

Secure Hope for Scattered People

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 March 2020

Preacher: Robin Gray

[0 : 0 0] Hello there, it's Robin here and I have a series of short messages from the first chapter of 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 1 and I'm going to read from 1 Peter and chapter 1 in the beginning of that chapter and I'll read down to verse 6. 1 Peter chapter 1 beginning at verse 1 down to verse 6.

Let us hear God's word. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout 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 for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by 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, 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 this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

This is a letter written by the apostle Peter. Peter, who had been with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry and who now, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, is writing to Christians who are scattered throughout a particular area. And that's the first thing I'd like you to notice that Peter has a scattered audience, a scattered audience. Quite often in the New Testament we read of letters that are addressed to one particular church. For example, Romans or Ephesians or Colossians.

They're written to a specific church in one particular place. But not here. Peter is writing to what he calls God's elect strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

They're scattered. They live in lots of different places. But the thing to remember is God knew where they were.

[2 : 5 2] The Holy Spirit, who is inspiring Peter, is prompting him to write to these Christians in all these different places, where they were. And what you must remember just now, friend, is that God knows where you are.

Even though we are scattered as a congregation at the moment, we can't gather together physically in the usual way. God still knows where you are. And indeed, God is where you are.

God is aware of your circumstances. He knows your every need. And his word is there for you to draw strength and nourishment from.

His spirit is the one who he has called the helper, the comforter, the counsellor, the one who stands beside. God knows in a very profound way where you live and knows all your needs and circumstances.

And so put your trust in him just now, remembering that he not only knows where you are, but is where you are. It was the same for this scattered audience.

[4 : 0 7] They remembered that whilst they might be scattered and were strangers in the world, because if you're part of God's kingdom, you're very importantly not part of this world.

And yet they were God's elect, God's chosen, and therefore have a very special place in God's plans and purposes.

And that gives us great comfort and reassurance. So we have a scattered audience. But then we see something amazing about our saving God, our saving God.

The scattered audience have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.

Notice there that all three persons of the blessed Trinity are mentioned. God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of God.

[5 : 14] The amazing, or one of the amazing things about God is that he is triune. He exists eternally in three persons.

One God in three persons who are equal in power and in glory. And you might say, well, what on earth has this doctrine of the Trinity to do with my current circumstances, or my current needs, or my current problems?

Well, a great deal, actually. The first thing is, it's very good to know who God is. It's important we know who God is. So we're not just worshipping a figment of our imaginations, but the God who is actually revealed to us in Holy Scripture.

And that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the next thing to say is, is that God reveals himself as Trinity in the way in which he saves us.

Notice that Peter says that it is God the Father who has chosen us. And then it's the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

[6 : 27] And it's the blood of Jesus Christ with which we are sprinkled and therefore cleansed from sin. And so you see there the saving work of the Trinity.

It was the Father who chose us and purposed our salvation. It was Jesus Christ who sprinkled us with his blood, thus cleansing us from sin.

And it's the Holy Spirit that applies that saving work to us, sanctifying us, that is, making us holy. Setting us apart so that we now belong to God.

We have a saving God. And we see the saving works of God being carried out by the three persons of the blessed Holy Trinity.

What a great God we have. And what a saving God we have. And all three persons are very much involved in that saving work.

[7 : 22] No wonder Peter can then say grace and peace be yours in abundance. So, a scattered audience. A saving God.

And finally, a secure hope. A secure hope. Peter says in verse 3, Well, isn't that a secure hope?

Many of the things that we value or put our hope in or our trust in will perish or spoil or fade.

But our salvation, well, that cannot perish, spoil or fade. It's kept in heaven for us. And I can't think of a safer place for it to be kept for us than in heaven itself.

That's our inheritance. That's our inheritance. That's our salvation. It's what we have to look forward to. It's what awaits us after this life. This imperishable inheritance of our salvation.

[8 : 52] That's our secure hope. That is something that we know cannot be taken away from us. It is perfectly secure.

Now, when we think about the fact that as well, we are being shielded by God's power until the coming of that salvation, that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Well, then that's further assurance, isn't it? God is going to shield us by his power from anything that could cause us to fall away completely, that could cause us to turn away or to be lost.

We are being shielded by God's power until the coming of that salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. Now, when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we were saved.

And we would commonly say that kind of thing. I was saved when I put my trust in Jesus. But the Bible speaks of three tenses of salvation.

[9 : 58] A past tense, like I was just saying. I was saved when I was converted or when I came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us don't know when that was because we only became aware of it gradually or it happened when we were very young.

Nonetheless, yes, we have been saved whenever we came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But in a very important sense, we're being saved at the moment as that sanctifying work and that preserving work of the Holy Spirit makes us, changes us into more like the image of Christ and preserves us and keeps us safe.

But then there's a future dimension to salvation as well that Peter is talking about here. Until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

That again is something which we can look forward to. And we can look forward to with security because God is shielding us and preserving us and protecting us until that time.

That means that Peter can say in verse 6, In this you greatly rejoice. Though now, for a little while, you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

[11 : 21] Jesus never promises us that we won't have grief or all kinds of trials in this life if we follow him. In fact, he said, in this world you will have trouble.

But what he does promise also is that he will be with us even to the end of the age. So, whilst we remember then that we have this inheritance, what we're looking forward to, our salvation which is kept in heaven for us and therefore cannot perish or spoil or fade.

It's totally secure. And we also remember that God is shielding us by his power until that day so that we can't fall away. Then that surely gives us great cause to rejoice.

As Peter says here, In this you greatly rejoice. Although he does also say, of course, For a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Now, we may be suffering in all kinds of trials at the moment in different ways and we all share in the current challenge of what's going on as a result of the coronavirus.

[12 : 35] But we still may be able to rejoice in the midst of that because we have something absolutely glorious to look forward to that can't be taken away from us.

That is a secure hope. So, yes, we're scattered a bit at the moment and yet we're comforted by the fact that whilst we may be strangers in the world, we're chosen by God.

And also, we remember the awesomeness of our saving God chosen by the Father, sprinkled by the blood of the Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

What a glorious God we have. And then we realise the security of our hope because it's kept in heaven for us and we're being shielded by God's power until that day when it will finally be revealed.

And this causes us to greatly rejoice. And so, I hope you will rejoice with me in your salvation if you've put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 44] Rejoice and you will be able to endure then the grief in all kinds of trials that you may be going through at the moment. May God bless to us his word.