

# Kept by the Power of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to 1 Peter chapter 1, 1 Peter chapter 1, and reading at verse 5.

Last week we were looking at the first four verses and we saw this inheritance that has been prepared for us and we're told that it was imperishable, undefiled, and unfading kept in heaven for you.

And we carry on reading at verse 5, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

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 that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not 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.

[ 1 : 25 ] Last week, as we looked at the beginning of this chapter, we saw something of the hope of the Christian, a hope that is rooted in Christ, the Christ who died, the Christ who rose, the Christ who has ascended, the Christ who is living for us, and the Christ who is coming again.

Jesus Christ is the source of our hope. And as we saw, the Christian is guaranteed a great future of that inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

And this place, as we saw, is kept in heaven for us. But we are also being kept for it. We are being guarded in order that we will receive this inheritance.

You know, grace is, in many ways, we could say, the great miracle. People say there's no miracles today. Well, I'm a miracle. You're a miracle in Jesus Christ.

It is nothing short of a miracle. It is an amazing thing to see somebody who has been born again, somebody who is kept, and somebody who has been prepared for the place that is kept for them.

[ 2 : 52 ] Because when you think of all the faults and all the failings and all the sin and all the potential for disaster that is in your heart and in my heart, it is nothing short of the amazing grace that John Newton wrote and sang about that will take us to glory.

Amazing grace. Amazing grace. Because it's quite an extraordinary thing. And if anything shows the power of God, we'll just look at that in a moment, it is this.

That despite everything that I am, I am still following the Lord. Despite all the potential for disaster that is within me, this place in heaven is kept for me, and the Lord will take me there.

That's what the Bible teaches. And it's an amazing thing. And it gives to the believer such a sense of security. Because if it was down to ourselves, A, if this was all up to us, A, we wouldn't be saved, and B, we wouldn't make it on our own.

You know, sometimes, and particularly with young people, I sometimes hear parents say when somebody, a young member of the family is converted. And on the one hand, there's this great sense of joy, but there's also a sense of fear.

[ 4 : 20 ] And they say, oh, you know, it's wonderful, but, oh, there's a new worry. And that worry is simply the fear. What if they don't keep going?

My friend, they will. If they are truly the Lord's, if they have come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, if they have been saved, they will be kept.

The Lord will see to it. The Lord who saves is the Lord who keeps. The Lord doesn't save for a little while and then say, well, I saved you for a wee while, you're on your own now.

Not at any point ever are we left on our own. Ever, ever, ever. He is always with us. And that's what this is highlighting for us.

That we are being guarded. And this word guarded is a military term. And it's the kind of word that was used about job when Satan complained that he couldn't get a job.

[ 5 : 24 ] He was complaining before God. No wonder job fears you. No wonder job honors you. Because you have put a hedge around him.

You have guarded him. And all that he has. Satan is saying, I can't get at him. Yes, of course, he could get at him to tempt him. But he couldn't get at job or his family or anything that he had to inflict damage or hurt.

It was only when the Lord, for job's ultimate good, although there was incredible heartache and pain, allowed, gave permission for that guarding to be penetrated.

For Satan to get access to job. So it's the same kind of word that we have here. This idea of God's guarding and protecting. And this guarding that God exercises or God works for all his people is for all of his people.

It's not just for the hundredfold fruit-bearing Christians. It's not just for those who live this incredibly saintly life. It's for all the believers.

[ 6 : 37 ] For everybody who walks. As we've indicated before, some people walk with a stride. Other people walk quickly. Others walk slowly. Some people walk all over the place.

Some people walk with a limp. All different types of walking. So it is spiritually. All of them are being guarded. All of them are being kept.

And so this is a great thing. That the Lord is going to keep his people. Just as he found, as it tells us, remember how he looked after Israel in the wilderness.

That verse he says, He found them in the desert land and in the waste howling wilderness. He led them about. He instructed them. He kept them as the apple of his eye.

That was a bleak, dangerous, barren wilderness with every enemy around and about. But all the time, God was watching over them and he was keeping them.

[ 7 : 38 ] As the apple of his eye. The most tender part. Covered by the eye. Protected by the sockets. Protected by the eyelids.

By the lashes. There is everything there to give this protection. Because it is so sensitive. It is like the Lord is saying, That is a protection that I am giving my people.

And he is protecting us always. Remember what the Lord says in Isaiah. He gives that speaking about his people as if they were a vineyard.

And he says, I, the Lord, do keep it. I water it every moment. Lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day. That's what the Lord is doing for his people.

