

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Between Two Worlds

PART

2

TITLE

Blessed Beyond Imagination

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 1:3-5



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It's our honor. If you're in the room or if you're at home, welcome. I would love for you if you have one in your hand, a Bible, if you would look with me first Peter 1, we are in a series. We just started it last week. We worked through the first two verses last week. And our goal is to work through three more here this morning, verses three through five of chapter one. It's really important for each one of us to have hope. And I know that for some of us who you walked into the room, you've sat here, you drove here and life is dark, there's things in your life, there's things in your family, there's things in your heart. We're just going to look around and you just think, I feel like I don't have hope. And this passage in this book is really written that you and I would experience hope.

And so let me pray for us as we get started. Father in heaven, we believe you, we believe your word, we come to you in that posture to say, God, we open up your word, believing that it's not simply a word from man. It's been held for a long, long time, but it came from you and it's been divinely preserved over time because you care that we would be changed by it. We believe that there's power that's packed within your word, it's unleashed by your spirit. And so we ask that you would pour out your spirit upon us now that you would help us to believe and see and admire Jesus Christ in these words. Your word tells us so plainly that there's the possibility that we can come into a room like this and we can leave. And the only thing that we can leave with is admiration for someone's ability to speak or sing. And that is not what we need.

Your word says that there's a condition of the heart, that when we come before you and we plead, we open up your word and we pray that your spirit would demonstrate your power, that we don't just leave admiring people, but we leave transformed because we have come to the place where we can admire the greatest one, Jesus Christ. And so I pray that you would open up our eyes and help us to see and to delight, enjoy, be curious about your word, and that you would allow it to have its full course in our life. We love you. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

Every one of us needs hope. There's something about hopelessness that is incredibly powerful. I suppose the same would be, there's something about hope that is incredibly powerful. When we feel hopeless, we are much more inclined to settle our own convictions to sin, or sometimes even to quit when things get hard, when our spirit is broken. I mentioned last week that one of our sons is currently at bootcamp. He's in the Marines. And we've had a few letters. We actually got one yesterday and he's enjoying most of it. And there's things that he's not enjoying, but when we dropped him off to put them on a bus, essentially, they said to us, they say, now in about two weeks, you will receive a letter that will have an address that you can start if you choose to write your son. And so I simply ask an honest question, I said, Look, I don't know necessarily how this works, but I do know this is that there's nothing about the Marines at this point in time that's accidental. You've learned what you've learned and you know what you're intending to do. Our hope is his best interest."

So let me ask you this question, is it in his best interest that we write or that we don't write? And that was really an honest question, thinking maybe there's something that that tie needs to be broken so that he can really focus. And so it was an honest question. And it's interesting how clearly he responded. The sergeant looked

at us and he said, "Look, your son is about to go to a place that is intentionally designed at first to break him, to see if we can break his spirit. It's going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be unpredictable. It's going to be unkind." That's the reality. He said, "Every day, we're going to push to try to find where that weakness is and we'll find it."

And then he said something so interesting. He said, now, in the course of an entire day, it gets very long. He said, "There's something about the end of the day, there's mail call." And the same drill instructor will read off the names who received the letter, the same one who yelled at him all day long and who made him miserable all day long. And he said, "When you're there, it's interesting mail call is it represents hope." He says, you can see that when a man's name is not called in that moment, you say, you can see his spirit fall." So he said, "So I would encourage you to write in order to instill hope."

Peter wrote to instill hope. There were people, his audience, his initial audience, and then the us, we live in a world that's unkind, it's unpredictable, it's uncomfortable, there's things that break our spirit. We need hope. You see, we looked a little bit last week at the context of what's happening, but in A.D. 64, the City of Rome burned, it burned to the ground, or at least a large part of the city of Rome did. And it's emperor, Nero, whom many today look back and actually blame him that he had this thirst for conquest and building something bigger and better. And so there's some who think that he actually looked at the city and the parts that weren't as glorious, he says, let's just burn those areas, but suddenly, the fire spread beyond that. So perhaps his hope was to create a fresh footprint upon which he could build something that was magnetic.

