

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 1:3-5

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[0:00] Vince Lombardi was a NFL football coach in the 1960s. And an incredible coach. He won several NFL championships.

But before his winning career kind of got underway, he lost a championship game, an NFL championship game. And in the loss of that, he returned to the practice that next year. And he wanted to return to the basics. And he was a coach that just wanted to practice all of the fundamentals of the game. And so he wanted to practice blocking and catching and all of the fundamentals of the game of football.

And tackling and blocking and throwing and catching, all the fundamentals. And so he returned to the team that next year after losing in the championship game. And he wanted to start with the fundamentals.

And so he said, gentlemen. And he held out a football. And he said, gentlemen, this is a football. And of course, everyone had played this sport since their childhood at that level of the NFL.

[1:13] And yet he dared to start with the fundamentals of informing everyone who was well aware this is a football. I would argue that is how Peter is opening his letter to the believers that are in the diaspora, that have spread apart in today's modern day Turkey.

They're scattered there. And the reason why they're scattered and the reason why they are persecuted and the reason why they are exiles is because God had chosen them. And he's writing to encourage them.

And it is as if Peter is opening his letter and he is going to say to the believers, I'm going to say gentlemen, even though I know we're in a mixed audience today. Gentlemen, this is the gospel. Or, to say it, to include everyone, church family, this is the gospel. And that is how I believe in the next several verses in our text that Peter is going to root the believers in the person of Christ through what he has done, remind them of the fundamentals of the faith that is going to encourage them while they face persecution.

So let us be reminded of the things that they face here in this letter. These believers in Christ, it talks about being reviled in this letter.

[2:37] It talks about being maligned. They are suffering. They are being grieved through various trials. They are distressed. They are rejected. And some are even being killed. And Peter is writing to these people who are distressed.

So today, if you find yourself in a distressing situation, suffering because of Christ, rejected, you're in good company. And may I argue, just like Peter is saying, church family, this is the gospel. Now, many of us think that the gospel is, and I say it often from this stage, and it's not necessarily wrong, that believing in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. However, I want to pay close attention. And that's true. That's the guts of the gospel. But I want you to pay attention today as Peter articulates the gospel, how much more textured it is than that. And we are going to see. So would you read with me 1 Peter 1, verses 3 through 5 is our text for today.

[3:44] 1 Peter 1, verses 3 through 5. 1 Peter 1, verses 3 through 5.

Ready to be revealed in the last time. That is how Peter articulates the gospel. So today, we're going to talk about five things that you are saved to.

I'm going to give them to you now, and then we're going to talk about them more in detail as the sermon progresses. We're going to see that we are saved because of God's great mercy.

We're going to see that we are saved not of our own initiative. We're going to see that we're going to save to a living hope. We're going to see we're going to be saved to a secure inheritance.

And lastly, we're going to see that we are saved for a salvation that will be revealed in the last time. Let's take the first one. This marvelous and sure salvation we have, we are saved because of God's mercy.

[5 : 11] We're going to save the opening line of verse 3 for the very end of the message. Blessed be God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to pause that and save it for the very end. But the reason why Peter wants to bless the Lord is because he says, according to his great mercy, and we're going to see what he caused us to be born again.

But first, we want to see we are saved, first of all, because of God's great mercy. That's the first point. Saved because of God's great mercy.

We see this in Titus 3, verse 5. We read this. He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

We are saved according to God's mercy. In Titus here we say, but not the works that we have done. There is nothing that we have done to earn God's favor, to say, oh God, save me.

Rather, it is God who saved us because of his own great mercy. We were the man on the side of the road, beaten and left half dead.

[6 : 26] Humanity was in a miserable, pitiable condition. Wretched, hopeless, compounded by the deceitfulness of our hearts. We had a corrupt mind, full of wicked desires.

We were slaves to sin, headed for a just punishment of hell. That was our pitiful condition. Therefore, humanity needed God in mercy to show compassion toward our desperate and lost condition and remedy it.

Only he can do that. Mercy concerns itself with an individual's miserable condition.

God's divine mercy, I'm going to contrast mercy and grace here. God's divine mercy takes the sinner from a place of misery to glory. And it's a change of our condition.

