

# God Saves Us Into His Mission

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[ 0 : 00 ] I encourage you. I know you've had tea and coffee. Do you have tea and coffee again? Johnny, no, that's it. Okay. Okay. Well, can I encourage you then as you're leaving to go and browse the stand back there and pick up maybe a copy of our prayer news or pick up a magazine, some fuel for prayer, and just use it maybe during this coming week to pray.

And also, too, we're producing new prayer cards for our new workers. And one of our new couples who I might mention later on, Joel and Katcha Marcus, who are working from the Cavan Church into the town of Belturbet. We kind of use them as guinea pigs for our first prayer card. We're checking the thickness of the card and all the rest of it. So we've got new cards for them. Now, you may never have heard of Belturbet here in Carrigaline. Where is that? Well, it's just slightly west of the town of Cavan.

But the Cavan Church, Ivan Watson is a pastor there who Johnny knows well and going out soon to Ghana again with. And they've got a vision to see a church planted in the town of Belturbet. And so you might take Joel and Katcha upon your hearts and prayers and pray for them. Let's read together from God's Word, 1 Peter chapter 1. And we're going to read from verse 1. It's on page 1217 if you have a church Bible.

[ 1 : 13 ] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying work of the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

[ 2 : 52 ] For you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Let's just pause for a moment and pray and ask for God's help as we look into His Word together.

Father, we thank You for this opportunity of meeting together here in the name of the Lord Jesus this morning. We thank You for the freedom we have in this land. We thank You for Your Word in our own language, Lord.

We thank You for all the privileges we enjoy of fellowship with one another and being able to gather together this morning to worship You. We thank You for Your Word and we ask that by Your Spirit now He would be our teacher and that You'd lead us into all truth, that You would speak to our hearts, that You'd challenge us, that You'd encourage us, that You'd send us out from this place this morning ready to serve You afresh in the power and enabling of Your Holy Spirit.

We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, here we are in 2019, and I don't know whether it's the same on RTE.

I kind of listen to RTE 1 when I'm going along in the car to try and keep in touch with all that's happening here. I watch then BBC News to see what's happening, if you like, in terms of what's going on, because you get local news in the north.

[ 4 : 12 ] And certainly nearly every day the headline is something to do with Brexit, and how Brexit is going to affect the economy and the housing crisis in Dublin and all that kind of stuff. Our friend Mr. Trump appears every so often on the wall between Mexico and here, and whether it's maybe something to do with his involvement in Russia.

Our North Korean friend pops up every so often too. And in our world, we have a mixture, don't we, of, I suppose, terrorism going on in various places, turmoil in terms of Brexit and the uncertainty of that, and also technology being used in all sorts of ways for evil.

And to do destructive things in our world. And people in our society, whether it's here in Ireland or in other parts of the world, are living in fear with all that uncertainty that's going on, whether it's globally or locally.

And here in the Republic, certainly in recent times, laws have been passed that are increasingly anti-God, that are going to put pressure on us as believers in terms of morality and the things that are acceptable to us according to God's Word.

Our tolerant society is becoming increasingly intolerant of the Christian worldview, and certainly of what is found here in the pages of Holy Scripture.

[ 5 : 26 ] The Apostle Peter writing this book around the year A.D. 61-62 is writing to believers who are under pressure, writing to believers who are being persecuted, or certainly are going to face persecution for their faith.

And it's seen really as something normal. If you look over in 1 Peter chapter 5 for a moment, and verse 9, Peter writes these words, we'll read from verse 8 just to get the context.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

So in a sense, Peter is saying, listen, this is happening to your brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, just like we know today, whether it's North Korea, China, India, other places, there's all sorts of terrible things being done to people like you and I, who simply name the name of Jesus and say, hey, I'm a person who follows him.

And many of our brothers and sisters, even today, may pay the ultimate price for naming the name of Jesus. The Lord Jesus said in John chapter 15, they persecuted me, they will persecute you.

[ 6 : 37 ] Also in this world, you will have trouble. And so these believers that Peter is writing to, they're facing persecution. They may be lost their homes, they may be split up from their families. Certainly they're going to face persecution in the years to come.

Under Nero and Rome, in AD 64 and following, many believers were fed to the lions. Many believers had oil poured over them and there were huge as human lamps to light up Nero's garden parties.

Many of them were literally led like lambs to the slaughter, dressed in maybe sheepskins or goatskins and fed to wild dogs and wild animals just for the fun and the sport of it.