And yet, once it burned, there's a lot of angry people because it was their homes and it was their businesses and their temples and shrines and places where they interacted with one another. And so Nero needed a scapegoat. And he looked around the empire and there was these people, they were already marginalized, they were already misunderstood, and in a lot of ways, they were already mistrusted and even hated. And they were called the Christians. These are people who didn't bow down to Caesar, even though Caesar said he was God, because they believe that you should only worship one true God. And in spite of the fact that Rome and its very identity was one of beauty and context and brilliance and nobility is that these crazy Christians, they worship this guy who grew up in Nazareth, which is like a pothole in the region, okay? There was nothing there. And they claimed that he rose from the dead. And so they blamed the Christians. And this not only set off, it intensified a deep persecution towards Christians that spread to its furthest regions.

And in verse one of the letter we learned that Peter was writing to these elect exiles that were scattered to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia right? And so, if you think about where we're at, okay, this is Rome over here where it was burned, Peter was a pastor, church in Jerusalem, but there's evidence in chapter five that somewhat indicates that he may have actually written this from Rome, but then you have all these regions and they're inside this circle, modern day Turkey.

And so what's happening is this is, there are people who are already living there, churches already there, certain believers already living there. And now they're enduring a lot of persecution that a lot of the people in this region were, but not only that, but a lot of people in this region, they were actually fleeing for their life, hoping to find a safer place.

And Peter, he's looking at this situation and he knows the vulnerability of these people whose spirit has been tested. He's looking and he sees, then he remembers, he remembers his own denial of Christ when his heart grew hopeless and he was vulnerable the night when he denied the Lord. He knew what was taking place. He also knew that as believers is that these individuals, including himself and us, that we're citizens of another world. He says, our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a savior, the Lord, Jesus Christ. He knew that we were as Christian citizens of heaven and yet citizens on the earth. And so Peter knew by default that as dual citizens, that life can become very, very confusing when you live in the middle of them.

What do you do when you have an eternal king and you have a national president and they don't agree with each other? What do you do as a people when you have a sovereign lord, who's a lawmaker, and then you have elected lawmakers here on the earth and those laws don't always agree with one another? How do you live?

Well, the book of First Peter is intended not only to give hope, but to answer a very important question. And that is how do we live between these two worlds? In verse one and two, he really emphasized identities as this is who you are in Christ, because identity propels behavior. And when he gets to verse three, he wants to talk about some reasons that they should be hopeful. This is what he says. He says, 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, 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 notice where Peter begins. He begins where he hopes our worship service today will end. He begins in verse three, where he hopes the rest of your days, our days will begin. And it's the word blessed be, blessed be. Now it's important you understand he's not instructing anything here, he's not commanding anything, there's no imperatives here. In fact, the very first imperative or instruction to these people living between two worlds is actually in verse 13. For the first 12 verses of his letter, that's going to take us three different sermons, he simply wants to highlight what God has done in our life before he tells us how we're supposed to live in light of who the Lord is and what he's done in our life.

And so when he says, blessed be, he's not instructing. He's doing what Christians do when they are reminded of the reasons for the hope that they have. And that is eruptive worship. It's like a geyser, right? Is that you and I know that we're on the right page. This is important you understand this, okay? Very important is that you and I know that we are seeing things as they really are, that we are believing the things that really are. And

indeed, that we are living in between these two worlds in a healthy way when the hope that God has planted in your heart, because what he's done and what he will do, it literally causes that well of worship to actually come to the place, to where it comes out of our mouth, and we as a people repeatedly throughout our life, throughout our days are saying, blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be the name of the Lord, whether there's any music or not, whether it's Sunday morning or not is that we would be a people instinctively designed and created and motivated to worship the Lord.

You see, if you don't understand what he's about to tell us that's true about us, if you get so distorted in how you're living your life here in between heaven, if you are a Christian, and the earth, that this never takes place in your life. If this water from the geyser represents worship, adoration, emotion, passion for Christ, love for Christ, a desire for Christ, if our heart simply looks like there's this hole that nothing ever comes out of, then it's very, very clear that we are out of step with what it looks like to live appropriately between these two worlds.

