

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

We Have A Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3-9

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PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: The resurrection matters why? Because without it there is nothing that makes sense in this life. Most certainly not for Christians. Yet it is common for Christians to forget the resurrection and focus on other things of lesser importance. Today Pastor Henry seeks to remind his congregation that all we do here and now is because of the resurrection and what it means for us.

I. Introduction.

- A. For the last several weeks I have taught on the nature of decision-making and the various ways Christians will attempt to make them.
- B. Do decisions really matter? To answer that requires that we deal with the nature of sin.
 1. If we think about sin as primarily being an external power then we can be quite content as a people.
 - a. For we consider what we don't do as an indicator of our goodness. Then we add the things we deem as good and praise worthy and we are all the more content.
 - b. As former NYC Mayor Bloomberg recently said in an interview, "Pointing to his work on gun safety, obesity and smoking cessation, he said with a grin: 'I am telling you if there is a God, when I get to heaven I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close.'" (<http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/dgreenfield/bloomberg-i-have-earned-my-place-in-heaven/>)
 2. But, if the reality is that sin is actually an internal force within each of us then there is a whole different issue going on. One we cannot escape and one that utterly dominates our lives in every way.
 - a. The bible gives us a powerful example of this in Romans 5 and 7. In chapter 5 we learn that when Adam sinned the human race came under the power of sin and we died.
 - b. In chapter 7 we learn that even God's holy law is not powerful enough to stop us from doing what God forbids, much less can it

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cause us to actually do what He commands. Sin is so powerful that it takes God's law and twists it in our hearts so that it produces even more rebellion in us.

3. Something must change and that ability to change lies outside of each of us individually and collectively.
- C. And this brings me back to the nature of decisions and whether they matter.
 1. If there is no God and all we do is live out our time on this earth then frankly decisions mean little. Basically I would counsel you to do whatever brings you pleasure and happiness now because tomorrow you die and there is nothing beyond that.
 2. In the bible Paul the Apostles writes about the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. He makes several points but for our purposes the one he makes in vs 16-19 is most important.
 - a. There is no reason for any of us to be here if Jesus Christ didn't rise from the dead. We are a joke.
 - b. Later in vs 32 he makes the point of why put ourselves in danger if there is no resurrection? Just pursue fun. That should be your driving principle in making decisions.
 3. But, of course, Jesus did rise from the dead. Hundreds were witnesses to this fact. And therefore decisions must be made in that light.
- D. All of us shall be raised from the dead in the end. All shall stand before their Creator and Lord to be judged. And that issue of sin

II. A Living Hope.

- A. Peter is using a special term here. "Blessed" is used only for the Lord in the NT.
 1. Lit. means "praise, a world of reverence."
 - a. It is the expression of a highly emotional adoration.
 - b. It is used of God because He alone is worthy of this level of adoration.
 2. Why does Peter praise Him and why are we to praise Him?
 - a. He has caused us to be born again.
 - (1) When we were first born we were born into this world/age.
 - (a) Therefore we were called children of wrath.

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- (b) Our destiny was eternity in hell.
- (2) But through a new birth we are now made to be children of God.
- b. Follow the logic of this verse.
 - (1) God is the one who caused this to take place. Not us.
 - (2) In accordance to His mercy. Without that mercy we have nothing, no hope. God is merciful, therefore we have hope.
 - (3) The new birth brings us into a new reality—a living hope.
 - (a) This was the purpose of this new birth, to move us into a new reality—a living hope.
 - (b) Not merely hope as in a vague wish or hope as in the sense of "I hope I win the prize."
 - (c) Hope as in reality and certainty. Hope as in you know what is true and so you press on and you endure. Hope as in something that you cannot lose or forfeit.
 - (d) It is a living hope. How?
 - i) It is living because it is a gift from the God of life.
 - ii) It is living because it grows in strength as we grow in maturity in our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - iii) It is living because it is certain and firm. It bears fruit in our lives as we seize hold of it.
 - iv) Finally, it is living because it will be found to be true in contrast to the dead hope that is taught in the many religions and philosophies.
 - (4) This is where Easter means so much. What makes this unique as compared to the many religions and philosophies out there?
 - (a) "Through" the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - (b) No resurrection of Jesus and there is no hope. We are just a group of people to be pitied.

