion (whatever it looks like) involves man attaining it through his own merits.

Christianity says that we are spiritually dead, corrupt to the core (to our very nature), and that we have a total inability to do anything about it. Along with that, some are put off with the fact that the new birth is something God does to us apart from our initiative. Notice the language in our text: God “has caused us to be born again.” We were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and we needed life, spiritual life. Dead people cannot bring themselves to life. God “caused us to be born again.” We can’t take any credit; we must simply join Peter in worship of this One who has blessed us with His abundant mercy! Jesus described the fact that God brought about the new birth in John 1:13 “who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” The reason Jesus chose the language of birth is to compare it to our physical birth. We had nothing to do with our physical birth. We did not cause it. It happened to us and was outside our initiating it and bringing it to pass.

Any and every good thing about us is the result of the new birth, not the cause of the new birth. Let me take that thought a little farther. The way we know that we have been caused to be born again is a transformation of our desires that flow out of our nature. While we still have the programming of the old man (flesh), there is a new spiritual DNA that manifests itself in a love for God and His Word and a hatred of sin. There is a desire to please God and keep His Word, and we cannot tolerate sin. We must confess it with repentance. We are still pulled by the world system around us, but we do not love the world. There is a longing for fellowship with other believers and thus a desire to be in church. I just gave you several of the tests found in the book of 1 John.

What does the new birth have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? It has everything to do with the resurrection of Christ! The phrase in verse three, “through the resurrection” refers back to “has begotten us again.” In other words, the new birth is through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The new birth happens when the Holy Spirit takes our “dead to God” spirits and unites us to the living Christ so that His life becomes our life. In other words, we are placed in union with Christ and we become partakers of His life. His life is the only eternal life and that is why we are told in many places that when we have been born again, we have eternal life – Christ’s life. If He did not rise from the dead, there is no eternal life and there is no new birth. That’s why Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:17: “and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” Because of the resurrection, we have a new birth.

II. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a Living Hope (v. 3b)

“Living” is one of Peter’s favorite words in this small book. God’s Word is living (1:23). Jesus is the living stone (2:4), and those who believe in Him are “living stones” (2:5). We have a living hope through a living stone and those who believe the living Word are united to Christ and are then made living stones. I remind you that “hope” is the confident, joyous expectation that what God has promised is going to come to pass. All the promises of God are tied up in Jesus. 2 Corinthians 1:20a: “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes...” We have a living hope because we have a living Christ. If Christ did not rise from the dead, we would be hopeless. Time destroys human hopes, but time only draws us closer to our living hope because we grow nearer to seeing Him face to face and being with Him for eternity. Those apart from Christ have only dead false hope. That is why it is so urgent that we go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). That living hope is why the apostle Paul could say with such confidence what he said in Philippians 1:21: “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” One preacher titled a sermon on this verse “Heads I Win; Tails I Win.” Paul is saying, “If I live, I am united with the Living Hope and He is my life and for me to live is Christ living through me. If I die, I get to see my Living Hope face to face and get in on all He has laid up for me. I can’t lose!” There is no cause to be down and discouraged and afraid when you are united to the One who is our living hope! Because of the resurrection, we have a new birth and a living hope.

III. Because of the Resurrection, We Have a Secure Inheritance (vv. 4-5)

We have been born again to a living hope to obtain an inheritance. What is an inheritance? The concept of an inheritance had its roots in the Old Testament which many of Peter’s original hearers would have readily comprehended. The Greek root word used here for “inheritance” was used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) to speak of the portions of the land of Canaan that was portioned out to the tribes of Israel. The Hebrew word used there is often translated “possession” in other places. Peter is writing to people who were undergoing fiery trials that included persecution and having their property confiscated. Peter reminds them that they have an eternal inheritance. What is it? Primarily Christ is our inheritance. I think that is understood here.

As I looked up the New Testament passages that speak of our inheritance, it seems to not be a specific possession or treasure in heaven but a promised place in Heaven. For instance, a verse that many of our mission teams claim is Acts 26:18: “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” In the ESV, “inheritance” is translated “place.” That vagueness is characteristic of most of the verses dealing with our inheritance. The Lord has purposely left out a lot of details about Heaven because we are not equipped to understand them. We simply know that in Christ we have an inheritance, a place, a share there.

There are two questions that come to mind about our inheritance. First, our inheritance may be there now, but how do we know that it will still be there when we get there? Second, we are united to Christ now, but how do we know we will stay united to Him and receive the inheritance? The answer to the first question concerning the safety of our inheritance is answered in verse four. Our inheritance is:

- Imperishable – This word is used to describe God Himself in Romans 1:23. It means that it cannot decay, be ravaged by an enemy, or be ruined. Everything on earth has the seeds of corruption in it, but our inheritance is imperishable.
- Undefined – This means that our inheritance cannot be stained or cheapened. This word is used to describe Christ in Hebrews 7:26. It means that our inheritance is free from all

contamination and unpolluted. In describing Heaven, we are told in Revelation 21:27a (NKJV) “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles...”

- Unfading (“will not fade away”) – Out inheritance cannot wear out or diminish in beauty or value.

Notice that this incorruptible, undefiled, unfading inheritance is reserved in Heaven for us. That word “reserved” means to be kept, shielded, or guarded. The answer to the first question as to how we know our inheritance will be there in good shape when we get there is answered clearly in verse four.

The answer to the second question (how do we know that we will get there) is found in 1 Peter 1:5: “who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” The word translated “protected” means to be guarded or watched over. It is translated “guarded” in the ESV. It was used of putting a garrison of troops around a city to protect it. This speaks of the glorious security of those united to Christ the Lord. The Christian’s continued faith is the evidence of the keeping power of God. We are not holding on to Him; He is holding on to us! Philippians 1:6: “*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*” The one who gives us faith can continue to energize that faith until we get to our inheritance. Our inheritance is kept for us and we are kept for our inheritance and all glory goes to God!

What is this “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”? While our salvation is sure the moment we repent of sin and believe on the resurrected Lord Jesus, there is an aspect of salvation that is still future. We have been saved from the penalty of sin – that is justification. We are being saved daily from the power of sin that dwells in our members (body) – that is sanctification. But we will be saved from the very presence of sin when we go to be with Jesus – that is glorification. Until that fullness of salvation is ours, we are kept, guarded, shielded by the power of God.

J. Vernon McGee tells of a man who had one word put on his tombstone – “Kept”. He understood this passage. Because of the resurrection, we have a new birth, a living hope and a secure inheritance.

Conclusion

Unless the Lord returns first, everyone listening to me is going to die. When that time comes, will you claim that “inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” or will you spend eternity separated from God and all that is good forever and ever? What determines where you spend eternity is what you have done with Jesus. Jesus (God in flesh) came and lived the life that none of us could live. He knew no sin, yet He died the death we deserved to die. He paid the penalty for our sin – death, separation from the Father. He then rose from the dead to prove that He was who He said He was and that the Father accepted His sacrifice – His shed blood.

You and I will one day stand before the Lord. If we stand on our own merits, our own righteousness, we will hear those sad words, “Depart from Me; I never knew you.” If we stand on the merits of the resurrected Savior, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, we will hear, “Welcome home to the inheritance that has been reserved for you.” When it comes to our own merits, we all fall short. When we stand trusting in Jesus and His payment of His own blood, we will be received into a place prepared for us which is described for us in Revelation 21:2-4: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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