In other words, one of the things he's going to tell us here is this is that you know that you're living halfway between these two worlds, is if worship spontaneously erupts from your heart and comes out of your mouth and even demonstrates itself in your facial expressions and sometimes with your hands, you know that you see things as they really are. This is where he wants us to get to. You see, he's not written down a single reason, but as these reasons are stirring in his mind and formulating sentences that are about to write down, the first thing that literally just flows out of his mouth, that erupts of his mouth is blessed be.

And so what are the reasons of hope that he had in his mind that he was about to write down that should propel us to be a hopeful people, worshipping people? Well, the first one that we see here is that our hope is built on mercy that God has given. Notice past tense, he has given mercy. We have been born again. You see friends, one of the reasons why worship may lie dormant within us is the possibility that we are religious, but not born again.

And another reason that worship may not combust within our heart and come out of our mouth is because we are born again, but we don't truly grasp how it happened. And therefore, we're really not all amazed at what happened. And so Peter wants to fix that problem in all of our lives. And so in verse three, he says this, he says, blessed be the God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he says, according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope.

Now it's really important this idea of born again. Some of us we hear this and we don't hear that word very often. This is a tragedy if you think about it, right? But sometimes where we hear about it is we think of it as a kind of a Christian, it's sort of like it's a certain stripe of a Christian, it's those fundamentals, it's something you hear in political exit polls. It's, oh, those born again Christians, this is how they voted, these born again Christians. Listen, in the Bible, a born again person is a Christian and there is no other. That's how it works. If you're a Christian, you're born again. If you've not been born again, you're not a Christian. Therefore, you're

not going to go to heaven. That's what the Bible teaches us. And notice Peter assumes that his readers are born again. That's why he says, he has caused us to be born again. It's happened. It's happened.

Now what he does in this one little sentence is beautiful as he tells us how it happened, what means it occurred and to what end. So let's look at each of those three. First of all, how did it happen? Well, it happened according to great mercy. Great mercy caused us, God's great mercy caused us to be born again. That means that we didn't deserve it. When he says great mercy, but it didn't take just a little mercy to get you to heaven. It took a bunch. That's what he says. Great mercy. And it didn't take some of my mercy, it took divine mercy, God's mercy. And that mercy was the cause. Some of us say, what's the cause of someone going to heaven? There is a cause and it's not you. It's not me. He says, this is the cause. It's his great mercy. That's the cause. He said, well, I don't understand because I believe in Jesus. So maybe that's the cause.

Well, let's just look just a little bit. Some of us, we don't know this because for some of us, we've been in church so long that we can't remember a time when these things are true. And so what we have to do is we have to open up the Bible in order to see what God remembers is true. One of the things that he remembers is true is that we're spiritually dead.

It's healthy I think, it's uncomfortable, but it's healthy to sometimes even visualize yourself just for a moment. Okay. You'll be uncomfortable, but just, and then, so we're going to move in and we're going to move out, okay? You're in a casket, got your hands folded and you're sitting there. You're motionless. Someone pokes you and you don't move. Someone blows in your face and you don't blink. God says, that is what your soul was like before I got hold of you. You say, well, how do I know that.

Well, Ephesians 2 says it this way. He says, you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, but God, being rich in mercy made us alive together with Christ. Not only were we spiritually dead, we were spiritually blind. We couldn't see. Someone told us about Jesus or maybe we read a story about Jesus and we thought, he doesn't seem all that consequential to my life, he doesn't seem all that important. This whole Jesus thing, the cross thing, Easter thing, Christmas thing, resurrection thing, I just don't get it. It doesn't seem that important. That's spiritual blind. And when you look at Jesus and you go, I just don't see the big deal. You're not seeing who he really is.

