**Living With Hope Through Trials Part 1**

**1 Peter 1:3-9 (Today we cover verses 3-5)**

**Introduction**

 Good morning! As we prepare to study the Word of God together today, I ask for you to open your Bibles to the gospel of Matthew chapter 25. Please hold that in readiness because we will be looking at that near the end of the message. Last week we began our study of this Epistle by looking at the author, the audience and the setting. What we concluded is that the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle to the followers of Christ who were scattered all around the vicinity of what is today the country of Turkey. Peter told his readers that he was writing to them because they have been chosen by God for salvation and that through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, they have the desire to obey Jesus Christ and experience the forgiveness of their sins by the sprinkling of His blood. We were challenged to embrace our identity as God’s chosen people by living differently than the rest of the world. We also are to rest in the assurance of our salvation because the peace that God gives through the sacrifice of His Son sets us free from the bondage to sin. Finally, we are also charged with seeking the grace and peace of God daily in our lives through prayer, studying His Word and through being obedient to Christ.

 With the time we have together this morning we are going to look closely at verses 3-9 of chapter 1, which provides us with instructions on how we can live with hope through trials. We must remember that the original audience of this letter were followers of Christ who were being encouraged to stand firm in the faith even though they have been facing harsh persecution by not only the Roman Empire, but also leaders in other countries. As we read these verses carefully, we will be presented with four applications. 1. Just like a seed looks dead at first but grows into life we will be asked to endure hardships because of our faith in Christ. It is through those trials that followers of Christ are strengthened and tested in their faith. 2. The treasures of this world that are looked at as providing security will fade away, but God will hold our inheritance in His eternal kingdom. 3. The goldsmith must put the gold into the fire to burn away the impurities, but after experiencing the fire the gold is pure and of high value. We face trials for a purpose, which is to mold us into the image of Christ. 4. We experience the joy of our salvation not through what we see or feel in this world, but in the relationship and union we have with God through Christ.

**The Source of Our Living Hope (v. 3)**

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

As Peter continues in this letter after his welcome, he first says that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son are blessed because He has shown great mercy by giving those who follow Him by allowing them to be born again to a living hope. What is this living hope? The living hope that all believers in Christ have is the promise that their sins have been forgiven not because of anything they have done, but because of God who is rich in mercy. Peter is starting this passage with a song of praise thanking God because He has granted to all forgiveness of sins and a new life in the Spirit, which is what is meant by being born again. If you remember this was the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus in the gospel of John chapter 3. Jesus was trying to explain to Nicodemus that being born again is a requirement to enter the kingdom of God. This new spiritual birth takes place when someone is reborn of the spirit, not the flesh. Being born again is when the Holy Spirit enters the believer and makes that person a new creation in Christ. The Apostle Paul describes it in this way **“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).** A believer in Christ is made a new creation through the Spirit that is planted in them. The old person has died, and the new creation has appeared. This transition happens spiritually because even though our physical bodies are continually breaking down, we have the spirit which will never perish. **God’s mercy**- Salvation begins with His great mercy, not our merit. **New birth**- We are born again into a new spiritual reality.

 This new birth because of God’s mercy gives us a **living hope** because it is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The old person passes away and becomes a new creation in Christ because He has overcome death and the grave. His power over death secures our eternal salvation and gives us the hope that this life is not the end. The Apostle Paul wrote these words to encourage his readers regarding the resurrection of Christ **20 But the fact is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man death came, by a Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).** We see that Adam was the first fruit of those who die in their sins, but Christ is the first fruit of those who will one day experience the resurrection from the dead. In Adam all men die, but in Christ all are made alive who accept Him as Savior. This is the reason why we have a living hope to sustain us through this life.

 Our first application comes to us in the illustration Jesus provided to the disciples in the gospel of John. **24 Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life (John 12:24-25).** When Christ died, He opened a way for those who believe in Him to be reconciled to God. However, through that dead seed comes new life in the spirit and this happened when Christ rose from the dead. It took death to make this happen, but after that death comes the new birth in the spirit for all who are in Christ.

**The Security of Our Inheritance (vv. 4-5)**

**4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

In this passage Peter is speaking of the inheritance that is shared with all who place their faith in Christ. Before we move forward, we need to look closely at what Peter means by the word inheritance. In the Greek language inheritance means that something has been passed down from a parent in the family. When a parent passes away and then chooses to leave a portion of the estate to a child, we call that an inheritance. When we read carefully the pages of Scripture, we see that God chose the Jewish nation as the people who would be the receivers of an inheritance from Him. He gave them the land of Canaan; He also blessed them with the law and sent to them the prophets who spoke His word to them. What we are going to see however is that the inheritance God gave to the Hebrew nation is surpassed by the inheritance that Jesus Christ has given to us. Peter provides three reasons why the inheritance of Christ is greater than what was given to the nation of Israel.

