

# Our Imperishable Inheritance

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Date: 07 June 1992

Preacher: Harry Robinson

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     God, as your Holy Spirit came down on the first Pentecost and spoke to people from all different ethnic groups and language groups, and they all heard in their own language, so will you, by the work of your Holy Spirit, grant that as we turn our minds to your words, that we may hear you speak in a language that we can understand in the circumstances of our own individual lives.

We ask this miracle of grace, in Jesus Christ's name, amen. Amen. In your Bible, on the Pew Bible, on page 216, verse 3 of chapter 1 of the first letter of Peter, chapter 1 and verse 3, Let me read you a couple of verses.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now, I don't know if that's the first time you've read that this week. It's not the first time I've read it. But the first time I did read it, I thought to myself, what on earth does that mean?

Who on earth is he speaking to? What possible relevance does that have? Now, you may be ready to debate with me on that, but that's what I thought.

[ 2 : 1 2 ]     Then I began to think, well, what if Joe Clark came out of one of the great constitutional meetings, the press was there at the door waiting for him to make an announcement, and Joe stood up and held a manuscript in front of him and said, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By his great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I will let you figure out what they would do to him.

Supposing the acting chairman of Olympia and York, having met with the managers of banks all over the world, came out after a long, and said to the waiting public, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By his great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, you don't have to use much imagination to think that that might be considered by all who heard him to suggest that he was totally out of his mind and totally irrelevant to the situation, because that's not the world we live in.

The only person who might possibly do it, because nobody quite knows what he means anyway, is this Perot fellow from Texas. He might get away with it.

[ 3 : 5 2 ]     But there's not very many people in our society who would get away with saying that. There's not very many places in the whole structure of our culture and our country and our world except a place like this now, where somebody can presume to be in his right mind and stand up and say and be dutifully and reverently and humbly heard by this congregation, that he's doing the right thing by saying, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Now the reason that this statement appears to be totally irrelevant to most people in our society is because it's totally alien to all that our culture has perhaps not articulated clearly, but often very clearly, which is in fact the opposite of that.

What we hear every day is, cursed be, not blessed be, but cursed be, the paternalistic God who makes us dependent and then proves not to be dependable.

Cursed be, the God who is defined as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, an insult to the breadth of religious experience of mankind. Cursed be those who think that God has begotten us, when in fact we know that any gods there are are begotten by us.

Cursed be those who are caught in the fantasy of a living hope, when we know that the only way to live is in the irony of despair.

[ 5 : 59 ] By the resurrection, the resurrection on our ears is like the story I read this week of the great white swan that rescued the child and carried her away to her home and family.

That resurrection is in the realm of a fairy tale in our society. All men's efforts, Ecclesiastes tells us, are for his mouth.

He is a cannibal that will ultimately consume his environment and then ultimately will consume himself and nothing will escape the process of perishing, spoiling, spoiling, and fading.

That's the world we live in. We have set up a great meeting in South America to chart the process, the progress of the world's cannibalism while it destroys itself and consumes itself.

And that we understand. God is not a shield and fortress. God is, for those who believe in him, only a hiding place from the reality of our world.

[ 7 : 18 ] And salvation is not a hope that belongs to the human race. We will pass and be forgotten like the rest. And the passage ends in verse 6 by saying, in this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials.

You know, the contrast between for a little while you may have it good, but the long-term prospects are poor.

As opposed to what Peter is saying to the Christians, for a little while you may have it hard, but the long-term prospects are glorious.

So you see that this passage is quite extraordinary. It's a passage which you can only read, I suppose, once you have experienced in some measure the reality of the person of Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

Now, it's not unusual that you should be told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's the function of the preachers of the gospel to harangue you, to persuade you, to dialogue with you, to proclaim to you the fact of who Jesus Christ is.

[ 8 : 56 ] And they have all the ammunition from the whole of the Old Testament to say, you know what the law of Moses tells you? It tells you that that law ultimately, and you can go through all the story of it, that law ultimately finds its fulfillment only in the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

You want to know what the kingdom of David is? The kingdom of David is man's struggle to see how we may be justly governed, and governing with justice belongs only to Jesus Christ as Lord and King.