And the Bible tells us that it must require divine activity for us to be able to see spiritually. You say, well, how do you know? Well, we looked at the story just a little bit last week, but if you're a member, Jesus wanted to test the spiritual temperature of his disciples about two years in. And so he goes, "Hey guys, let me ask you a question. I know that you're hearing a lot of different opinions about who I am. So what are some of those opinions? When you hear people ask the question, hey, who do those people say that I am? What do you hear?" Where I'm at, sometimes we hear prophet, Elijah, lots of different things. And he goes, "That's interesting. Let me really test the heat her. Who do you say that I am?" And you know what Peter said? It was Peter, he opened his mouth and he goes, "You, you're the Christ."

The Christ means promised one. Meaning ever since the garden, when humanity sinned and God the Father made a promise in that moment, one day there will be a son born of a woman that will become the savior that reconciles people back, the Christ, the promised one, Peter says, you're that one. You are the one that every generation of God-fearing people since Adam and Eve have hoped that their eyes would get to see, you are the Christ, you are the son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, blessed are you. And you can just see Peter just like, nailed it. I get to see him. Looking over at Matthew and some of the other disciples, he's like, "What's up, man? Yeah, I'm blessed."

And then Jesus humbles him. He says, this is why you're blessed. It's not because you got it right. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. You know what that means? No amount of your research, no amount of your interest, no amount of your studying has led you to that conclusion. Let me tell you how you got to that conclusion. My Father in heaven told you. He opened your eyes so that you could see and go, that's the Christ.

The Bible says that each one of us, we must place our faith in Jesus Christ to be born again. And so some people go, "Oh, well I have strong faith, I put it in Jesus. And so I contributed to the whole field." Ephesians 2, though, verses eight and nine says it this way, says, for by grace, you have been saved through faith. You say, see, I believed. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. And it's not a result of work so that no one may boast. It's a gift.

Many of us in the room, all of us in the room, at some point in time, we've received a gift that we liked, we really liked. We opened it up. We're like, wow, that's a great gift. They were shiny or expensive, or it looked enjoyable or attractive, something. We looked at it and we really loved it, we really like it. We're like, great gift. And then at some point in time, we learned more. It may have been that we just waited a little bit longer and we found out what someone had to do in order to give us this gift. It may be that you had to wait many, many years because your parents said, "Oh yeah, dad had to work double shifts or mom had to work overtime in order for this to take place." We didn't even know what those things were until all of a sudden, we now know what those things are.

And then all of a sudden, isn't it true that some of those gift that once your eyes and your heart begin to see, wow, I liked the gift by itself, but to then know what someone had to pay because they love me and were to give me that gift, we see now all of a sudden the gift takes even greater shape, it creates more of an expansion of the heart that sends words out the mouth that says, dad, mom, thank you. Bless you. What you did to give us to me, it's amazing.

And so when Peter wants to say, okay, this is the gift, this is what happened. Notice where he goes next. He goes, what means does this happen? Okay. So he, by his mercy, caused us to be born again how? Notice, through the resurrection Jesus Christ from the dead. Now Peter knows what happened for the resurrection to be necessary.

You see, there came a day, an the actual day when Jesus Christ the prince of heaven on a throne in heaven, receiving the endless eternal adoration of all the saints who have gone before and all the angels, everyone, all the Old Testament say, they're all like, there he is. And suddenly, Jesus Christ in time and space removes his crown, removes his robe, stands up and says, it is time.

And Jesus Christ came as a baby, lived on the earth, Jesus traded, worthy is the lamb, worthy are you. He traded that for, hey Jewish boy, the son of God. And he came to this earth and he lived without any sin. He was tempted in every way that we are yet. He was without sin. And yet, he then made a promise. He says, guys, this is what we're doing. We're going to Jerusalem. And once we get to Jerusalem, I am going to be delivered over. I'm going to be put on trial. I'm going to be falsely accused. I'm going to be condemned. I'm going to be scorched. I'm going to suffer. And then I'm going to be crucified. But in three days, I'm going to rise from the dead. And then he went and pulled it off. It's exactly what took place.

