

## Living Hope, Preserved Inheritance, Divine Protection

1 Peter 1:3-5

Introduction: Social Isolation up, Suicide up, hope declining.

From 1999 to 2016 the CDC has tracked a 30% increase in suicide. Suicide accounts of twice as many deaths as those from homicide.

The explosion in psychotropic drug prescription, and psychiatric therapy have not been effective in this epidemic.

One assessment of the problem has pointed to social isolation as a key contributor to the hopelessness that seems to drive suicide.

But the secular culture doesn't seem to want a spiritual answer. Essentially, apart from God, we become people without hope.

Many readers being Christians relocated in foreign cultures and social structures were minorities. Their previous support structures were gone.

Peter writes to reassure them of who they are in Christ and how to cope as faithful Christians with the trials they must face. The first and most important goal Peter had was to set in concrete the **identity** of a Christian.

What do we have that sets us apart and makes us special, regardless of what society thinks about Christianity?

Peter cited five facts for them and for us:

1. Your God is the only God who should be worshipped, verse 3a.

There is no other God except the one who is God in an eternal relationship as Father to Jesus Christ.

Many false gods then, many fabricated gods today.

2. For you who believe the gospel and trust your life to Jesus, God makes you new, verse 3b.

How? By giving us **new birth**. Note Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:1-3.

Peter's experience receiving the Spirit from the resurrected Jesus, John 20:19-22

This work of creating new birth derives from the mercy of God.

Mercy is the extension of God's benevolent power into a situation where people are helpless and unworthy.

3. For you who believe the gospel and trust your life to Jesus, God gives a living hope, verse 3c.

Just as the disciples rejoiced seeing Christ resurrected, Peter reminded his readers of the fact that their faith rested on the historical event of the resurrection.

4. For you who believe the gospel and trust your life to Jesus, God grants a secure eternal inheritance, Verse 4.

Matthew 6:19-21.

Our inheritance in Christ cannot be touched by the fluctuations of time and circumstance.

New Covenant rewards are less material, physical, and earthly than those of the Old Covenant.

Contrary to the messaging of most health, wealth, and prosperity preachers, there is little focus on present material prosperity in the New Testament. James 2:5; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Pet 4:14.

John 14:1-3

5. For you who believe the gospel and trust your life to Jesus, God Grants divine protection, verse 5.

Peter says we who have been born again are kept in God's almighty protective custody.

Only a Christ-focus will allow you to see that God is with you and interested in doing you good, not harm.

And whatever God allows to come against you, by faith you can trust that He does not allow His children to be slandered, or mistreated, or attacked without having a high purpose for it.

Peter's idea of salvation is the coming inheritance, to which we are now fully entitled but do not yet fully possess--glorified bodies, souls freed from sin and fully redeemed, and life in a new environment—

--first the earthly Kingdom of Jesus under His righteous dominion and then the heavenly city—the New Jerusalem.