

## **“OUR GLORIOUS SALVATION”**

### **HOLINESS 1 Peter 1:3-9 DON MAURER March 6, 2015**

**Don:** Thank you. Okay. Let’s read from the word of God here. There is a typo in your handout. Sorry about that. My fault. It should say 1 Peter 1:3-9, not 2:3-9. So this is the word of God.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again into a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith, for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now, for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Don:** Amen. Father, we pray that You would help us indeed to behold You more clearly, through Christ. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Don:** Okay. I wanted to address this text today to fill in some of the gaps. I don’t know if Carl is here this morning, but he did a fine job a couple weeks ago on facets of this passage. I wanted to talk not so much about trials and suffering today, though I will touch on it briefly, but upon our gracious and glorious salvation, as Bruce terms it—the nature of it, and how we can revel in it, because a lot of us are going through a lot of problems, and there is no one that we know who isn’t. So this is a good opportunity just to revel in the great joy and salvation that the Lord has given us.

Now notice verse 3. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I’ve said it in the past, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the one only living and true God. God, of course, is Three in One, One in Three, and He is the only living and true God. Our culture doesn’t like to hear that, our multicultural, pluralistic society. Nevertheless, it’s true.

It may strike you as rather odd, but as the God-Man, Jesus, God the Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said it to Mary Magdalene, when she saw Him at the Resurrection. He called the Father “My God and your God.”

Now, of course, Muslims capitalize on this. “Well, wait a minute. This proves that Jesus isn’t God.” No, it does no such thing. It proves the two natures of Christ, and I could spend a whole class on that subject alone. Christ is God. Christ is man. And, of course, He humbled Himself to have the position that He has. And so I just wanted to

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bring that to your attention, that God the Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then it says, “according to His abundant mercy.” Now remember, what is mercy? Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve.

I’ve used this illustration before. When I was little, even though I was repeatedly told not to throw stones at the garage door, I kept on doing it and broke it. And when my father came home, he said, “Well, I guess I’m going to have to give you a whipping.”

“Oh, but Daddy, that hurts!”

“Well, it hurts when your brothers get it too, but you laugh when they get it.” (*Laughter.*)

Well anyway, he said, “All right. I won’t do it this time. But if you do it one more time, if you ever do it again, you’re going to get a whipping.”

Well, he should have given me a whipping, but he didn’t. That’s mercy, folks. That’s mercy.

And God’s mercy is abundant! You know, we hear this term *abundant* all through Scripture, don’t we? For example, Jesus said that He came that we might have life, and have it abundantly. The night before He was crucified, Jesus said to the apostles that He wants His joy in us to be full, to be abundant. In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul says that we have been made alive and seated with Christ in heavenly places, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His mercy and His grace. He said that God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive. He’s not stingy in His mercy, is He? He’s abundant in His mercy.

That should preclude any objections that people have to election. You know, people say, “Well, that’s not fair! Why doesn’t God choose everybody to be saved?” And yet we hear these expressions about His abundant mercy, His generosity, the riches of His grace, and that He is going to save a multitude that no man can number. He’s going to save many people. That’s being abundant in mercy.

And “He has begotten us again” into a new birth. We have been born again. We’ve been regenerated. For what purpose? Not only for salvation, not only to new life, but to “a living hope.”

You know, my pastor, who is also teaching on 1 Peter, talked about the number of Scriptures that talk about the phrase *living* in the word of God. For example, God is referred to as “the living God.” “My soul longs, yea, faints, for God, for the living God,” the Psalmist said. We’ve been given “living oracles,” according to Stephen, in the New Testament, in his speech to the Jews in Jerusalem. Jesus promised us “living water” if we believe in Him. We, as believers, are “living stones.” And we are born again to eternal life, and into “a living hope.”

Now this isn’t wishful thinking, is it? It’s not a “hope so” hope. You know, you can think of examples, and this is very trivial. But Tuesday, I was almost biting my nails listening to the first Pirate exhibition game. And Dick Clouser is not here, so I can talk about him. (*Laughter.*) I called him on Tuesday, to razz him.

“Are you listening to the Pirate game?”

