

'Kept'

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to what we read in 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter chapter 1.

And reading at verse 4. Well, we'll read from verse 3, but it's verses 4 and 5 in particular.

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 our 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 a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now, it's amazing when we can come to God's word and we can compare and we can contrast what this world's fame, fortune, glory, power is and what the glory to come is going to be like.

I remember in school when, in English, there was a poem. I'm sure you all remember that if you go back in your mind. Thomas Gray's elegy written in a country churchyard.

[1 : 30] And one of the verses went like this. The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave, awaits are like the inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave. And that is true. Because at the end of the day, whether a person is a king or a tramp, at the end of the day, it is a grave.

The grave will take the king and take the tramp, just the very same. And that's what the glory of this world is, irrespective of what a person amasses, irrespective of what a person achieves.

It's all going to pass with the using. Sometimes a person will have their glory, their fame, their fortune throughout their life. Sometimes it doesn't even last their lifetime.

But the one thing that is guaranteed, it is only for this life. Because everything in this world is going to pass with the using. But when we come to what Peter is writing about, this great living hope that we have, we see that we have this inheritance in heaven.

[2 : 44] And that there's our glory awaiting us. An eternal glory. Not that we are eternal, we will never become eternal. Only God is eternal. But we will live in eternity.

And we will receive all the glory that Christ as mediator has won for us. And I think in the apostle's mind, because he is quoting from Isaiah towards the end of the chapter there, when he speaks there about all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass and so on, that Peter is obviously, he's writing to people who have an understanding.

It's got to remember the Christians are all scattered abroad. And he's writing to those who will have a knowledge of God's history, the history of God's people.

And you remember when God took his people out of Egypt, he promised them an inheritance. In fact, even before they went into Egypt, he had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he was going to make a great nation from them and that this land that they were in would become their land.

So as they journeyed from Egypt to Israel, to the promised land, the land of Canaan, it was to be God's inheritance to them. They were to enjoy an inheritance there.

[4 : 07] And it was a land flowing with milk and honey. And they were told there were wonderful things there, but there was a warning with it that if they turned their back upon God, if they defiled the land through idolatry, if they turned from God, then God's judgment would come upon the land and the blessings that they had would fade.

The great things that they had would perish. The land would be defiled, everything. And all that came to pass because God's people turned away. So I think something of this is in the mind of the apostle as he is writing now about the new inheritance, the inheritance that God's people are going to enjoy forever.

And that's what's ahead of you and me as we follow the Lord Jesus Christ because he describes something of this inheritance and we're told that it's imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

And imperishable means simply that it can't corrupt. And that's why Jesus says, have your treasure. He doesn't say you don't have any treasure in this world.

But where your main treasure is, Jesus tells us, where your treasure is, that which is above everything else, that's where your heart is. And if your treasure is in heaven, your treasure is in a place, he says, where thieves can't break through or steal, where moths and rust cannot destroy.

[5 : 43] So that your treasure is something that as we read here is imperishable. All earthly treasures will either get lost, broken, decay, or we have to leave them behind when we go.

Here is a treasure that is imperishable. And it's undefiled. Now, as we know, we live in a world that is full of defilement.

But there, it is a world that is pure, clean, and stained. This world is polluted. Everything about it, sin is on everything, sin is in everything, everything is stained, and marred, and spoiled, and ruined by sin.

And in a sense, it's impossible for us to really understand what has been told us about our future.

Because we cannot imagine what it's like to be in a place that is imperishable or that is undefiled. Because it is beyond anything that we have ever encountered, anything that we ever are.

[6 : 54] So, at one level, while we accept and believe and look forward to and are persuaded of it, yet it is hard for us to grasp just what that really is.

And we also see that it's unfading. It's like the picture of a flower that's dying or fading. And that will never happen in glory. Because this is a, the glory in Emmanuel's land is a glory that will never run out.

Everything in this world runs out. But the glory there is unending. It's unfading. It is forever and ever. And that we're told, as Peter tells us later on in chapter 5, that when Christ appears, you will receive an unfading crown of glory.

So, that's, that's what's ahead of us. And so, then Peter adds, being kept in heaven for you.

So, that's one of the great and wonderful things that we, we have this reservation, as it were, in heaven. Now, you and I know very often when we go to weddings or things, some, maybe some function like that, very often your place is reserved.

