

Our Identity, Our Hope, Our Privilege

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: 14 August 2016

[0:00] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Now, a bit of a digression here. One day, when I was still serving in Wisconsin, I was doing prayer and outreach ministry at a local farmer's market.

As I was walking around, I encountered some representatives from one of the local non-denominational evangelical churches. Struck up a conversation with one of the gentlemen. And he, of course, had some idea of who I was, I think, because I was wearing a clerical collar.

I tend to stand out that way. So he ended up asking me what I believe about salvation. I told him that I believe in salvation by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.

[2:17] He responded, good man. I don't think that he expected someone dressed like me to give such an evangelical answer. He went to get one of the other representatives from his congregation, told her super excitedly as he introduced us, hey, he believes in salvation through the blood of Jesus.

What he might not have known, of course, is that as Anglicans, we are evangelicals, just evangelicals who are in medieval dress.

But all that means, of course, is that we were evangelical before it was cool. But, this is where I'm going with this.

There is a lot of confusion these days about what it means to be Christian, what it means to be evangelical. What do those things mean? Recently, I read a couple of pieces in the Washington Post about how there is widespread confusion about the meaning of the term evangelical.

Thomas S. Kidd, who is a professor at Baylor University, had this to say. Evangelicalism in the 1800s turned into the de facto established religion of many parts of the South and Midwest.

[3:38] By the mid-20th century, many Americans could grow up imagining that they were evangelicals, because the term seemed in some quarters equivalent to Protestant, Christian, or even American.

Dr. Russell Moore of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has something similar to say. What happens when evangelicalism is no longer even clear about what it takes to be saved?

Repentance from sin and personal trust in Jesus Christ. Now, Dr. Moore thinks we're living in a day when that lack of clarity is precisely what's going on.

He goes into detail about what we should be affirming. Evangelical means a commitment to the truth of God's revelation in the Bible, and a conviction that the blood of Christ is offered to any repentant, believing sinner as a full atonement for sin.

In the culture, and even in the church, there is widespread confusion about what it means to be a Christian.

[4:57] And we're supposed to be believing and proclaiming the gospel and living in light of that. This book, *Taking God Seriously*, Anglican writer Dr. J.I. Packer, charges us with believing the whole gospel.

What is that? Teenagers, some of these ideas should be familiar to you because of what we've been talking about in Sunday school. As long as you weren't napping. I think you guys are alright. Packer writes, In the New Testament, the gospel includes all that is contained in the Apostles' Creed. Creation. The incarnating, dying, rising, reigning, and return of the Son.

And the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Generating the holy universal church of forgiven sinners. Who no longer fear condemnation, but anticipate heaven's eternal joy.

Anyway, the gospel is the full declaration of this saving plan that God is fulfilling in and for his spoiled world. Plus, the full demonstration of the proper response.

[6:14] Faith in Christ and repentance. Good works and love both Godward and manward. With gratitude and with joyful hope. The full declaration of God's saving plan.

The full declaration of our hope. And the full demonstration of the proper response. Repentance. Committed Christian discipleship. Obedience to Jesus and Christian holiness.

Although I don't think that he set out to do it. Dr. Packard gives a really clear summary of what 1 Peter is about. 1 Peter.

It's written to Christians who are being ridiculed. Who are suffering for their faith. In the midst of a hostile and unbelieving world. It's written to remind them of their hope. To encourage them to be light in the dark world around them.

By living as obedient disciples of Jesus. They are called to be disciples in the world. Not to withdraw from the world. But not to be conformed to the world.

[7:23] And that call is our own in our day too. So can we see why this message is so important for the church in our time? Have the same calling in our time.

Now is not the time to forsake the gospel. To please an unbelieving world. Now is not the time to be worldly. To be conformed to the ways of the world.

Now is not the time to stop proclaiming and practicing the utter necessity of repentance. In the history of the church.

If we look again and again. We've seen times that we're not so much different from our own. So many times when the church stands up.

Recommits itself to repentance and obedience to the Lord. Seeks after holiness. Then revival begins from there. Starts in the church and then spreads out.

[8:26] And that is why I think that 1 Peter. With the themes that we find in 1 Peter. So essential to the church in our time and our place.

So let's study that. In our verses for this morning. In the opening of 1 Peter. We see a reminder of who we are as believers.

Then we see a reminder of our hope that is in Christ. And we see what a great privilege is ours. That, as we'll see as the series goes on.

Sets the stage for how we're supposed to live. So let's look. Who are we? What is our hope? And what is our privilege? Peter in his greeting identifies who his hearers.

And really who all believers are. Verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

[9:33] As Peter reminds them. They and we are elect exiles. What does that mean? Well, what does it mean to be elect?