So the context in which Peter is writing this book into is the people who are being persecuted, people who are suffering, people who are under trials. Look at verse 6, he says, and this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

So their trials are real. Their grief is real. God doesn't promise us as believers, as the false teachers and prophets that you'll find on certain TV channels, tell you, come to Jesus and he'll take all your problems away and you'll be happy and wealthy and all will be good.

[ 7 : 51 ] The Lord Jesus never promised that. In fact, the very opposite we just read a moment ago, they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. But into this context of suffering, of grief, of trials, of persecution, Peter writes to these believers and he reminds them of certain things.

He reminds them, first of all, that they're living under the mercy of God. Look at verse 3. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in his great mercy.

He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In his great mercy. Look at chapter 2 for a moment.

Turn over to chapter 2 for a moment. And verse 9. Words I'm sure that we're familiar with. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession.

Or I think as the older NIV translation said, a people belonging to God. That you may declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

[ 9 : 04 ] Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. And brothers and sisters this morning, whatever difficulties and trials and problems, and we all have them.

We stayed here this morning and we formed ourselves into a circle. I'm sure we could go around the circle and we could all name them. Whatever struggles you have, and maybe we're not facing the persecution yet of these early believers facing, or what our brothers and sisters are facing across the world, but whatever difficulties or trials or things that are causing you grief this morning, can I remind you?

Remind yourself. We this morning are living under the mercy of God. In his great mercy he has given us new birth. Theologians debate and there's, I don't know, endless books being written on the sovereignty of God versus, you know, the human decision, all this kind of stuff.

But this morning, here's what we can rejoice in. Not fully ever understanding it, I certainly don't. But here's the thing, God in his grace and mercy has saved you this morning and he saved me.

And as I go on longer as a believer, the thing that I suppose I ponder on more is not the hows and wherefores of all of that, but the wonder, why did God ever save me?

[ 10 : 30 ] And the more I go on as a believer and the more I understand the holiness and the so different God is to us and I see my sin as God sees it and I get a glimpse of it, how utterly rotten and sinful we really are.

The wonder that God should ever set his love upon us. The old song, I think, said, oh, the wonder of it all. The wonder of it all. Just to know that God loves me.

And here we are this morning, brothers and sisters, a people living under the mercy of God. Look what he says in verse 2, have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying work of the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood. The work of God's grace and mercy, the triune God. Somebody once said this, the Father sought us, the Spirit brought us, and the Son bought us by his precious blood.

Determined before this world was ever created, in the mind of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God setting his love and mercy upon you and I, not for any good that we have ever done or could ever do as we've reflected in our songs this morning, but because he chose us in love and in grace and in mercy, were a people this morning who belong to God and Peter says, praise thee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 07 ] That's what causes this morning as we have done already to glorify him, to praise him, to thank him. Father in heaven, thank you this morning that despite all the things that are going on in my life and the difficulties and the pressures and the problems, you've saved me by your grace and in your mercy.

Living under the mercy of God, he also reminds him that there are people who have a living hope in a risen Savior. Look again at verse 3. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Today is Resurrection Sunday.

Every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. The Lord Jesus conquered death again as we reflected in our songs this morning. He conquered the grave. He's alive forevermore and he's defeated death in all its three-dimensional ugliness.

Physical death, spiritual death, eternal death. He conquered it all when he died upon that cross and rose again. And he lives today in the power of an endless life.

[ 13 : 16 ] Death has been defeated. And brothers and sisters, you and I are going to live forever. Not in this cursed, fallen world, but in that new heaven and new earth where there will be no more suffering, no more sickness, no more tears, no more pain, no more death, no more separation, and God himself, John writes in Revelation, will wipe every tear from our eyes.

We have a living hope because we have a risen Savior who's alive and ever lives this morning to make intercession for us.

Isn't that amazing? Isn't that incredible? The Lord Jesus this morning interceding on our behalf before the Father in heaven today.

We're living under the mercy of God. We're a people living with hope and a risen Savior. If we look again at verse 4, an intimate inheritance, he says, that can never perish, spoil or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that's ready to be revealed in the last time. Not only are we people this

morning living under the mercy of God with a living hope and a risen Savior, but we have a lasting inheritance.

[14:42] I heard Michael O'Leary on the radio the day after Tony Ryan died. Now you've all have probably flown on a plane with Tony Ryan's name on it.