Now, there are some gardeners who spend so much time on their gardens. And there are some gardeners, and it's such a labor of love, that they're never out of their garden.

[ 8 : 39 ] But it doesn't matter how much they love their gardens. And how much time and effort and how much they pride. They cannot do it 24-7.

But the Lord does. We are like a watered garden. And he's making sure that nothing will ultimately hurt us. Nothing will ultimately destroy or ruin us.

And so, this is a wonderful thing. So, we are being guarded. How are we being guarded? Well, we're told, by God's power. That's how we enter this inheritance.

It's all by God's power. That's how we were saved. This gospel, we're told, is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

That's how you became a Christian. God's power. We've mentioned this often enough before. It's the word we get our word dynamite from. Dunamite. That's a word.

[ 9 : 35 ] It's as if when God comes, he blows apart. Just in the way that used to get these explosions. Say, for instance, when you'd see the roadmen building the road.

And dynamite would be used. These explosives or the jelly, whatever, would be used to blow apart. And the rocks would be blown apart. Many of the roads, you can see how they've gone right through the hillside, which was full of rocks, blown apart.

Well, that's where we get our word dynamite. From the word that describes God's power. That's what happens. That's how people's lives are changed.

Because this power changes us. The same power that brought this world into being. God spoke the word. Dunamite.

Dynamite. He spoke. And he brought in the sun, the moon, the stars. Brought in the dry land, the sea. Brought in the birds, the fishes.

[10:41] From the dust to the ground. Spoke the word. Broad man. Built woman. Ordered the stars. Counts them. Guides them. That's the power. Power that saves and the power that guards.

Could anybody be safer? I was reading a letter recently that some of you may get a letter from Adam.

You know, he's preached here and he ministers in some of the quite dangerous parts of this world. And he was saying in that letter, the one thing I have discovered.

That if you are where God wants you to be, even although it is the most dangerous place on earth, it becomes for you the safest.

And if you go to what is regarded humanly as the safest place in the world, but it's not where God wants you to be, it becomes the most dangerous place.

[11:46] And that's so true. And that gives us some idea here. There was Israel in the wilderness. Such a dangerous place. Here we live out our lives in a world that hates the gospel, hates Christianity.

It is enemy territory. And it is true in our life that if we follow the Lord and go where he will have us go, then we are in the safest place.

So we are being kept by this power. And this power works within us in two different ways. It works, for instance, A, in controlling. Controlling the forces of evil, of binding and protecting.

But it also, this power works in influencing us for good. Remember what it says in Philippians. It is God who works in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Isn't that amazing? God, his power influences us to will, to do of his good pleasure.

[12:57] So it's that God who is at work, but we're told of here who by God's power are being guarded through faith. Isn't that wonderful?

Through faith. Now, our faith may at times be weak, but that will not stop God's power at work. You know, some, you might be here today and say, well, I have really, really weak faith.

Does that mean that my little faith will stop God guarding me and protecting me? Not at all. At the end of the day, God's guarding is not relevant to our faith.

Faith is a product, remember, of this power. Faith is a product of this power. Faith, the guarding and the keeping, manifests itself through our faith.

But then it tells us, for the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. So what's this salvation ready to be revealed in the last time?

[14:05] Well, we know that the salvation that we get in Jesus Christ isn't just the moment that we're born again. Sometimes we talk about that as salvation. Salvation is threefold.

It is, first of all, in what we would term our justification when we're born again, when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. That's the first part. The second part is our sanctification.

And that's twofold. One, where we are set apart, when we are born again, set apart. It's instant. But also, while it is developing, so that we are growing more and more and more like Jesus.

This is all part of the salvation. But there's a third part, and that's glorification. And that is involved in our death. So that when we die, our souls will immediately go to glory.

But that's not the end. That's not the fullness of salvation. Our bodies, which will be laid in the grave, will rise again. And there will be the full glory enjoyed by body and soul reunited.

[15:18] So the salvation that is won in Jesus Christ is all that. It's not just when I am saved. Jesus won.

Everything that Jesus did as mediator for us is given over to us. So that we see that in Jesus, his death, his victory over death.

The grave couldn't keep him. And the glory that Jesus has now as mediator is a glory that you and I will share in. All of that is salvation.

And that is what Peter is talking about here. When this salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time, it's this, when Jesus is returning again, and all the glory that will take place there.

No wonder this is a letter of hope. We must never lose sight of the fact that Peter is writing to people who are having a hard time. And that's why it's a letter of hope.