[8 : 11] Your name is at the table. And that's your, that's your spot. It's been reserved for you. Or maybe you're going away somewhere and you're, you, you, you, you pay for and you reserve a place, whether it's in a hotel or on a train or whatever.

That's your place. It's reserved for you. That's your number. That's you. Because it's paid for. And that's what the Lord is saying to us. Your place is reserved because it's been paid for.

And we know that Jesus is the one who paid for it. He paid the price. We hadn't anything to pay. We couldn't pay. We didn't have in any shape or form what could pay, what was required.

But Jesus did. And he did so by giving of himself, giving his life, giving his all for us. And so the Lord has reserved this place for us.

And the great thing that we read here is that not only is the place being kept for us, because, you know, it's one thing to know there's a place being kept.

[9 : 18] But then you say to yourself, what if, there's a place there, but what if I don't make it? It's all very well being told there's a place in heaven. But what if I don't make it to heaven?

Well, that's what the Lord is telling us. Not only is there a place being kept for you, but you and I in this world are being kept for that place.

Works both ways. And so that's a great encouragement that we have here. For you are being kept, that's what it is, are guarded. It's the same word, who by God's power are being guarded through faith.

So this is a wonderful thing. But, you know, sometimes we read that and what an encouragement, because there are lots of encouragements like that in the word of God.

But, you know, a lot of God's people, I would say most of God's people, possibly all of God's people, sometime or other, maybe frequently, maybe seldom, but they do.

[10 : 22] They have their doubts. They have their fears. Despite what the word says, we don't doubt the word, not in any shape or form. Never doubt the word. Sometimes we doubt ourselves.

And so we've always got to remember that God's word is what we're to base things on. But, you know, sometimes we doubt ourselves in different reasons. For instance, maybe you're a Christian and you're looking back over your life and you say to yourself, you know, I came, I went through a really difficult time and I ended up, I was beaten, I said to the Lord, Lord, you have to take over here.

I'm finished. I can't, I can't do any more. And it's like you handed everything over to the Lord. Time has gone on and you're still following and you love the Lord who you haven't seen.

But you sometimes say to yourself, maybe, maybe it wasn't a work of grace. Maybe it wasn't a real work of grace. Maybe it was just because of that particular situation and I felt I was in distress and trapped and I, I looked to the Lord and asked him to help me and what if it wasn't a real work of grace?

Sometimes the Lord's people get troubled by the likes of that. but we've got to remember that the proof is in the pudding, the fact that you're still following and that you want to follow because you've got to remember that most people don't want to follow.

[12 : 01] The Lord tells us that the broad is the road and many go on that, narrow is the road and few go on that as he's comparing and contrasting how it is with regard to salvation.

You're still following because you want to. That's where your heart is and that in a sense is an evidence of the reality of that work.

But again, sometimes people have their fears and their doubts because they say, you know, I can't pinpoint to a day. I can't pinpoint to an hour when I was actually saved.

I hear people give their testimony and it's so clear and so vivid and they can pinpoint exactly to where and when. And you say, but I can't.

I know that there was a day I wasn't following the Lord. But I also know a day where a period in my life where I came to a persuasion and as we've often said, we're like the blind man when asked what happened.

[13 : 09] He says, I can't tell you but one thing I know I was blind and now I see. So sometimes we're like that. But because we don't have a clear testimony of day or hour, the devil can have a field day and bring you to have your doubts and to have your fears and all these things that go along with it.

And again, sometimes a young convert, a person who's become a Christian and to begin with everything is so new. You remember what it was like? Prayer was just so, so amazing.

You were constantly speaking to the Lord. The word was so fresh. Christian fellowship was so wonderful. You just, you couldn't get enough. And there was this just vibrancy and joy in your soul.

But as time has gone on, it's like the sparkle has gone somewhat. And then you begin to find that it's a struggle. You weren't expecting that. And there's battles and struggles and difficulties and trials and opposition and things that you weren't expecting.

Sometimes you begin to doubt yourself. You begin to wonder, was it really, was it really a work of grace at all? And then maybe as an old Christian, you look at yourself and you say to yourself, you know this, I'm worse than I was when I started.

[14 : 35] And you begin to look in and you see a darkness in your soul that's frightening. You see something of the corruption of your own heart.