You see, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, he would still have a life of love that would be worthy of emulation, but his blood would have no power to save us or to cause us to be born again. It's the declaration of God almighty that says, his payment on the cross is paid in full. And how you know it? Is I'm going to rise him from the dead. This is how we become born again. It's through this means, Jesus doing it all on our behalf. And then he talks about to what end, why does he do this? Why does his great mercy cause us to be born again through the resurrection? To what end? And he tells us, to a living home. To a living hope. This is why. It's because God almighty, even though you've sent against him, he looks down. And when he sees you in the darkness, he says, I want you to have hope. And it's not just hope, it's living hope, it's responsive hope, which means when you poke it, you move.

When this hope blows in your face and reminds you of what God has done in your past, you blink, you tears start flowing down. The thought of we have been forgiven, we've been given righteousness, we've been made citizens of heaven, the family of God. All this is what he means when he says that he's caused us to be born again to a living hope.

I'm overwhelmed by this reality, though. And that is that there are so many people who think that what they are doing even here this morning is the decisive act that's going to get them to heaven. You look around the country and you can just sit and you could go and ask people, how do you think people get to heaven? Well, you have to be good and you have to go to church. There may be somebody, many people right now who are actually thinking that you driving here, participating in this and leaving in this religious spiritual experience is contributing to the decisive work that's going to tilt the scale to allow you to go to heaven. Is it any wonder then that the church struggles to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness when so many, even within the church think that they called themselves from darkness by turning a new leaf or by giving Christianity a try, by doing good or by coming to be religious?

Listen to me, no matter how religious you might be, a heart that is not born again never explodes in worship. It's a geyser without water. So my question is, where are you? Let me encourage us. All of us, let's examine our life for new birth. Specifically, have you been born again? John 3, you remember a religious person on the Sanhedrin, that means that his standing in society, his morality was impeccable. Nicodemus comes and he asked Jesus, "Hey, rabbi." Means you have something to teach me. And Jesus looks to him and this is what he says to him. Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But somebody said, "Well, how do I know then? You just kept describing something that I can't do it. And so how do I do it? How do I know if I've been born again, as opposed to, I'm simply religious?"

Well, wouldn't we all agree that to be born again, you have to first be born? It's interesting how similar these two things are. And so let's talk about the first. We were born. If you came to me and you said, "Brian, how do you know you were born?" I wouldn't go get my birth certificate and say, do you see Chicago, Illinois. I would breathe. That's what I'll. I'll blink. So see, I was born. I was clearly born. That's the greatest proof that I was born. And so the question then would come if you asked me, well, how do you know if you were born again? I would not go to my gray leather Bible I had when I was 16, where I wrote the date at the very first page of when I trusted Christ, I wouldn't tell you about First Baptist Church Bolivar when I went up and I talked to the pastor. Well, how do you know that? Well, I would tell you that I love Jesus today. If you don't love Jesus today, but you remember a date in your past, you should examine your heart if you're born again.

There are signs of spiritual life you should be looking for today. And the Bible lists a bunch of them, things like I would say, this is my love for Jesus today. I am trusting him and him alone today. I long to see and occasionally do see the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in my life today, love, joy, peace, patience among others. I hunger for his word today. I want to repent of my sin today. I love God's people. 1 John says, this is one of the reasons you know that you've been born again is you love the people of God. I love you is one of the signs I know that I've been born again. The confirmation of God's spirit with my own spirit saying you are my child. It's all today. My point is this is the only piece of evidence is a memory of an aisle or a date written in your Bible. I encourage you to examine your life for evidence of new birth. Do you love him today? Do you trust him today?

You see when Nicodemus came and Jesus said, unless a man be born again, what he's saying is this to somebody who is ultra religious, who is probably coming to Jesus saying, look, my guess is there's 10 marbles that you need in order to get to heaven. And I'm contributing nine and a half of them. I just need you to get me over the top. Jesus said, "The only thing you contribute to the salvation process is the spiritual need of a savior. You sinned. I sinned. We contribute not a single marble." But God in his grace, he comes. He said, "Well, then how do I do it? This whole thing, it sounds like a miracle that God has to open my eyes, that God has to incline me, that God has to give me the gift of faith. It is." But if you believe, it means that God has given you the gift of faith.