[16:18] Because Peter is saying to them, yes, this world is tough. Yes, you're having a hard time. But fix your eyes upon what it's really all about and where you're going.

What a difference it makes to our life. Because you and I know what we have. We know who we have. And we know where we're going.

And that makes some difference to our lives. But then Peter says, in this you rejoice. He says this in verse 6. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

Yes, all this is going to happen. This is your life. But, he says, you can expect there will be trials. The pathway to glory has many bumps and bangs.

And the pathway has many things which will cause difficulties and trials. But we've got to expect that. It's not something that we should say. And, you know, there's always this danger of thinking when, as a believer, when something difficult comes into your life.

[ 17 : 33 ] Or you face opposition. Or there's something, and you're saying to yourself, I didn't think the Christian life would be like this. The word of God is reminding us, it will be.

And we must never be like Job's friends who thought that when Job faced troubles and trials, it was an indication that he didn't really love the Lord.

Nothing was further from the truth. And so we've got to remember that, that there will be the troubles. There will be the trials. But it's necessary. You see, all these troubles and trials that come our way, they're there for our good.

One of the things it does, it keeps us from becoming too fond of this world. We were reading that in 1 John. The world is dangerous.

And we've got to guard against becoming too fond of it. We mustn't end up loving the world. Now, when, don't get me wrong, that doesn't mean, that's not saying we mustn't love life.

[ 18 : 35 ] And we can often mistake love of life for our love of the world. They're two different things. Because we're living in this world. When it talks about the world, it talks about the spirit of the age.

All that the world, in that sort of sense, is in itself. So that our heart isn't caught up in it.

Of course we enjoy life. This life is full of many blessings within our family, within our environment, within the church, and within our work, and within our leisure, with all sort of things.

And we've got to thank the Lord for these things. And of course we love life as such. But it's loving the world. Where we lose sight of the Lord.

Where the world is our focus. Where what we can do and what we can get. What we can achieve in this age with regard to the world. Where the things of this world matter far more than the Lord.

[ 19 : 42 ] If that's what happens, then we've gone all wrong. And sometimes it's all too possible for us to get sucked in. So that we lose.

And you know, then a knock comes. Something comes. And it knocks us. And you know how often I've so often heard and probably said it myself. You know, I needed that.

My focus had gone. It's getting too caught up in this world. How often we hear God's people say that. When some knock has come or something has happened.

And the Lord is reminding us, this world is not your home. You are in fact being delivered from this present evil age. For the glory that will be.

Again, the trials are there to suppress and break self. The I, me, my syndrome.

[ 20 : 41 ] It's my life. And I'll do what I want. So many people think like that. You'll find that so often. It's a heart of a song.

And it's a heart of the human nature. It's my life. And I'll do what I want. God says, no, that's not the way you live.

The world says, I am master of my own destiny. The Lord says, no, you're not. So we have to work out this balance. Not that we become crippled and insecure.

But that we discover the freedom. By handing our life over to the Lord. So that we're ready for our way and our self to be broken.

It's not easy. But that's what the Lord is trying to do in our heart and life. Is break this self-important self, self, self.

[ 21 : 39 ] So that we come to focus more and more upon himself. And these knocks that we get, these tiles, in turn, send us more and more to Christ.

So that we find that this world is so full of disappointments. And we find ourselves going again and again to the Lord. For help.

For strength. For grace. Sometimes we can feel very lonely and very vulnerable in this world. To whom else can we go? Sometimes we feel nobody will understand.

The Lord always will. He's always got an ear open to our cry. And again, these things are all preparing us for eternity. All the knocks, all these things are part of preparing us. So that there's a growing longing within our heart. To be forever with the Lord. And it's here, as we see, our verse tells us that these knocks and these trials are tests.

[ 22 : 46 ] Verse 7. So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The most precious thing, as the Lord looks down upon your life, is not the home you have. It's not the possessions you have.

It's not your bank accounts. None of these things. It's your faith. It's more precious than gold. Gold was always looked at, and certainly in the older world, as the most precious and lasting material possession that we could have.

And gold, as we know, was refined in the fire. Everything that was not gold was taken away.

Through gold, it came through the fire.

And the Lord is saying, that's your faith. The genuineness of it is tested in the fire. And that's what Satan was saying.

[ 23 : 52 ] Let me at Job. And you and Job and everybody will see it's not real. It's not genuine. He's only worshiping you, God, because you're so good to him.

Let me at him, and you'll see a different man. God opened the fence. God removed the guard. And he said to Satan, don't take his life.