And you see that you go to the New Testament and you see how the Lord is saying to us how we should be maturing and becoming holier. And you feel you're anything but.

And you say to yourself, I must be the most immature Christian going. I must be the most unholy. And you go through all these thoughts. And then the doubts and the fears come in and you think, am I a Christian at all?

And then on top of that, you look at people and you know people who started so well, they were brighter than you. And they made a great profession.

And now they've wandered off. Well, the thing is that we know that some Christians backslide. But the Lord won't leave them there. He'll bring them back.

[15 : 38] And even just now, if they're in a backslidden state, whatever they might appear outwardly, there's no contentment inwardly. If they are the Lord's, he'll bring them back.

But we also know that there are some who had an experience and appeared very bright. But they are nowhere to be seen with no interest or desire or anything for God's place or God's house anymore.

And that reminds us of what Jesus said with the stony ground here. As you remember in the parable of the sower, sometimes the seed went on to stony ground. There was only a little bit of soil.

Couldn't take root. It sprung up for a little but then it withered away and died because it couldn't take root. And he said, sometimes there are hearers like that. So when you go through all these kind of things, you say in yourself, what if I, what if, what if I'm, what if I, there isn't a real work of grace that's taken place in my heart.

And so many of the Lord's people have doubts and fears. In fact, I would go as far as to say that it's probably only the Lord's people that have doubts and fears. Because the non-Christian doesn't think like that.

[16 : 59] It's only the Christian that worries. And I would say that's, or else it's somebody that the Lord has begun to work in that has a fear. Because those who aren't looking for the Lord or thinking about the Lord, they don't think like that.

But the Christian does. And that's why you'll find over and over and over and again in the Bible that the Lord is encouraging us. There are so many verses all the way through to assure us and to encourage us.

And so here we're told very simply that we are being guarded or kept, that we are being guarded every single day.

And it's not us who keeps ourselves. If it was up to us, not one of us would keep ourselves. It is impossible for you and for me to keep ourselves.

It is the Lord who guards us. It's the Lord who keeps us every single day. And that word guarded here is a military term where a person is guarded or shielded or protected or kept.

[18 : 13] Well, there are no guards ever, not at Buckingham Palace or anywhere in the world that have ever shielded or guarded like the Lord guards his people. And we read here of how we are kept by the power of God.

Isn't that wonderful? The power of God. However great the power of sin within, however great the power of Satan, however great the power and lure of the world, these three powers together are nothing in comparison to the power of God.

Because, you know, it's that power that, it's that power that drew you in the first place. You didn't come on your own accord. First of all, you wouldn't want to.

Secondly, you couldn't. It is God's power that first drew you. And the power that drew you is the power that keeps you.

It is the word. And when you think of this power, we think of the creation, we think of the universe. Everything was brought into being by the word.

[19 : 21] And this same word that brought the very universe and holds the stars in their place that guides and rules everything in this world and has the very jury, the end of this world in sight and knows when it will be.

It's the same power that is keeping you and guiding you and guarding you every single day. You are being kept by this power.

And as I said, it's unnatural to follow Jesus because when we start to follow Jesus, as we said, we come into a place where there is ridicule, where there's opposition, where there's enmity, where there's hatred.

There's so much that's against the Christian. You remember when Jesus was in this world and he was ministering? In the early days of the ministry, huge crowds were following.

In fact, they were so taken up with Jesus, they wanted to make him king. But when Jesus began to explain to them what discipleship meant, what happened?

[20 : 34] They went away in their droves. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds began to desert him to the point that Jesus turned to the twelve and said, are you also going to go away?

That's what it was like. And so, it is only the power of God that can keep us. And you look back over your Christian life and you know that, that you're here tonight simply because of the power of God.

The number of times that you could have made shipwreck of your soul, the number of times that disaster loomed large, but you're still following, you're still here. And it's for one reason, not you, but the Lord in you.

And that's a wonderful thing because this power is working, the power of God works in two ways. The power of God at one level is shielding and sheltering and keeping you and guarding you, protecting you, but the power of God is also working in you.

That's what we're told, that God works within us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. where the Spirit is guiding us and leading us and teaching us so that we're following in the way of the Lord.

[21 : 51] And so, we see that this divine power that is influencing and guiding us through, we see here, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for our salvation.

