

THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION
1 PETER 1:3-5 (1 PETER – WEEK 2)
BY ANDY MANNING
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The title of this sermon is “The Blessings of Salvation.”

Today we’re going to look at a passage in the Bible in which Peter praises God for the blessings of salvation. And he goes into detail about what those blessings are.

The Bible says that we need to be saved from our sins and reconciled to God.

And the Bible says that is why Jesus came – to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

He did not merely come to do good works and show us how to live a good and moral life;

He did not merely come to teach.

He came primarily to save us from our sins.

But what does it mean to be saved?

In salvation, God does much more than simply rescue us from hell.

And the more you understand the blessings of salvation, the more you will be like Peter and praise God.

So let’s read the passage, **1 Peter 1:3-5 (CSB)**, and then we’ll look at the blessings of salvation.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 and into an inheritance that is

imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

So Peter starts out in verse three by saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is praising God. To say "Blessed be God" is another way of saying "Hallelujah," or "Praise the Lord."

Why is Peter praising God? Because of salvation. Praise God because of all He has done for us in salvation. Praise God because of all things that He saved us from, and all the things He saved us to.

When we gather on Sundays to sing, this is what we are doing. We are doing like Peter. We are praising God for all the blessings of salvation – for all the things He saved us from, and all the things He saved us to.

And that means that the more you understand the blessings of salvation, and the more you focus on the blessings of salvation, the more passionate and enthusiastic your praise will be.

And the Peter mentions six blessings of salvation. So let's take a look at each one.

6 Blessings of Salvation

1. Salvation is because of God's great mercy.

Notice verse 3 again. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Salvation is "because of his great mercy."

What is mercy? Mercy in this context means forgiveness. It means not giving someone what they deserve.

So we are saved because of God's mercy, or forgiveness, or because God does not give us what we deserve.

What do we deserve?

The Bible says we are all sinners (Rm 3:23),

and that the punishment for sin is God's wrath, or hell, the place of eternal torment.

And there's no way to atone for your sins by doing good deeds. Even if you do lots of good deeds, your sins still deserve the wrath of God, or eternal hell.

And so the last thing you should want is for God to give you what you deserve, because that would be hell.

But salvation is not by works, but it is by God's mercy. It by God's forgiveness. God doesn't give us the punishment we deserve.

How is it possible for God, the judge of the universe to just forgive our sins? Isn't that unfair?

That's why Jesus died on the cross. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin; to absorb the wrath of God that we deserved upon Himself. That's what it means that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice, or propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 2:2). And since Jesus was punished in our place, God is able to forgive us.

Remember this: Good people don't go to heaven, forgiven people do.

And that's a reason to praise the Lord, because none of us are good.

2. Salvation means the new birth.

Look at **1 Peter 1:3** again. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth.”

The second blessing of salvation is that God has given us new birth.

What is new birth and why is it a blessing?

This is where we get word “regeneration” from.

The word “regeneration” (Gk *palingenesia*) means new birth, or a radical new beginning.

Regeneration means that when God saves us (at that very moment), God gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.

When God created mankind, He created us to have love relationship with Him; to enjoy Him; to do His will; to glorify Him.

But when our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned in the garden, sin entered into the human race and was passed on down to you.

And so from the moment you were born, your natural inclination has been to sin, or to do your own way rather than God’s way. Your natural inclination has been to love yourself rather than to love God. Your natural inclination has been to trust yourself rather than to trust God.

And this sin nature is not something you can change. The Bible says that before you become a Christian you are slave to sin.

And this is bad because we were not created to sin. Sin leads to suffering, even if it is pleasurable for the moment. Sin is poison to the body and the soul. It leads to misery and suffering. It destroys relationships. It separates us from God. But again, before Christ we are enslaved to sin. We are stuck.

But when God saves us, He gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.

He gives us new birth.

We are born again.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that become a new creation, or new creature.

Romans 6 says we are set free from sin.

God instantly and radically changes us on the inside so that we now want to love God, and we have the power to love God. In other words, the new birth means that when we get saved God changes us and gives us the ability to live the life we were created to live.

One of my older brothers is currently in jail. He's just a few years older than me, but his entire life he has been stuck in sin. Even though sin was crushing him, and destroying everything good in his life, he couldn't help it. He just kept going back to his sin. But about six months ago he got saved. He writes about one letter every week to my parents, and his letters are amazing. It's like night and day. It's exactly like 2 Corinthians 5:17 says. The old is gone, and the new has come. He wants nothing more than to serve and please God. He sees Himself as a horrible sinner who is has experienced the love and mercy of God through Christ. And now he's trying to serve God in jail.