But everything else. And Job was hit and hit and hit and hit. Trial of your faith. And what came through?

The genuineness of Job's faith. Satan was completely wrong. Job even reached the point where he said of God, Though he slay me, if God were to come and murder me, yet I will trust him.

I don't know if there's been a greater declaration of faith anywhere than that. If God were to come and slay me, that is just murder, I will still trust him.

[ 25 : 05 ] That is the most amazing faith. And it shone through in the trial. It was proved. And you know, it's one of the wonderful things to see within the church.

Are those who have suffered. Those who have lost. Those whose hearts have been wrung out in this world. And yet they're still following the Lord.

Their faith is still there. Proving the genuineness. The reality of the faith. And the Lord is saying to us, My verdict.

My ways are completely different. Far more precious than gold. Far more precious than anything this world can ever have or show.

Is your faith. That's what's been tested. That's what's coming to the surface. That's what's beautiful in my sight. That's what lasts.

[ 26 : 07 ] Because at the end of the day, what's not of faith is sin. So that's why God is at work.

That's why Peter shows us God is at work. And so we see that we're told then, Though, just in a moment, the time is going.

It tells us, Though you have not seen him, you love him. Now this word love here is a continual, The actual word is describing a continual, regular activity.

Love is a continual, regular activity. That's the actual word. That's how it's played out. So that this is part of what it's like within our heart.

There is a continued, regular awareness of that love to the Lord. And though you don't see him, you believe in him and rejoice.

We believe in the Lord as surely as if he were here. We haven't seen him, but we believe. We mustn't underestimate this believing.

[ 27 : 22 ] Because it's all tied in to our faith, to our joy, to our love. Because so often people say, I don't feel the love for the Lord I want.

And many a Christian feels miserable with that. Many a Christian is actually doubting, Am I really a Christian? Because my heart is not overwhelmed with love for the Lord.

I don't feel the way I want to feel. Remember how Jesus said to Thomas, You've seen and you've believed. But he said, Blessed are those whom, having not seen, yet believe.

That's you and me. We never saw, we've never seen Jesus with our human eye. Only with the eye of faith. And it's in believing in him.

And it's through this believing That we receive A sense of who he is. A persuasion of who we are in him.

[ 28 : 29 ] And it is all found in this believing. This is the key to it. And we will discover that love. There will be times When that love will be aware of it within our heart.

And what we've got to remember With regard to the love Is that that love So often manifests itself Into the things of God.

How do we know that we love the Lord? Because we love his word. We love his people. We love his house.

We love his cause. We love the things that are his. That is evidence of that love within our heart. And so, though you do not see him You believe in him And rejoice with joy Which is inexpressible And filled with glory Obtaining the outcome of your faith The salvation of your souls.

Well, you see This is again It's tying in with this This salvation And all that is to be. My friend God asks this all important question Where do you stand In relation to all this?

[ 29 : 52 ] We've been thinking about Some amazing things. The believer Think about it. Here's this person Here you are If you're today a believer Think about it Here you are God found you In a waste Howling wilderness Just like Israel He put his love upon you He's continued to guard you And to keep you He's prepared a place in heaven for you He's working in you Making you more and more like Jesus Jesus day by day And then One day He's going to call you Out of this world And he's going to take you home To be with himself Forever Your body will be placed in the grave For a while But he's going to come back And he's going to take your body Back to heaven And it will become a glorious body And he'll reunite your body And soul together To share with him Forever and ever That's what Jesus has done

That's what Peter is writing about Surely it is utter madness For any person to say You know I don't really want that I just want to be left alone I just want to go my own way Do my own thing And kind of hope for the best That's absurd Really is absurd When you think Of what we have here And if you've never come to faith In Jesus Christ I would urge you today You know Maybe you have But you don't know it Maybe you've been here for years And there is a heart in you For the things of God That just won't go away But you've never got past where you are Will you ask the Lord to show you That you belong to him Because I believe that Throughout Throughout the Christian church There are many people Who have come to faith And don't know it Or they're looking For something else They're looking for some Almost like a big bang Something else My friend It's down to the believing Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ And you will be saved Let's pray Lord our God We give thanks for this word And we pray oh Lord That this word Will affect our lives For good Transforming us So that we will become Mirrors Of Jesus That there will be that Growing Christ likeness Within us Oh Lord Keep us Protect us Wherever we are Wherever we go May thy hand be upon us For good Bless us and keep us And do us good Take away from us All our sin In Jesus name We ask it Amen

Amen Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you