You read the story of the priestly offering of the sacrifice day after day in the temple in Jerusalem, trying to deal with the pervasive sense of failure and guilt that afflicts human nature, and that priestly offering finds its fulfillment in the atonement for our sins through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

you can search through the books of wisdom to find out where they lead, and they lead ultimately to that good which is to fear the Lord, the Lord who loves us and has given his son to die for us.

You want to know what the ultimate promise of the prophets is, where they ask the profound question, what is the meaning of life in the midst of suffering? What is the meaning of life in the midst of conquest?

[ 10 : 45 ] What is the meaning of life when everything seems to be subject to perishing, to fading, and to spoiling? And the prophets say, there is something more.

So that we are taught that our primary relationship is to God through Jesus Christ, our first loyalty is to Jesus Christ as Lord and King.

Jesus Christ, our great high priest, has effected the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Our wisdom is to put our faith in him whom we fear, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, the one whom God has raised from the dead.

The promise of the prophets is imperishable. unfading and unspoiled inheritance.

Well, this is why this statement is here. Go back to it again and see if you can hear it with new ear.

[ 11 : 59 ] Now, when I talk to you as I am this morning, I mean, your faces are talking to me. And I know that some of you are in the bliss of being married recently.

I know that some of you are enjoying prosperity. I know some of you are bursting with good health.

I know some of you are afflicted with disease. I know some of you are contracted with despair and profound depression.

I know some of you have great anxiety. I know some of you can slip into hopelessness very easily. I know some of you are daily confronted by frustrations which are overwhelming.

overwhelming. And I know some of you have a vision of the end which haunts you day and night. All that you're telling me.

[ 13 : 16 ] You're telling me as I meet you through the week. You're telling me as I hear from you through one person or another. your joys and your sorrows.

All those things. But then I stand up on Sunday morning and say to you as I do this morning using the words of St. Peter from 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

An inheritance which is imperishable undefiled and unfading which is kept in heaven for you and as that inheritance is kept so you are kept for that inheritance by God's power.

You are guarded through faith for a salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time and in this you are to rejoice even though you may have to suffer trials for a while or even though you may be enjoying the crest of joy and peace and all the fulfillment that this human life offers us.

So what I want you look at is that this is Peter's letter isn't it?

[ 14 : 53 ] Peter is the one who preached the sermon which was read as the lesson this morning. When the men heard that sermon the men who were gathered in Jerusalem the people who were gathered there said what must we do?

Peter said repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that the Holy Spirit fell on them brought them conviction which was described in the New Testament as being cut to the heart and then brought them to faith in Jesus Christ as the one whom God had raised from the dead and gave them a heart to rejoice Christ because of the God who had revealed himself in Christ and because through that by faith in a world that was as bad as ours I'm sure they were able to say with one accord as God grant that we may be able to say on this Whitsunday or Pentecost Sunday this day in which we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit that we by that Spirit may be able to say in the midst of the world in which we live and to say intelligibly so that our world can hear it even if they don't understand it that they can hear that there is this undergirding reality of our life in

Christ so that we say blessed be why don't you say it with me and we'll just read verses 3 to 6 aloud because this is what I want you by God's grace to be able to hear in the midst of your circumstances will you say it with me 3 to 6 blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Christ Christ I saved and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and as many parents which is perishable unbilled and unbated and in heaven for you who are God's power are heart and faith are salvation that they could be real from God's time that says it all I mean it doesn't say it all but it says so much that that I could wish that you would commend that to memory or commit that to memory so that you may know whatever circumstances overcome you that this state of blessedness is

God's guaranteed promise to you in whatever circumstance you find yourself when those men on the first Pentecost heard Peter's message and repented and believed seeking the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit so may we be renewed in our faith on this day discover anew the wonderful reality of the forgiveness of our sins we may we share in the gift of God's Holy Spirit in our life and in our worship this needs to be part of the life of each one of us may God give you grace to receive this forgiveness of sins and to receive anew and afresh the renewing power of