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- (c) But, because Jesus did rise it therefore changes everything. And I mean everything.
 - (d) Because Jesus was raised, we can have a new birth.
 - (e) Because Jesus was raised, we can have true, living, abiding hope.
 - (f) Christ did not just pay the price and penalty for our sin. He also destroy death itself for us.
 - (g) Therefore we do not speak of dying as much as we do of us “sleeping.”
 - (h) Because we are in Christ, what is Christ’s is ours. His death is our death. His righteousness is our righteousness. His life is our life.
 - (i) Do you believe this?
- B. What kind of living hope?
- 1. At this point it is still just vague in our minds. But Peter gives us clarity on this subject.
 - 2. First, we have an inheritance (4).
 - a. Now notice where our inheritance is kept at, heaven.
 - b. By the way, the word “reserved” is in the perfect tense. This tells us that the inheritance is certain, not merely a vague hope, but a certain hope.
 - c. What is the inheritance? It is life everlasting in the new creation with our Lord.
 - d. Notice that Peter then gives three descriptive words to tell us what it is not. That is a funny thing about heaven and its rewards, it is so unlike earth that the best way to describe it is by saying what it is not.
 - e. It is imperishable.
 - (1) It is eternal. It cannot be used up. You don’t need to be miserly with it.

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- (2) Our salvation is something that we will jump into with both feet and simple be overcome with an inexpressible joy.
 - (3) Psalm 102:25-28, “Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end. The children of Your servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before You.”
- f. It is undefiled.
- (1) There are no imperfections to be found.
 - (2) You can spend eternity looking for the smallest of cracks, the tiniest of stains, but it will never be found.
 - (3) Romans 8:22 says that all of creation is groaning. Why? Because of the defiling nature of sin. And creation groans like in childbirth, awaiting the birth of the new heaven and earth where sin is gone once again.
 - (4) This is our inheritance. It is in heaven, where moth, nor rust, nor thieves can destroy it.
- g. It will not fade.
- (1) This is the picture of the beauty of a flower past its glory.
 - (2) You know, there are things that we all have bought that were pleasing to our eyes. But over time that beauty fades or becomes commonplace.
 - (3) But not this inheritance. It will never be replaced by another that is more desirable or beautiful.
- h. This inheritance is nice but it is in heaven and we are not.
- (1) What if we fall short? What if we don't make it to heaven?
 - (2) Notice how Peter now moves from the "it" of the inheritance to the "you" in verse 5.
3. You are protected (verse 5).

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- a. Notice that the fort that is our protection is the Lord's power.
 - (1) The same power that saved Hezekiah from the Assyrian army.
 - (2) The same power that shut the mouths of the lions in the pit and caused the fire to burn away the ropes bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, yet leave them untouched.
 - (3) This is the power that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and split the Red Sea.
 - (4) That is the power we are all hidden in, enveloped by, and draw comfort.
 - (5) If anyone desires to take us from our salvation, that person must overcome the power of God.
 - (6) You know and I know that we are weak. We have areas that Satan can assail, and often does. We are easily tempted and led astray. Though we desire to be holy, so often we struggle.
 - (7) But beloved, the fort that we trust in is not our own, but the Lord's. And as Martin Luther wrote,

“A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing, our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own Choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He, Lord Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts, of Armies) His name, from age to age the same, and He must win the battle.”

- b. The way we enter into that protection is through faith.
 - (1) Our faith in God take hold of this unlimited, pure power.
 - (2) And this power then strengthens our faith. As we struggle and squirm under trials and persecutions, the promise of being kept in the power of God builds us up each day.