And so what you do is this. How we're born again is we take what God is doing and we simply extend it back to him in response. The Bible says that how we do it is we put our trust in him, we believe in him, we say, God, I believe in you. I wouldn't believe in you unless you opened my eyes to help me to see that Jesus is the Christ. You gave me the gift of faith, and now I'm taking that gift and I'm laying it at Jesus and saying, I know I cannot save myself. I know I can't. I'm not contributing in any way other than extending the gift to you and saying, I believe you, I trust you. Have you done this?

Some of you go, you talk about the gospel every time. Don't you know that we've already heard it? Peter is writing this to Christians. And the reason is because one of the greatest people who are in danger on the earth are not irreligious, unbelievers, but religious ones. And so test yourself, have you trusted Christ? How you do it? You should pray. You can pray right now to the Lord something like this. Father, I believe, I believe Jesus. I believe I cannot save myself. I believe I need a savior because I'm a sinner. I believe that Jesus died and rose again. And I confess that my Lord, Bible says he'll make you his own or cause you to be born again. You can do that right now. And I urge you to do so.

Well, the second thing that he does after pointing us backwards to the mercy that he is given is he points to hope that's anchored to grace that God will give. In other words, our hope rests not only on past mercy, but also on future grace. He says that you and I, we've been born again to a living hope. And then he says, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you. Grace is when we receive something we don't deserve.

So let's think about what we do deserve. The Bible tells us that for those of us who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, which has all of us, that the wages of that sin is death, which is separation from God for eternity in a place called hell. That's the reality what the Bible teaches. We deserve separation from God and hell. And yet, what does Peter say that we get as believers? We get inheritance with God in heaven. That's called grace.

See, if you're sitting here and you're thinking about who you really are and you see how holy he really is. And if you think, you know what? This inheritance thing, I mean, that's just a little too far. Can I just get in? I just want to go to heaven. And the thought of even being in heaven, a man just in is gracious plenty. If you think that way, you're thinking correctly. And that's when God startles us. And he says, look, I want to press even the boundaries of your imagination, for I not only want to give you heaven, but I want you to share in Jesus reward as the victory over life and death. It's amazing to me. When you think of the word new birth, birth, we're born into a family, right? So new birth indicates there's a family involved. And anytime there's a family, it always comes with inheritance and there's stuff. There's heirs and co-heirs.

And the Bible says in Romans 8, says this, that the spirit himself, that's the Holy Spirit, bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. He goes on and he says, the inheritance that we have that's kept in heaven for us, he says, it's imperishable, means

it won't ever die. It's undefiled, they will never spoil. It's unfading, it's never going to lose its sheen or its shine.

There's a lot of us who are familiar at least with the concept of prosperity gospel, where if we believe in Jesus, then we're going to be healthy and wealthy. What's interesting about that theology is it's partially true. That's why it's attractive to so many people. They point to places like this. You see, when we trust Christ, we enter his family. He's a rich king who has inheritance and we're heirs and co-heirs of Christ. The problem is it's mistimed. Do you really want your inheritance now when you're going to die or do you want it in a place that you're going to live forever? Why now? We'll live there forever.

And so Providence, if all of this seems fair, meaning it's inheritance. If you read verse four and you go, you know what? That looks like an appropriate wage for the good life that I've lived, then you're not going to sing a whole lot the rest of your life. But if you see the grace that will be poured out over your head forever and ever and ever, your mouth even now is going to erupt, blessed be the name of the Lord.

So let me encourage us as a church family to guard our heart from the worship killing virus of entitlement. I want you to think about what Peter must've been thinking when he was writing these passages. There was a time when there was this rich, young ruler who came to Jesus. They talked, Jesus explained the terms of following. And the rich young ruler says, "Nope, I'm not giving up my stuff." They get alone. And suddenly, Peter, he has a question. And Peter says, "Oh Jesus, look, we have left everything. We left our families, we left our businesses, we left everything. So what's in it for us?" Can you imagine that same Peter writing verse four, thinking, what was I thinking?