God's Holy Spirit one last I got to tell you this this morning at the eight o'clock service Max McBean got up to read the scriptures this is the word was to be read there we were all sitting there and Max McBean got up and stood at the lectern over there and said this microphone isn't working that it said it all for me that there's a sense in our world in which it's not working the way it should and the way it should work the way our world needs to work is that we know anew the wonder of the forgiveness of our sins and the reality of the gift of the Holy

[19:52] Spirit and then we'll be working the way we should amen let us pray as we begin to pray I would like to read excerpts from Psalm 67 let the nations be glad and sing for joy guide the nations upon the earth the earth has yielded its increase

God our God has blessed us let all the ends of the earth fear him father you love all your children let the whole earth acknowledge your great glory and worship you in holiness let the nations submit to your righteous rule and be united in a community of mercy justice peace and truth let all humankind fulfill the purpose of your love father we pray for the earth summit in

Rio de Janeiro we pray your hand will be on all those who share common concern in the protection of serious environmental issues throughout all the earth lord in your mercy hear our prayer father we thank you for the corporate body of Jesus Christ we are so aware of our saint John's family and friends father we thank you that we are able to share in the joys of one another we especially think of a number of couples who have recently been married we pray your blessing upon them father we also share in the sorrow of those in our family who are shadowed by illness and suffering lord Jesus we pray for your comfort courage and strength to be to them all that they need lord in your mercy here are prayers for Ben and Elizabeth Thomas for Jack for Todd and Troy for Hugh and we also pray for those who have recently been bereaved we pray your comfort to them now father we also want to pray this for the synod meeting this week pray that you will give them good judgment and wisdom and the Holy Spirit can we take just a moment now to pray silently for these our friends now father we thank you for Katherine Couldron's safe return to Canada and to us thank you for her term of service with Youth for a Mission Youth with a Mission help her now as she formulates future plans and father we would like to pray for Mike and he and he and he and he who leave this week for Costa Rica may you be to them all that they need father we thank you for the mission held at Saint Chad's this past days may the good news of the mission be blessed as

your amazing love and liberating power has been known has been made known in Jesus Christ we pray with all gratitude for those who have found in Jesus a living savior and lord lord in your mercy hear our prayers now finally we pray for each member of the canonical committee we ask special wisdom and vision as they proceed in careful deliberation regarding the selection of the person who will take the reins from Harry and continue the strong ministry of the Gospel of Christ in this parish may we now in silence pray that the person of God's choosing will come to St John's these prayers this morning we ask in the name of Jesus Christ Amen let's continue to pray and turn to page 77 of our prayer books page 77 we're told to confess our sins so that we may hear God's forgiveness we say together Almighty God Father of our Lord Jesus Christ maker of all things judge of all people we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most previously have committed our thought broke indeed against that divine majesty we do only through pain and are heartily sorry for these other sins have mercy upon us most merciful Father for our son of Jesus Christ who give us all his past a grant that he ever after serve and peace be and will his life divine glory Almighty God our heavenly Father who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him have mercy upon you pardon and deliver you from all your sins confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to everlasting life through

Jesus Christ our Lord Amen hear what comforting words our savior Jesus Christ says to all who truly turn to him come unto me all that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish but have eternal life hear what Saint Paul says this is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners hear what Saint John said if anyone sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous and he is the propitiation for our sins please stand we sing our offertory hymn number 383 stand up and bless the

[ 30 : 40 ] Lord any sopero He was the blessed and temple in place.

Jill pres allteth Turkey■■■■ Maat■■■ Danke geht Not dort auf der ■■■he And ■■■■ DayConel the Buh.

O Lord, come He came, and He's for beauty born Jesus, let His Christ choose His love, and in life vaznavar The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Son, and the salvation of the Lord, and the peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior and the Savior.

The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior and the Savior and the Savior.

The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior and the Savior. The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior and the Savior. The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior and the Savior.

[ 33 : 27 ] The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior. The peace of the Lord is the Savior and the Savior. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.