 The first reason why it is greater is because it is imperishable. On your outline the first statement under number 2 reads this way **Imperishable** – not subject to decay. When God gave the nation of Israel the Promised Land, we see that they eventually would lose it by being sent into exile. They lost it because they rebelled against God and then had to be tested in the fire of exile to get it back. The people had to follow God’s commands to receive His blessing, and He promised to be with them if they obeyed, but He also told them He would discipline them if they disobeyed. God was faithful to the nation, but they were unfaithful to Him. When someone places their faith in Christ they inherit the assurance of eternal life with God in heaven. That hope cannot be taken away and is therefore imperishable.

 The second descriptor is the word **undefiled**- pure, without stain or sin. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden the entire creation was corrupted by sin. Not only did death enter the world, but the entire creation was cursed. The earth experiences tornadoes, earthquakes and all kinds of natural disasters as well as the violence we say taking place among humans that have been created in the image of God. Even though this world has been corrupted by sin those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ have a hope that is undefiled. The salvation through Jesus Christ is perfect and flawless meaning that it sanctifies us in Him.

 Thirdly, Peter says that it is **unfading**- Eternal, unlike earthly treasures. The wealth and prosperity that the world seeks are things that will not last forever. Everything that we see here in the physical world will one day pass away and come to nothing. Only the good news of Jesus Christ and the hope of eternal life of the soul is what will last eternally. This is why we must remember that putting our hope in temporary things of this world will always leave us wanting. It is on Jesus Christ and His atoning work on the cross that gives us an unfading hope that nothing in this world can touch.

 The inheritance that we receive from God is **reserved** in heaven for us. Therefore, as we live these years on earth we are preparing for the inheritance that we are to receive when we pass on to that next life. Let’s take a moment to review the passage in Matthew where Jesus is telling the disciples about judgment day. Please grab your Bible that has been opened to Matthew 25. Let’s read verses 31-46. This passage shows and confirms the words of Peter in verse 4. Jesus says when He pronounces judgment that those who have blessed by the Father will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. See the word “inherit” here? This is the blessed inheritance that those who believe in Jesus Christ are promised. To receive inheritance, we are encouraged to live out our faith in a way that can be seen by others. This is not to earn salvation, but to serve as a testimony that Jesus is really our Savior. All who place faith in Christ are adopted as children in God’s family and receive the inheritance that He has allotted for them. Thank goodness for the grace of God this is made available to all who accept Him as Lord!

The final statement we will fill in today is that last line under point #2. Believers **guarded** by God’s power through faith. It is the faith that we have in God that is sustaining us and protecting us until that time when our salvation is completed. We must be careful though when we speak of protection. Once again, we are speaking of spiritual protection, not merely physical protection. Once a person has accepted Christ as Savior their salvation is secured, and their soul is protected by God until the time when they will be with Him in eternity.

 Our second application this morning is that worldly security fades, but God holds our inheritance in His eternal kingdom. This reminds me of the parable Jesus shared of the people regarding the rich man who had placed all his hope in his earthly wealth. **16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began thinking to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. 19 And I will say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years to come; relax, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!”’ 20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is demanded of you; and as for all that you have prepared, who will own it now?’ 21 Such is the one who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich in relation to God” (Luke 12:16-21).** Having such large barns and a lot of crops was what this man made his priority. All that wealth and prosperity faded away when he realized that his life was going to be demanded by him that night. The security that God provides for us through Christ is much greater and has eternal importance. Nothing we can have on this earth will equal such importance or bring us the joy that He can!

**Conclusion**

As we conclude I would like to ask you to make certain to keep your paper for service next week. We will continue the passage and conclude it at that time. Today we have learned from Peter that we can endure through trials because we have a living hope that will not fade away regardless of what happens in this world. We can face the future with the hope of God in our hearts because He has given us an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. May we always allow this hope to guide our hearts and minds as we continue the work of evangelism and awaiting the return of our Lord and Savior. Amen.

***On the next page you will find the fill-in-blank notes you can use for later reference. Please keep this in readiness for next week’s message as well. Put it somewhere in your home where you can see it to remind you of the hope that you have in Jesus Christ!***