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- (3) The weakest Christian is safe. Because by believing, he is hidden in the depths of the castle of the Holy King.
 - (4) As David wrote in Psalm 18:1-3, “I love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.”
 - (5) Now understand this clearly, it is not my faith that protects me. It is the power of God. We depend upon God, not ourselves to take us through each day.
- c. Notice also what the purpose, or goal, of that protection is for, “. . . for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
- (1) Here Peter is helping these struggling believers to look to the future. To look beyond the difficulties of the now.
 - (2) To be sure, when we trust in the Lord for salvation we are saved, that is why we are placed in the protection of God. But that salvation is not completed yet and all of us wait for that day.

III. Conclusion.

- A. This living hope that is brought about by the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not merely a vague, abstract concept. It truly affects how we view and live now. “In this” points us to the previous verses.
- B. The resurrection of Jesus brings us the certainty of our salvation and our eternal inheritance with Jesus. But it also affects how we react to the fallen, broken nature of this existence here and now.
 1. I tell you, when you see these as more than black ink on white paper you will have a renewal, a revival that you can’t contain.
 2. When these words no longer have only a theological, or intellectual meaning, then you will find that they will transform you like you have never seen before.
 3. Your eyes will blaze with hope and joy.
 4. Or as Peter says, you will greatly rejoice.

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5. But it is really important that you get the "in this" part right.
- C. “Even though now, for a little while, if necessary you have been distressed by various trials.” Let’s break that down to enjoy the things that are hidden in this verse.
1. “Various trials”
 - a. Word means to be tempted or tested.
 - b. Notice the first word though, “various.”
 - (1) Multi-colored.
 - (2) God always tweaks the trials, they are never quite the same the next time.
 2. “Distressed”
 - a. This is a military term that refers to the harassment of the enemy.
 - b. This is very disruptive to the opposing force and all of us know how disruptive a trial is!
 - c. These trials cause us distress and grief.
 - d. Now this is something you need to understand. Because this idea of being distressed shows that the trials attack at the surface, the physical and emotional realms. But your affections are often not attacked.
 - (1) Emotions are fickle and constantly changing. This is why you don’t, or shouldn’t trust them. You let your emotions control you and you will be a miserable basket case.
 - (2) Affections are deep and abiding. They sort of look like simple emotions, but they run far deeper. They are founded on convictions.
 - (3) Usually, when we are saved, our affections are very similar to our emotions.
 - (a) As Christians we need to learn to develop proper affections.
 - (b) This is sort of like putting off, putting on.

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- (c) It is done through diligent study, prayer, and proper application of the Word.
 - e. That is what happens in these trials, the emotions are attacked and challenged, but if you have developed deep, godly affections, then you are able to rejoice, for your affections are built upon the truths of the prior verses.
3. “If necessary.”
- a. It means just that, necessary. Something that is needful and fitting. But it is also controlled by the "if."
 - b. This means that not everyone will have to suffer as others do.
 - c. In fact it tells me two things:
 - (1) First, trials will come into my life only if they are part of the sovereign plan of God. Therefore I cannot resent them, but understand that God knows that they are necessary.
 - (2) Second, trials come and go. Sometimes they are necessary, and other times they are not. So don't lose heart, God will give you times of rest.
4. “Even though . . . “
- a. The words here in the Greek are strongly saying that these trials are short in duration.
 - b. In fact they are emphasizing the fact that it is for only a little while. How long? Perhaps unto death, but compared to the eternity that awaits, it is but a short time.
 - c. Beloved, the thief on the cross is not up there complaining about having his legs broken.
 - d. Stephen is not up there filing a lawsuit because it took too many rocks to kill him.
 - e. Job no longer remembers the pain of his boils.
- D. I dislike Easter in that it helps us think of the resurrection once a year when for a Christian it is what is to move us forward every moment of every day.
- E. We are closing out this day with Matt Maher's song, Christ Is Risen.

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