You see, God's keeping shows itself in your faith. faith is God's gift to us where we receive his power.

But then it says, kept through faith for our salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Now, you and I know there are three aspects to our salvation.

There's what we term justification and we term sanctification and we term glorification. Now, we know that justification, if you remember your shortest caddiction, that justification is an act, it's a one-off.

It's a moment when we are born again, where we are made right before God in his sight. We are justified, we are just before him because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

[22 : 59] And we can't become any more justified because in God's sight we're as just as Jesus, as our mediator. We would never dare say that, but that's what the Bible tells us.

That's what justification has done for us. We have been made righteous in the sight of God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Sanctification is ongoing.

Now, theologians talk about what we term definitive and progressive sanctification. and what they mean very simply and that is a definitive is a once, just once and for all.

And in a sense that's what happens because to sanctify is to set apart. Set apart for something to be holy. And that's what God did with you and with me.

He set us apart. The moment that we're set apart, the moment we're justified, we're set apart from this world. This world no longer has a claim on us.

[24 : 01] This world no longer loves us in the way that it loves its own. We are set apart for God. We have this inheritance, but you know, the other way around is we are his inheritance.

Isn't that an incredible thing? God tells us that we are his inheritance. His people are his inheritance. And so we wait for the inheritance that he gives us to be with him forever.

So there is what we say this definitive sanctification we're just set apart. And then we talk of progressive sanctification, which is simply where God is at work in us every day.

Making us, shaping us, remoulding us more and more and more to resemble our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But then at the end comes the other stage, glorification, where we will be changed. It's quite an extraordinary thing because we're told then in the end that we shall see him as he is.

[25 : 17] Now that would be enough. That would be more than enough. But it doesn't just stop there. We shall see him as he is and we shall be like him. Probably the most amazing words in Scripture.

You know, I'm sure if you're like me, the one thing that you you want to see, you want a greater vision of Jesus, a greater sight of Jesus. You're saying, I wish I but you know, the Bible keeps telling us as we have here, you'll see there in verse 8, though you have not seen him, you love him.

That's how it is. As Jesus said to Thomas, just because you've seen me, you believe. Blessed are those whom having not seen yet believe.

That's where we are. So we long for the day when we will be in the presence of Jesus and we will see him as he is.

How we've longed for that and we shall be like him. Into this unending glory as it tells us it's there we will receive the inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading.

[26 : 38] What a hope the Christian has. You know, sometimes we can get a bit down because we live in a world which is becoming growingly opposed to Christ. But then we go back here and we read what our future holds and what's ahead and we say, oh my word, it's wonderful and there is a growing desire the further we go on where the Lord is preparing us and I think one of the things is he loosens us as we go along he loosens us a wee bitty more and a wee bitty more to this world and our mind begins to travel more and more our heart begins to travel where we're going.

That's how it is because that's where our inheritance is to be with him forever. Let us pray. Lord, we give thanks for the great encouragement that your word is to us.

We realise as your word says that we're just pilgrims and strangers here in our journey to an inheritance that is beyond our imagining. But it's all true because your word has made it clear to us.

So we pray that you will bless us and bless each and every one of us here tonight. Bless our homes and our families. We give thanks for this church family that we have here and for the love and care that we have for one another.

Pray, Lord, for those whose hearts are heavy and sore. We again remember Margaret MacLeod from the Cairns tonight and we pray for her as her heart and we remember herself and Anne as well and all her same mourn Catherine's passing.

[28 : 20] Remember all who are nursing broken hearts and it might not be in the immediate. It might have been a long time ago but it's still so sore to this very day and so we pray that you will be with every broken heart.

Be with those who are sick, those who are so unwell. Remember we did McDonald in hospital so unwell. We pray for all and we give thanks Lord for answers to prayer.

We were praying there for Isabel son Derek recently and we give thanks for how well he has got on hearing that he and Heather have got home and we pray your blessing upon us.

We give thanks for answered prayer. We pray Lord that we will always give you thanks for all your mercies and goodness to us. So we ask that you will be with us.

Be with the psalmody class afterwards and thanks for James in leading this. Take away your sin in Jesus name we ask. Amen. Let us conclude singing from Psalm 116.

[29 : 20] Let us conclude singing from Psalm 116.