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“Yeah, buddy,” he said. “They’re winning 5-0. But don’t turn it on and jinx them.”

So what do I do? I turn it on. It’s 5-0, 6-0. Then it’s 8-7, okay? (*Laughter.*) I’m sorry, 7-6. They ended up winning 8-7, but it was a nail biter.

But anyway, I was hoping that the Pirates would win. Or, you know, we all hoped as kids, or maybe sometimes as adults, to get what we wanted for Christmas. And we hope for those things. But this is a living hope. It’s not a hope so hope. It’s a certainty. It’s like the gift is already in the mail, on its way, all right? This is a living hope.

And why is it a living hope? Because of the living Christ! It’s “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” Peter says. This is the heart of our living hope. This is the reason for our living hope.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most well attested event in history. And all other explanations of what happened that day are ridiculous, whether you talk about the swoon theory, where Jesus just appeared to be dead, but wasn’t really; He fainted in the tomb, or that the disciples stole the body,--how that could have happened with the heavy stone, I don’t know how,--or whatever, or just an illusion, whatever it is,--all of them just fail to account for the fact that Peter and the other apostles who before were cowards and ran away, and Peter denied his Lord, and now they’re willing to die for their faith. As Nabeel Qureshi in his book says, “Liars make bad martyrs.” Okay, people are able to die a lot for what they truly believe, like the 9/11 people, the suicide bombers. But it’s very unlikely that somebody will die for something that they absolutely know is false. They know it’s a lie.

Now, of course, for unbelievers, the Resurrection is a favorite thing that they like to attack. For example, the other night I heard a debate between James White, the Reformed Baptist apologist, and (I almost said Bob Barker. It’s not; it’s Dan Barker), (*laughter*), who is president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Tragically, he once was a preacher. And Dan Barker said, “Well, the resurrection of Christ and the claims of Christ have no more validity than the Church of the Spaghetti Monster,” whatever in the world that is. You know, what silliness! What blasphemy! It shows how much he hates the truth.

And, of course, I heard Mike Pitek last week on the radio, and he was talking about the death of Leonard Nimoy, who was Mr. Spock on “Star Trek.” We have a few Trekkies here, I think. (*Laughter.*) And he said, “Well, Leonard Nimoy will live forever in our hearts, just like Jesus.” (*Gasps.*) You know, he has no idea of the seriousness of what he’s saying, and the seriousness of the Resurrection.

And, of course, the alternative, which these people don’t realize, is absolutely dreadful. Rich Clark, would you read on your handout 1 Corinthians 15:16-17, please?

**Rich:** Yes, sir. “For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins.”

**Don:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Pretty dire, isn’t it? Okay. There was an article I read a few months ago, and it said, to the effect, “Quit thinking so much about heaven.” Now what did he mean by that? Well, of course, we have all of these movies that have come out, books and movies about people supposedly going to heaven with near death experiences, or even people who supposedly didn’t die, but went anyway. I’m a little skeptical about

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those things, to be honest with you. But we have to realize that the resurrection of the body, as we say in the Apostles’ Creed, is very, very important. It’s central. It’s not that we’re going to be these wispy souls, existing in some Never Never Land in heaven. No, we’re looking for new heavens and a new earth. We’re looking for resurrected bodies, and if we don’t have resurrected bodies, then death has the victory, doesn’t it? All right. So the Resurrection is extremely important. Bill McCoy, would you read John 14:19 for us, please? The promise of Christ.

**Bill:** “Because I live, you will live also.”

**Don:** “Because I live, you will live also.” Brothers, we can take that to the bank, can’t we? All right, this is the living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now what is this living hope? It’s an inheritance! And unlike other inheritances, it’s “incorruptible,” (or some other translations say “imperishable”), it’s “undefiled,” and “unfading,” all right? Earthly inheritances may be stolen, all right? And we lose them when we die. But not this one. And we all know that things break, material things, and our bodies get sick. I see that now with my mom, unfortunately. And, you know, all of these things are going to pass away. But this inheritance that Christ is giving us is unfading, and incorruptible, and eternal! And it gets better and better as it goes on, all right? Unlike earthly possessions, this will not be taken away from us.