God's grace, on the other hand, takes a sinner from a position of guilt to acquittal by a change of our position. We read in Romans 9, 15 and 16.

[7 : 31] For he says to Moses, I have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.

Thanks be to God for his mercy. Not human effort, not good works. No human will could save you, but God who is rich in mercy saves.

Imagine how that would be of comfort to a persecuted people. Because often when one is suffering, there are questions like, does God see what I'm going through?

Does God see me? Does God even see or care about me? Oh, does God care? Does God care? God demonstrated his care, not because we were worthy, but because he was merciful in our pitiful condition.

His mercy motivated him to act on your behalf and mine. I love how Paul puts it. He refers to the Lord as the Father of mercies.

[8 : 46] So we are saved according to his great mercy. That's point number one. Church family, this is the gospel.

Number two, we are saved to a spiritually new life. Look at the verse three, halfway through it. It says, according to his great mercy, he caused us to be born again.

He caused us to be born again. We are saved to a spiritually new life. What did God's mercy motivate him to do? To give us new life, for us to be born again.

And notice, he caused us to do such. He caused us to be born again. Notice who the causal agent of salvation is. Not me, not you.

The Father is. God is the causal agent of salvation. He caused us to be born again. It goes back to verse one in first Peter.

[9 : 49] God chose you as elect, as elect, as exiles, as chosen exiles. God is the causal agent of salvation.

We were dead in our trespasses and sin. If God had not acted, we were incapable of doing so. God is the one who takes initiative in producing new life.

No one can take credit for being born again. You cannot earn it. You cannot earn God's favor. He is motivated by his mercy to cause those to be born again.

I think of John 1, verses 12 through 13. We read this. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

By the will of God, he chose, and he gave the right to become born again. I look at John 3, verses 3 through 8, how this confirms this even further.

[11:00] Jesus answered him, truly, truly, I say to him, speaking of Nicodemus, he's speaking, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter in the second time to his mother's womb and be born? And Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born again. And that is God's mercy and God's choosing and God's prerogative to cause someone to be born again.

Being born again is having spiritual birth, is what we're talking about. It's interesting, I think, when we share our testimony, where we begin.

[12:06] For example, I can begin, and this is not, so I can say, at the age of 19, I believed in the life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

That's correct. That is true. More complete true could be something I say like this. Notice, I mentioned, as if I am the causal agent of my salvation, I believed, at the age of 19, I believed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

the way I framed it and said it. It's not inherently wrong. It's just not complete or full. I should say, and so let's listen to how we share our testimony.

I should say, at the age of 19, God drew me to himself. God is the causal agent of my salvation, not me. God drew me to himself, and he gave me the faith to believe in Jesus Christ who died for my sin.

That is more complete and more true. God is the causal agent of my salvation. It's because of his great mercy he saves. We are born again.

[13:18] Number three, so let's review. This marvelous and sure salvation, we are saved because of God's mercy. God's great mercy. Number two, God, we are saved to a spiritually new life.

Third, we are saved to a living hope. Let's look with me in verse three. We are saved to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So he caused us to be born again, but we are born again to what?

To a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So I want us to see this result of being born again. There is a three-fold result of that.

Number one, the first result is that he saved you to a living hope. Now notice the word living. This living hope is genuine.

It is vital. It is not empty and it is not vain. This hope is not based in wishful thinking. It is not based in some baseless superstition.

[14:24] I want to compare and contrast this with the worldview of secular humanism, which is the predominant air that our culture breathes. It begins with a presupposition that there is no God and that all that is can be explained through the Big Bang and so everything after the Big Bang you can see that all that can be explained is because of that event.

Everything in life will come to an end and so, and we know this to be true, life of a thing can be prolonged by washing it but everything is going to come to an end by an earthquake toppling, storms tearing up things, waves crushing, flash floods ripping, moisture causing rust, decay, weeds overrunning things, moths eating things, all will come to an end and when you die, according to a secular humanist, you just return to dust.

There is no eternal life of any form afterward. the secular humanist who does not believe in God, there is no eternity beyond the grave.