How does entitlement grow? There's an equation. And this is the equation. You're ready? First of all, we see our personal worth. We say how awesome we are. And then we see what we give, our personal sacrifice. And that creates within us this assumption, this presumption of debt. We walk into the room and if we're awesome and we serve, then you are in my debt. If we live on the earth and we served and God is in my debt. This is a wage that he should be giving me. Is this how we think? You see, when we sit in the lender's chair and then keep serving, we presume others never to be out of our debt and no Liberty that we take and no payment someone else gives could possibly reduce the principle. And what this does is it leads to a life of ingratitude and blindness to blessing. Peter looks at us and he says, do you see what you deserve? And now look at what you get. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

And that gets to the last thing before we sing about this hope is that our hope is guarded with power that God is providing. I hope you see verse three is yesterday, verse four is tomorrow, verse five is today. We get mercy yesterday, grace tomorrow, protection today. He says, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. It's crazy some of us actually think that we are currently experiencing all the benefits of salvation. You're so wrong.

If you've been born again, you've not even touched everything that is actually yours and you will experience. It would be sort of like a man who is absolutely in love with a woman who absolutely loves him. So he says that it's that 10 friends and he gives each one of them a rose and he stages them 50 yards apart. And she gets to the first, first friend hands the rose and says, this is from so-and-so and you need to keep walking. It's better from here. He's waiting to propose. He's at the end. She goes to the second one and she gets the second rose. And she goes to the third and gets the third rose. She gets to the fourth. And she goes, yeah, I think I'm good. Look what I got. We would go, no, no, no, you got to keep walking. And the reason is because the best is yet to come.

Fellow Christian, most of the blessing that we have in Christ, you've not experienced yet, but it's coming. In verse five says that God is guarding us for it. You see this throughout the scripture, such as in Jude 24 when he says, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory. You see the fact that God is keeping us for that end that day, that God almighty is guarding us. It doesn't mean that there's an invitation to passivity. You see Christ provides spiritual armor and he tells us to put it on. Christ prays for us and he tells us to pray. Christ, in verse five, guards us. Notice what he guards, through what? Through faith, he's guarding. We are being guarded through faith. This is how he's guarding us. And yet, he calls us to press on in faith.

And this leads us, if you remember, to that critical time at the Lord's Supper, the first institution of it when he said, "All right, guys, tomorrow is the big day." Thursday night, they're sitting there and suddenly, Jesus, he looks right at Peter and he says, "Peter, wants you to know something. Satan demanded." That's a pretty strong word. It tells you the goal, it's in Satan, that Satan would actually go to the presence of God and demand something. And what did he demand? He demanded to have you. In other words, Satan came into my presence and said, I demand to have Peter. That's intense. Then he might sift you like wheat, mess you up. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. What's the guarding? A faith.

What does Satan want to destroy? In verse five. In chapter five, we're going to learn that he's the lion, ready and seeking to devour. What does he want to devour? Our faith. What does Jesus do? He prays for our faith. What else does Jesus do? He tells us to gather together to encourage one another in our faith. He tells us to read the Bible to grow our faith. He tells us to pray in order to protect our faith. You say, well, didn't Peter's faith fail? Momentarily, it did, but not utterly for he repented. And now he sings, blessed to be the name of the Lord at the thought that he is now guarded.

And so let me encourage us, let's be vigilant, vigilant as we rest in his security. You see, as we enjoy God's promised protection, let's pursue deeper faith and deeper love and deeper wisdom. Let's continue to read his word and gather together and connect with one another. Let's be serving with one another and let's think of these truths that produce worship. See what he says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is I believe what he's saying. The word blessed is where we get the word eulogy. It means to speak well. You speak well of someone else when you know that person well. A living hope, if it resides in the heart, it

must come out of the mouth.

So let me pray. And then we'll sing. Father in heaven, we love you. We thank you that you love us and we thank you that you have done these remarkable things in our life. I pray for those who are here, who are considering and contemplating what it would look like to follow you, whether they trust you, whether you are trustworthy to put all of their faith upon, I pray God that you would convince them even now. Use our singing, use our expression and our singing to convince them that we believe that this is true. Would you use that to contribute in their life to opening their eyes to help them to see that it's true. And so we sing to you as a church family with gratitude of what you've done in our life, what you will do in our life and what you're doing in our life. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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