3. Salvation means the hope of eternal life.

Let's go back to our text, 1 Peter 1:3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

The third blessing of salvation is that we have a living hope.

What is our living hope? It is eternal life.

Titus 3:7 says, “So that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.” So salvation means God gives us eternal life.

Let’s look at the word hope for a moment. The word “hope” in the Bible does not mean wishful thinking. It is not merely a strong desire for something to happen. “I sure hope God lets me into heaven when I die.” That’s not the Biblical concept of hope (Gk *elpis*). It means **a desire for something with the absolute assurance and certainty that it will happen.** The hope of eternal life is that we earnestly long for eternal life, and we are absolutely confident and sure that it is ours.

What is eternal life? Eternal life means that when you die, you will live forever with God in heaven rather than forever in hell.

And that’s what the Bible teaches. The moment you die you wake up in the presence of God, and you will live forever with God in heaven (Phil 1:21-23).

And that’s something to praise God for.

First, it means we don’t have to suffer for our sins in hell, even though that’s what we deserve. Second, it means we get to enjoy all the blessings of heaven.

Can I remind you of what heaven will be like?

- Revelation 21:3 says that we will be with God.
- Revelation 22:4 says that we will see God’s face.
- Jude 24 says that we will forever dwell in the presence of God’s glory with great joy.
- Isaiah 65:19 says there will be no weeping or crying.
- Revelation 21:4 says there will be no tears, no death, and no pain.
- Revelation 21:23 says that heaven doesn’t need the sun or the moon, because God’s glory lights it up.

- Revelation 21:25 says there is no night in heaven.
- Revelation 21:27 says there will be no sin.
- Revelation 7:16 says there will be no hunger or thirst.

This is something to praise God for because no matter how bad life gets, you can know that compared to eternity life is short,

and if you are a Christian, then when you die and leave this horrible place you will wake up immediately in the presence of God and live in paradise for eternity!

And by the way, notice that at the end of verse 3 Peter says that salvation is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

That should raise some questions because usually we think of Christ’s death as accomplishing and securing our salvation.

Why does this verse say that we are saved through Christ’s resurrection?

For two reasons.

First of all, if Christ did not raise from the grave, then that would mean that He was just a man (a crazy man at that). And if Christ was just a man, then His death would not be able to pay for the sins of the world. He would need a Savior, too!

Second, the resurrection of Christ proves that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins. It proved that God was pleased with Christ and that His death actually did atone for our sins.

This is why Romans 4:25 says that Christ was “delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” And so this is why we can say that we are saved not just through the death of Christ, but also through the resurrection of Christ.

4. Salvation is secure.

The next blessing of salvation is described in **1 Peter 1:4-5**. “4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

So verse three says that by God’s mercy we have been given new birth, and the hope of eternal life, and then verses 4-5 say that this new birth and eternal life are secure. They cannot be lost. Once you are saved, you are always saved.

This is called the doctrine of eternal security, or the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

Let’s take a closer look at the text.

First, it calls salvation an inheritance, or something that we are promised to receive.

On earth, usually you receive an inheritance from your parents when they die.

But with salvation, we receive the inheritance of eternal life when we die.

And notice what the Bible says about the inheritance of salvation.

It is imperishable. That means it cannot be destroyed.

It is undefiled. That means it is unpolluted. When you get to heaven, you won’t have to worry about sin. It will be a sinless existence.

And it is unfading. That means it is not subject to decay. Heaven will be eternal. It will not fade. It’s not temporary life; it is eternal life.

And then at the end of verse 4 it says that salvation is “kept in heaven for you.”

God is reserving your salvation for you. He is saving your seat.

And then look at verse at verse 5. “You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Not only is God keeping your salvation for you, but He is also guarding you. He is protecting you.

The word “guarded” is a military term that means the “vigilant defense of a fortress.”

God is guarding, protecting, defending you. For what? For salvation!

Peter is assuring us that we cannot lose our salvation. Once you get saved, you are always saved. Your eternity is secure.

There are two main views of eternal security.

Some Christians believe that you can lose your salvation, and some believe that you cannot lose your salvation.