Now is this wishful thinking? You know, when I was in college, I got to know somebody who was trying to convince me of Buddhism and Hinduism, and he accused me, and he accused Christians of being babies that didn’t want to grow up. That was his view. Is this just pie in the sky? Is this what Karl Marx said was the opiate of the masses? People say, “Well, you Christians just don’t know how to face life. You’re afraid, and so you have to have this Jesus and this Christianity.” No! This is something that is reserved in heaven for us, isn’t it? Doug, would you read John 14:1-2, THE GREAT PROMISE OF Christ?

**Doug:** “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

**Don:** Yes. Amen. Do you hear what Christ said there? He says, “If it weren’t so, I would have told you.” I wouldn’t have lied to you. I wouldn’t have disillusioned you with false hope. No, this is real, brothers. What does it say in the book of Revelation, in Revelation 21, with all of these glorious promises of the new heavens and a new earth? “These words are trustworthy and true.” Oh, amen!

**Participant:** Yes, sir.

**Don:** And, you know, Carl said something a couple weeks ago, and he said a lot of very good things. He said that God stakes His reputation on us. Well, I’d like to say that I think it’s even more true that God stakes His reputation upon Himself. And Sig gave me special instructions that he wanted to be called when we read Hebrews, when the Hebrews Scriptures came up. (*Laughter.*) So Sig, would you read Hebrews 6, verses 16-18, please?

**Sig:** I just said that I preferred the NIV translation.

**Don:** Yes. All right. Well, go ahead.

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**Sig:** I’ll read it along so those coming in the door can follow. (*Laughter.*)

**Don:** Oh, how magnanimous of you, Sig! I’ll tell you what! (*Laughter.*) Go ahead.

**Sig:** “For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.” I mean, how confusing is that sentence! (*Laughter.*) It should read, “Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said, and puts an end to all arguments.” Isn’t that clearer? (*Laughter.*) Anyway, okay. “Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise”—oh, come on, Don!—“the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us.”

**Don:** Okay. Do you want to read it in your vernacular?

**Sig:** Yes. “Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, He confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.” (NIV 84)

**Don:** Okay. Very good. What is the author of Hebrews referring to here? He’s referring to Genesis 15, which is R. C. Sproul’s favorite Scripture. And people look at him and say, “What?” But what he is saying is that God can’t lie. It’s talking about the incident with Abraham. “How will I know, LORD,” that You’re going to do this for me, and that You’re going to give me all these children? And so God takes the animals, and Abraham sacrifices them and cuts them in pieces. Later on, a deep sleep falls upon Abraham, and there is a smoking pot. I don’t mean marijuana. I mean that there is a burning pot. What God is saying, as He takes these animals, and divides them, what God is saying, in effect, as He makes a covenant with Abraham, is “May what happened to these animals happen to Me, if I don’t fulfill that promise.” He swears by Himself. Brothers, that is the surety of our faith. That’s the guarantee of our faith. That’s the guarantee of the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we’re kept by the power of God, through faith. Oh, let’s see. Who haven’t I called on yet? Would someone read John 10:28-30, please?

**Participant:** “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My hand. I and the Father are one.”

**Don:** Thank you, Jay. All right. That, of course, is the preservation and perseverance of the saints, isn’t it? We’re kept by God’s power. If it were up to me, if I were kept by my power, I would be toast in a nanosecond. But we are kept by God’s power, all right?

Now, of course, we do have faith. That faith is a gift from God. It’s a living faith. It’s not a dead faith. Sig, once again, Hebrews 11, verse 6.

**Sig:** For without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists, or He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

**Don:** Okay. All right. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. We are justified by faith, and faith alone. And as Romans 1:16 and 17 says, “It’s faith from first to last.” Jesus, of course, is “the author and the finisher of our faith,” is He not?

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And this salvation is going to be revealed “in the last time.” Now, of course, “last times,” and “end times,” and everything like that, there is a fascination with that today. And, of course, it’s used in different senses in Scripture. But I think what Peter is talking about here is that the “last time” means the end of time. At the coming of Jesus Christ, this salvation is going to be revealed.