It means to have been claimed by God. Set aside to be conformed to the image of his son. It means to have been called to faith in Jesus Christ. And washed in his blood.

And gathered in as part of God's holy people. What does it mean to be in exile? Anyone know? Stephanie?

Separate. Yep. You can't sit any person there. Yep. So. Right. So.

Has to do with living outside of a place that isn't our true home. To be sojourners, so to speak, in a place that isn't our true home. So we are elect.

[10:43] And we are exiled. Now. A couple of things come to mind when we think about our identity. First. Is that we are treasured by God. Have been called to him.

And that we do have a true citizenship in heaven. The flip side, of course. Is that we have been called not to live as the world around us lives.

But we do still have the calling to live in the world that isn't our home. Our identity. Our identity. As those who have a true home in heaven.

And are supposed to live like it. In a world that is not our true home. Our identity. Verse 2.

We are reminded of who we are in relation to our triune God. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father. And the sanctification of the Spirit. For obedience to Jesus Christ.

[11:43] And through the sprinkling with his blood. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. Now let's unpack that for a second. The Father.

In his foreknowledge. Knew that he would send his son to die for our sins. To rise again that we might have life. He knew before we were ever born. That we would be his beloved adopted

children.

In Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit. Has called us to faith in Jesus. And lives in our hearts. Making us into God's holy people.

And we have Jesus as our Savior. We've been sprinkled by his blood. And we have Jesus as our Lord. To whom we owe our obedience. Our identity is bound in relationship.

With our triune God. Since he has called us his own. We've been called into an intimate. Loving relationship with him.

[12 : 47] Our identity is found in our God. Who cannot fail. And so we have a certain. And unwavering hope. Peter.

After having talked about who we are. In the next few verses. Shifts his attention. To what our hope is. As Peter explains that hope.

He of course has to begin. By praising God. Blessed be the God and Father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy. He has caused us to be born again.

To a living hope. Through the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. From the dead. Something of a disclaimer here. We are going to be hearing. Quite a bit about hope.

In first Peter. Although if you have been listening. To my sermons week after week. You've probably gotten used. To hearing about hope. Notice.

[13 : 42] That our hope. Is according. To God's mercy. Talked about this. This morning. Didn't we teenagers? Yeah. Grace and mercy. It is not through anything.

That we have done. To deserve it. It's not through anything. That we've done. To cause it. It is mercy. Undeserved. Unearned. And because. It's according.

To God's mercy. It is a living. Certain hope. That cannot fail. Because Jesus Christ. Is risen. If our hope.

Were according. To our accomplishments. It would be certain. To fail. But God's mercy. To us. And his crucified. And resurrected son. That is unshakable.

We see that in verse 4. When Peter. Reminds us. That we have been born again. To an inheritance. That is imperishable. Undeified.

[14 : 45] And unfading. Kept in heaven. For you. An inheritance. That is imperishable. Undeified. And unfading.

Where in this world. Can we find that? Where in this world. Can we find treasure. That thieves. Can't break in and steal. Treasure. That can't be.

Corrupted. Where in this world. Where can we find that in this world. We can't. Everything here fades. Everything here decays. Everything here is passing away.

But in heaven. Thieves can't break in and steal. Neither can moth or rust destroy. It is being kept there for us.

Eternal life. Eternal joy. It is being kept there for you. For me. For all who place their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. For all who are the fathers adopted children in Christ.

[15 : 46] Christ. We may as well say that it has our names on it. God has an eternal inheritance for us.

We. Who is verse 5 tells us. By God's power. Are being guarded through faith. For salvation. Ready to be revealed in the last time. See even more grounds for assurance here.

We are being guarded. By God's very power. For salvation that is certain to be ours. A reward that is certainly coming. And will never end.

In the words of the great Anglican preacher Charles Simeon. We are to be upheld every hour and every moment by God. As much as an infant in its mother's arms.

Knowing that. That God is determined to uphold us every hour. And every moment. Just like an infant is held in the loving arms of her mother.

[16 : 53] What is there that we can't face? Is there any difficulty too great for the power of God? Is there any enemy too powerful for the power of God?

No. Absolutely not. So when trials come. Even when difficulties seem like they are about to overwhelm us. We can rest in the arms of our loving God.

And trials will come. That is for certain. But God's love for us. And God's power. Are certain. In grief. In trials.

In suffering. Even then. We can rest in God. That is what we see in verses 6 and 7. In this you rejoice.

Though now for a little while. If necessary. You have been grieved. By various trials. So that the tested genuineness of your faith. More precious than gold.

[17 : 53] That perishes. Though it is tested by fire. May be found to result in praise and glory and honor. The revelation of Jesus Christ.

Trials do come. In the Christian life. We are not exempt from pain and suffering. Not in this life. But. We have a joy. And a hope. That even trials cannot take away. In fact. God allows us to undergo trials. So that our faith may be tested.