So, the concept of a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, they would think is merely wishful thinking and it's baseless superstition.

to have life that is beyond the grave, that's just wishful, that's baseless according to them. But notice what this living hope is anchored in.

[16:01] It is anchored in the person of God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. How certain are you of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? That is what this living hope we have assurance of.

because of the resurrection, Christ overcame sin and death and eternal life is now available to you. It's not some baseless superstition or wishful thinking.

So imagine first century believers, perhaps you, some of us in the crowd, suffering, maligned, persecuted, dashed to the ground with their troubles to know I have been saved to a living hope based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Their hope, how does the apostle Paul share this assurance of this living hope and how does it bolster his life in living?

Paul says, listen, for me to live is Christ and for me to die is gain. I'm assured of a life beyond the grave and that is gain to me.

[17:21] He does not fear death. He does not need to avoid risk. He can have courage to continue proclaiming Christ because he has this assurance of a living hope.

One day we will enter God's glorious presence with full, unhindered fellowship with him, his angels and the other saints and we will be praising him.

And this beautiful truth reminds me of what Jesus shared with Martha just prior to raising Lazarus from the grave. He says to her in John 11, 25, Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? And it's as if the Lord is asking us, do you believe this?

You have this living hope. It changes the way you face trials. It changes the way it bolsters courage in us. What can man do? What can man do?

[18:30] So we are saved, firstly, because of God's mercy. We are saved to a spiritually new life. The result is we are saved to a living hope and the next one is we are saved to a secure inheritance.

Look with me in verse 4. To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you.

Inheritance, I think it's one of the most important words in our entire passage. Among the many things that is not secure is an inheritance.

I'm sure you, like me, have seen families ruptured, separated, because someone did not honor the will or in the absence of a will took more and stole from other family members and so of all the things that is not secure in this world and has ruptured and torn apart more families, the inheritance is one of them.

Contrast how insecure and insecure earthly inheritances are to the inheritance that Peter is writing about. Notice the adjectives that he describes this inheritance with.

[19:58] It is imperishable. That is, this inheritance that we're talking about, it is not subject to corruption at all. It is imperishable.

It is not liable to death, it is not subject to destruction, or it's not subject to the whims of another. It is sure. Notice the next adjective.

It is imperishable, it's undefiled. That is, it remains unstained or unpolluted. It cannot be defiled in any way.

It's unfading is the next adjective. It's flawless, it's perfect, it will never lose its magnificence.

I love flowers, I love sunsets, I love dahlias. Dahlias are brilliant in color. The problem with dahlias is they die. They fade. But can you imagine the magnificence of an inheritance that never fades?

[20:59] It never diminishes in beauty. Sunsets, they eventually fade and go away. But this inheritance never loses magnificence.

I can't imagine. And it's kept. It's kept for you.

It's reserved. It's guarded. It's watched over. No one's ever going to cheat you out of it. What's the whole point? What is Paul trying to communicate about this inheritance?

is that it is without question secure. That's the whole point. Karl Marx, the German philosopher who authored the Communist Manifesto in the 1800s, he advocated, among other things, a socialistic way of thinking about life.

And he popularized the notion. And he's on record of saying religion is the opiate of the masses.

[22 : 09] He did not have regard for Christian faith or religions in general. But he considered religion as an opiate of the masses. Further, he would say religion is the opiate of the oppressed people.

So here's how he viewed it. Karl Marx. He saw religion as serving as a drug that numbs the pain of suffering of the oppressed. That's what he saw religion as.

He saw religion as offering, if you will, a false hope of an afterlife that ought to bring comfort. But notice how in contrast Peter is saying no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

This salvation, this inheritance that you have that is totally secure, it's unfading, it will never go away, it's undefiled, it's imperishable, it awaits you in heaven.

How this is not an opiate of the masses. This is a hope, a living hope that offers us courage to live each day. What can man do to me?

[23 : 22] What can jeopardize my inheritance in the Lord? Nothing. Nothing. So I can have courage to live today. I can have courage to share Christ.

I can have courage to share this life-giving gospel that I too am now anchored in. This is a football. This is the gospel. Peter's not mistaken.