I believe Peter is making it very clear that your salvation is secure; that you cannot lose it.

What if someone stops believing? What if someone starts the Christian life, but then later on rejects Christ? This person was clearly not saved in the first place. They professed salvation, but they did not possess salvation. They may have agreed with the doctrines of Christianity, but they never experienced salvation. Because once you are truly saved, you will not lose your salvation. You will not later on reject Christ. If you are truly saved then you will continue to follow Christ and love God the rest of your days. You won’t be perfect, but the pattern and direction of your love will be faith, love, and obedience to God.

This is wonderful news because even though we are Christians, we still sin. Sometimes we blow it big and do horrible things, like Peter when he denied Christ three times. But just as Christ did not abandon Peter when he sinned, Christ will not abandon you when you sin.

The Home Discipleship Catechism talks about eternal security. It answers the question, Can we lose our salvation? Here's the answer: Since we are not saved by good works, we cannot lose our salvation when we fail to be good.

Do you understand? Usually the reason we wonder if we've lost our salvation is when we sin. We wonder, Has God taken away my salvation? But remember, God did not save us because of good works, but because of His mercy. So if good works are not what save us in the first place, then what makes you think that failing to do good works will cause you to lose your salvation? You must remember that it is Christ's work on the cross that saves us, not our works of righteousness.

5. Salvation is received by faith.

Look at **verse 5**. "You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

Peter is inserting in here the way that we receive salvation – through faith.

Christ died and rose again to secure our salvation; to make salvation available for us. But each individual must personally receive salvation. And the way you do that is through faith in Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to put your faith in Jesus, or to believe in Jesus for salvation.

Faith in Jesus has both a positive and a negative aspect.

First, faith is positive in that it is trusting in Jesus' death on the cross to pay for your sins and reconcile you to God, and it is trusting in Jesus as the Lord and leader of your life.

Second, faith is negative in that it is not trusting in your own good works to save you, and it is not trusting in yourself as the leader of your life.

Putting your faith in Christ is not just agreeing with a set of doctrines. Even the devil agrees that Jesus is Savior and Lord.

You have to personally invite Jesus to be your Savior and Lord.

Romans 10:13 says, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

How can you tell if you have put your faith in Jesus, or if you are merely agreeing with doctrines about Jesus?

First of all, if God were to ask you, Why should I let you into heaven? Your answer focus on Christ and what He did to pay for your sins.

Second, because you have put your faith in Christ as the Lord of your life, then your life will show evidence of a strong desire to obey God, and a pattern of becoming more obedient over time.

6. Salvation will be revealed when Jesus returns.

Notice **verse 5** once more. “You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

What does it mean that salvation is ready to be revealed at the last time?

The phrase “last time” is often used to refer to the second coming of Christ.

So Peter is saying that there is an aspect of salvation that will we will not experience until Christ comes back. What is that?

As soon as you die you will wake up in the presence of God. But that's not the eternal state. That's called the intermediate state. Why? Because when Jesus comes back, things will be different.

When Jesus comes back, you will experience salvation in three ways.

First, you will get your new, glorified body that is completely free from sin.

This is often called the resurrection, and it's often called glorification.

1 John 3:2 says that it will happen when Christ returns, and we will be like Him (we will have the kind of glorified, resurrected body that Jesus had when He rose from the grave).

1 Corinthians 15:51-35 says that we will be changed in the blink of an eye; and we will be given incorruptible, immortal bodies.

In other words, they will be sinless bodies that never die.

Second, you will receive your heavenly reward that you earned by living a life of good works.

All through the New Testament we are promised that when we do good deeds, we are storing up heavenly rewards, or treasures in heaven.

When will these be doled out? Matthew 16:27 says they will be handed out when Christ returns, at the final judgment.

So immediately when you die you go to be with God in heaven, but you will not inherit all of your rewards until Christ's second coming.

And third, you will experience the new heaven and new earth, where you will live with God forever.

Finally, the Bible says that when Christ comes back He will create a new heaven and earth where will live with Him forever (2 Peter 3:7-13).

So when you die, your spirit will go to be with God immediately, but you won't experience the fullness of your salvation until Christ comes back, when you will get a new glorified body, and all of your rewards, and when you will see the new heaven and earth. This is what Peter means that salvation is ready to be revealed at the last time.

CONCLUSION

So salvation has many blessings, and the more you understand the blessings of salvation, the more you will be able to say with Peter, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”