Well, at the beginning of his second name anyway. If you've flown, we used to call them Ruin Air when I was in the airline business, but we called them Ryan Air, right? Tony Ryan. And this is what Michael O'Leary said about Tony Ryan the day after he died.

He was talking about how Tony was a great man and always thinking about new projects, always planning for the future, always working out new strategies, new markets, where he was going to go next, etc. And the thought that went through my mind was, I wonder how much planning Tony Ryan has done for where he is now.

He's gone to meet his maker. And I don't know where Tony Ryan stood, but what I can say on the authority of God's word this morning, if Tony Ryan died without a saviour, then all the money he had, all the cars he drove, his big mansion in County Wicklow, would have no use to him if he was without Christ and without hope.

Somebody asked a question after a wealthy person died, how much did he leave? And the answer was he left everything. He left it all behind.

[16:13] Brothers and sisters, this morning, we may not have that much here on this earth, but we have an inheritance in heaven. And ultimately, that inheritance is not in things, but it's in a person.

We have the Lord Jesus. He is our joy. He is our salvation. And one day, we are going to see him face to face.

That salvation will ultimately be revealed. Paul says, the coming of the salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time when Jesus comes again.

and we are shielded by God's power. Come with me for a moment to John chapter 10. Again, familiar words, familiar passage, but good to be reminded this morning that we are safe, not in ourselves, not on what we do, not in our church attendance, not in our involvement, but we are safe because of Jesus.

We are safe in him. Verse 27 of John chapter 10. My sheep listen to my voice.

[17:21] I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life. It can never be bought. It can never be merited. It's a gift. And they shall never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

And Peter reminds these believers that they have, they're living their lives under the mercy of God, that they have this living hope in their risen Savior, that they have a lasting inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they're being kept by the power of God.

God is keeping them through their trials, through their difficulties, through their problems. They're being kept. They're being shielded by God's power until Jesus comes again or calls them home. And then he says in verse 6, and this is where I want to challenge us all this morning.

He says, in this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

[18:32] Though you have not seen him, you love him. And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy if you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

In this you greatly rejoice. You're filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. So here's the challenge to us all this morning, brothers and sisters. Whatever our difficulties, whatever our problems, whatever our struggles, whatever grief we're going through, whatever we're facing in this world, despite it all, and God doesn't take those problems away.

But when we reflect on all that we have in the Lord Jesus, that we're a people who have been forgiven by God, that all our sins have been washed away, that as far as the East is from the West, so far as he removed our transgressions from us, that he's written our name in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he's given us eternal life, that we're going to be with him in glory forever, one day when he comes again or calls us home, that we have an inheritance, that we belong to him, that can never be taken away.

We're in the Father, we're sealed by the Son, we're sealed by the Spirit, the Son of the Father have us in their hands, we can never be snatched out of their hands. Brothers and sisters, this morning, that should be filling us with an inexpressible and glorious joy despite our circumstances.

Now, it's not a false outward smile, it's not a pretense that we have no problems, it's saying that in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our suffering, as Peter writes to these believers, that they can still have a deep inward joy, that goes out into a world of darkness, and hopelessness, and pain, and suffering, and says, we can declare his praises even in the midst of our difficulties.

[ 20 : 24 ] Like he says, and we read earlier in chapter 2, declaring his praises, who's called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

We can go out on mission and tell people the wonder of our God because of who he is and what he's done in our lives.

And even those trials and persecutions and problems that come our way, God has a way as only God can of using them to hone and shape and make our faith even more precious than it is now because only he has the power to do that.

He can take trials and difficulties and use them for our good. Look at Romans chapter 5 for a moment as we come to a close. We're probably all very familiar with verse 1.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

[ 21 : 34 ] But look what he says in verse 3. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character hope.

And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. None of us want suffering.

None of us, I'm sure tonight are going to pray, Lord, send persecution to Ireland. We just long for a bit more, right? We're not going to pray that, are we? But in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our sufferings, God can even use those things to deepen and sharpen our faith and make it even more genuine.

He says in verse 7, these have come that the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire may ultimately result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Brothers and sisters, this morning, if we're living under the mercy of God, if we're living in that great hope of knowing that we have a risen saviour, of knowing that we have a lasting inheritance, of knowing that we're being kept by the power of God, then this morning we can rejoice in Him and we should be people of joy and we should be able to go out into a world full of pain and difficulty and speak to them of our saviour who's given us this joy, point them to Him.