And grow. That we may be refined. That we may turn from the things of this world. And become more conformed to his image. And when it's all said and done.

It will be worth it. No matter how hard it's been. John Newton once wrote. Faith upholds a Christian under all trials.

[18 : 52] By assuring him that every painful dispensation. Is under the direction of his Lord. That chastisements are a token of his love. That the season, measure, and continuance of his sufferings.

Are appointed by infinite wisdom. And designed to work for his everlasting good. And that grace and strength shall be afforded him.

According to his need. Brothers and sisters. The sufferings that we as Christians. Experience in this life. Do not catch God by surprise.

All things work together for good. For those who love God. Do we believe that? We have the assurance.

Of the things that we suffer. Awful as they might be. Will work together. For our eternal good. Not only will our trials. Not take our eternal hope from us.

[19 : 48] They will drive us to know. And trust more fully in God. And to yearn for the eternal inheritance. That is ours in Christ. We have an eternal inheritance.

An eternal hope. We are held in the loving arms of our God and Father. And all things will work together for good. To bring us safe to that everlasting joy.

That is being kept in heaven for us. So we continue in hope. Walking by faith. And not by sight. As we see in verses 8 and 9.

Though you have not seen him. You love him. Though you do not now see him. You believe in him. And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible.

And filled with glory. Obtaining the outcome of your faith. The salvation of your souls. So lately. So lately.

[20 : 49] A little theologian in training. Mia. It's been talking. Talking about you.

Yeah. It's been talking a lot about how we walk by faith. And not by sight. About how we don't see God now. But we believe in him. And rejoice. Knowing the outcome. That our faith will become sight.

Right. Here's how she puts it. Jesus is in my heart. But I can't see him now. And then she also says. I can't wait to go to heaven. And see God for real. The way that she puts it. Is simpler. And more profound.

Than anything I could hope to match. I think she has the right idea. Our identity. And our hope. Our identity.

[21 : 42] As God's beloved children. Claimed by the blood of Christ. Living as exiles. But with an eternal citizenship. In heaven. Our hope.

A certain inheritance. That will never fade away. We have an amazing privilege. To look upon Christ. And him crucified. The very thing.

That the Old Testament. Prophets. Saw from a distance. From afar. But has been revealed to us. In our age. Verses 10 and 11.

Concerning the salvation. The prophets. Who prophesied. About the grace. That was to be yours. Searched and inquired. Carefully. Inquiring. What person.

Or time. The spirit of Christ. In them. Was indicating. When he predicted. The sufferings of Christ. And the subsequent. Glories. They saw.

[22 : 36] The grace. The grace. That was to be. Ours. And we. See. The grace. That is ours. We see a similar idea. In Hebrews 11.

When speaking. Speaking of some of the. Faithful ones. Of the Old Testament. It tells us that. These all died. In faith. Not having received.

The things promised. But having seen them. And greeted them. From afar. And having
 acknowledged. That they were strangers. And exiles. On the earth. They saw.
 The day. Of Christ. Coming. From afar. But we. Have seen. The fulfillment. They saw. The hope. In
 the distance. We see. The fulfillment. Of Christ.
 Crucified. And risen. The promise. Of eternal life. They knew. About the grace. That would be ours.
 But we have. Received it. And the prophets.
 [23 : 32] Knew. That what they saw. And spoke. Was for our benefit. Verse 12. It's revealed to
 them. That they were not. Serving themselves. But you. And the things. That have now been.
 Announced to you. Through those. Who preach. The good news to you. By the Holy Spirit. Sent
 from heaven. Things into which. The angels. Long to look. The things.
 That were long. Foretold. To many. Faithful. Servants of God. Saw. And greeted. From a distance.
 Have been announced. To us. These are things.
 Into which. Even the angels. Long to look. How blessed are we. And how great. Of a privilege. Do
 we have. Our identity.
 Our hope. And our privilege. Christ. It's all. It's all tied. Into what God. Has done. For us. In his
 mercy. It's grounded. In Christ. And him.
 [24 : 31] Crucified. Given the grace. That has been. Poured out on us. The joy. That awaits us.
 The citizenship. That we have in heaven. And God's. Never failing.
 Fatherly. Provision. For us. Why wouldn't we live. As those. Who have been rescued. From sin.
 Rescued from guilt. Rescued from death.
 Rescued from the futility. Of the fallen world. Why wouldn't we strive. To live as God's holy people.
 And to proclaim.
 The gospel. That we treasure. So that others may see. What God has done. For us. So that others.
 May see the beauty. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 Believe in him. And be saved. In our words. In our hearts. In our lives. Let's be those who say.
 [25 : 30] Blessed be the God. And Father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father.
 And of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thank you.
 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.