Peter's not mistaken. And I'm sad for Karl Marx. Let's outline again this marvelous and sure of salvation with the fifth point.

But let's review. We're saved because of God's great mercy. This is the gospel. We're saved because of God's great mercy to a spiritually new life, to a living hope, to a secure inheritance, and for a future salvation.

This is the last point for a future salvation. Look with me in verse 5. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[24 : 34] There are aspects of our salvation, past, present, and future. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 commonly memorized verses reads, For by grace you have been saved through faith.

Notice the past tense. This is, for me, at 19 years old. This is a past tense event that occurred in my life. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing.

It is a gift of God, not the result of works that one may boast. By grace you have been saved through faith. Past. Presently speaking, we read Philippians 2.

There is a present sense of our salvation. We read in Philippians 2, 12-13, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, but not only in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do or to work for his good pleasure. So, the past tense sense of salvation is known as justification.

[25 : 40] The present tense sense of salvation is sanctification. The future sense here that Peter is writing is a future sense. So, now we return to 1 Peter 1, verse 5, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

There is a future sense of our salvation. And it is sure. It is unfading. It is secure. nothing can jeopardize this salvation.

I hope you, just as I, am captured and captivated by this great salvation that is being articulated.

I want to read these verses one more time and think, brothers and sisters, this is the gospel. And he's writing to encourage and then we're going to conclude.

[26 : 49] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

And I pray all of us would say, oh, praise be to God. And because of that response, oh, praise be to God, Peter writes his blessing to the Lord at the front end of all of it.

And he says, he is so captured by the gospel, he begins by saying, oh, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be him. So, he begins with this doxology of praise, if you will, this formula of praise. Bless is God.

[27 : 57] We ought to bless and praise God and we ought to be a people who soar with praise because it is a fitting response to the Lord's infinite worth, number one.

We ought to be a people who soar with praise and worship because it is the right ordering of our affections to the Creator. We ought to soar with praise because he has redeemed us.

This is the gospel. And he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. And so, we ought to be a people who easily praise the Lord.

We ought to be a people who soar with praise because praise is the overflow of the mind and the heart that is captured by the gospel's beauty.

we ought to be a people who soar with praise because praise is the consummation of delight. And what do I mean by that?

[29 : 01] the end of my delight in the Lord ought to be a praise. Oh Lord, because of your great mercy, because I've been saved to a living hope, because I have been saved to a secure inheritance, because of the greatness of what you have done on my behalf, I can't help but praise you.

And I pray that when we gather on a Sunday morning, why do we gather? We gather to worship him. Why do we sing songs? In fact, Elijah, the last song we sang before the sermon, can you put up the first slide, please?

Do you realize the song that we sang right before the sermon says this, there is one gospel on which I stand for all eternity.

It's my story, my father's plan, the son has rescued me. We praise him. This is why we gather on Sunday morning.

We're reminded what God has done and we can't help. We gather on a Sunday morning in part solely to praise him. Lord, you have been so good to us.

[30 : 25] And to be reminded what he has done. We ought to be a people who soar with praise. And praise, it anticipates eternity.

It is something that will never end. And it ever increases in the light of God's glory. Praise be to God.

And so Peter can't help himself before he gets to the gospel by saying, oh, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then he shares the gospel. He reminds his people of the gospel. Let us be a people of praise. Would you pray with me? Lord, I thank you for the depth of your gospel.

I thank you that we have been caused to be born again according to your great mercy, to a beautiful living hope because of what your son has done in raising from the dead.

[31 : 38] to this inheritance that is secure and kept and unfading and undefiled and imperishable. And you guard a people through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed.

Lord, you are good. Lord, I pray that this good news would so, we would be so anchored in it that it would bolster our courage in the midst of persecution.

What can man do to threaten my salvation? Nothing. And so we would be courageous. Lord, I pray for those who are going through hardship, those who are suffering persecution, those who are suffering loss, and we would be a people given to praise and say, Lord, but you are good and your salvation is oh so good.

Thank you for being a merciful God who acts because he saw a pitiful condition. We love you, Lord, and we are thankful for the opportunity to praise you today.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.