[ 23 : 11 ] And the glorious thing is in the midst of our pain, in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our difficulties, get to the end of 1 Peter, you come to chapter 5 and verse 7 where he says, cast all your cares upon Him because He cares for you.

And I ask you this morning, do you have this joy? Are you rejoicing in the fact that you're part of the people who belong to God? Are you going to go out tomorrow not in your own strength, not conjuring up something within you but in God, with God's strength and by His grace and the enabling of His Spirit to go and declare the praise of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light?

You see, mission is not going and telling other people how wonderful we are. It's going and telling people who Jesus is and what He has done.

And our circumstances can either make us bitter or better. Remember the servant girl Naaman's time? We don't even know her name.

She was captured, taken from a homeland. She was effectively a slave. She had every reason to be bitter and angry with God, with her circumstances, what was going on in her life.

[ 24 : 41 ] But rather than allowing that to make her bitter, it made her better. And even to the leader of her enemies, she was given the grace to point Him to the one true God who could ultimately see Him healed and restored.

We have mysteries in Spain. The Reed family who live up in Barcelona. It's in the news a lot. Andrew Reed's involved in training pastors in Spain.

The Federation of Churches we are linked to in Spain called the Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches. Only about a third of those churches have their own pastor. But two thirds don't.

A lot of those pastors have not been trained. They've just, I suppose, they may even be just the pastor because nobody else wants to be the pastor. And Andrew Reed's involved in training men in pastor ministry, training men and preaching across the land of Spain in partnership with Langham, partnership and other agencies as well.

So pray for them as they seek to equip men and women in Spain for preaching. Right down the very south of Spain we have a couple called Andrew Rosali Elliot. Rosali is from Brazil and they work in a place called Algatherus which is a big port in the south of Spain and a lot of their work is involved in reaching people from a Muslim background and they have a children's club in different ways, homework clubs and different things of reaching into that area.

[ 26 : 14 ] and they're seeking to reach into a new town in Spain called Medina Sidonia so it's a bit like Caratul an area in Spain a town in Spain but 45 minutes away from where the church is in Agatherus and where that town is in Medina Sidonia there are four other towns you're standing on the hilltop in Medina Sidonia there are four other towns you can look down and see where there's no Bible believing church as well so from that place they'd love to see more churches being planted.

Sometimes God brings people into mission in different ways we had a couple and they're young their name is young they don't look old enough to be legally married in my opinion they're so young looking but they came to me about a year ago and said Mervyn we've been really burdened for Spain we've been there on teams served God there we don't want to go as missionaries we don't want to cause Baptist missions or anything we want to go we want to go as tent makers and so in the goodness of God they moved to Spain he got a job teaching French in Gibraltar so only God can do that have somebody go to Spain but actually teaching French he teaches a bit of Spanish as well and his wife is a physiotherapist she got a job in Gibraltar as well so God's provided for them they set up home in Agathiris their hope is they're being involved in the church but they also want to reach out into a new community where there's no church and so be part possibly of a new church plan in that area as well we also have a mystery couple at the other end of the age spectrum or a non-identified couple as we're calling them who have taken early retirement but because of their involvement in other parts of the world in the past they've asked us not to put their names out there in the public arena so you won't find their names in the magazine or prayer news or anything but there are a couple who came and said listen we don't want to just sit and vegetate in our local church there's too many people in it already anyway we want to go and serve God somewhere else and so they sold up moved to Spain they don't have any Spanish so you can pray for them as they go through language learning but they just begun to get to know people meet people for coffee and so forth and here's the way

God works in his grace and his sovereignty the only place they could find to rent in Medina Sidonia there was no other place available all the estate agents said we don't have plenty of stuff to sell nothing to rent one place available to rent and they moved into an upstairs flat they got to know their landlady came down to speak to her one day and discovered that their landlady had a bible on her shelf and she actually reads it as well and something like 20 odd years ago a man from Puerto Rico gave that lady he'd lived in that flat in the past and he'd given that lady a bible and so that couple had begun to meet with the landlady and her husband because she's interested in knowing more about the bible now again only God can take people from Ireland to an inland town in Spain lead them to a place where maybe the only person in the town maybe not but the only person certainly who had a house available to rent and the lady had already been in touch with a believer would you pray that the light of the gospel as they seek to shine the light of the gospel as they seek to bring that living hope of a risen saviour to the people in Medina Sidonia that God would work through them and in them for the furthest of his kingdom and the glory of his name thank you John level.