Do we have it now? Absolutely! And why do we use the means of grace? Well, we use the means of grace to experience it, don’t we? We fellowship, like we do here on Friday mornings. We go to church. We pray. We read the Word. We receive the sacraments. Why do we do that? To experience this great salvation, here and now. But the completion of it, the totality of it, is going to be revealed at the last time. And I can’t wait to see what that’s going to be like. Oh, glory! All right. Now, of course we’re going to suffer trials. Peter makes that very clear. Scripture makes that very clear. You will have to suffer various trials. They’re bound to come. Didn’t Jesus say that? He said, “In the world you will have tribulation.”

But why is it here? Is it here—perish the thought!—because God is mean? No. Is it here because God is punishing us for something? No, not necessarily. It’s here to prove the genuineness of our faith, like gold, tested by fire. That’s the only way that gold is purified, isn’t it? That’s just the way it is. And therefore, for the Christian, for you and I, who name the name of Christ, suffering is not senseless. Suffering is not ultimately tragic, though it is real, and grievous. Of course it is, you know, whether it’s the suffering that people inflict upon us, or the suffering, of course, that our brothers and sisters around the world that Bruce has referred to many times are going through. Cancer, is real, and it’s grievous.

But this suffering results in what? It results in the praise, honor and glory of ourselves? No. The praise, honor and glory of Christ. And we are in Him, so we also receive the benefits of Christ, do we not?

Christ will be vindicated one day. Christ will be vindicated when He returns. The Bible says, “Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Oh, what a glorious thing it will be to see Khrushchev and Nero, and Saddam Hussein, and Osama bin Laden, and all of the dictators, all the presidents and kings, who have caused Christians such grief, to finally bow the knee before Jesus. It will be too late for them as far as their salvation is concerned, if they haven’t been saved. But they will bow the knee, and Christ will be vindicated, and that is what we are longing for, brothers. That is what we are longing for.

And then Peter goes on to say that, though not seeing Him, we love Him, “with joy inexpressible,” all right? Now, of course, we do express our joy when we sing hymns, don’t we? When we do a lot of those kind of things, we worship Him. But aren’t there times, beloved, when that joy that you feel when you’re before the Lord, is inexpressible? Words just can’t express it. The Scripture says that the Holy Spirit utters groans that words cannot express. But what about our joy? Absolutely.

Now let me ask you a question. What are some things that might hinder that joy inexpressible in our lives?

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**Participant:** Well, Don, I wanted to ask you a question about that, because when we were talking about being tested by fire, like gold is refined, and the bad parts of gold are burned off by the fire, or whatever. But in persecution, you know, I don't know about you guys, but I'm pretty susceptible to wimping out and running the other way.

**Don:** Aren't we all?

**Participant:** I mean, I would be ashamed. I would be crestfallen. I would be horrified if I didn't stand up to it, and I hope that I would. But, you know, I'm pretty selfish, and I like heat, and I like a warm place to sleep, and I'm afraid that I might give in. So the hope I have in Christ is that if I fail, He's bigger than me, and I haven't failed His purpose. Can you elaborate on being tested by fire?

**Don:** Well, I'm not an expert on those matters. I'm not an expert on how gold is refined, or whatever. Maybe somebody else may be. But then, see, I go back, Sig, to what is said before, that we are kept by the power of God. I can't imagine what it must be like for brothers and sisters around the world to go through what they're going through. But my hope is not in me. My hope is that God will see me through this, and give me the grace to endure, and not to fail. Of course, we know that Peter did deny his Lord, and Peter was restored. And that's the hope that we have, that we're kept by God's power. Boy, that probably doesn't help much, brother, but—

**Sig:** No, I think that's a good point. The very fact that this story is in the Bible is encouraging.

**Don:** Oh, absolutely.

**Participant:** Back to your question, Don.

**Don:** Yes.

**Participant:** Things that might rob our joy?

**Don:** mm-hmm.

**Participant:** I think, maybe, what comes to mind is sin, especially habitual sin.

**Don:** Amen.

**Participant:** Are you familiar with that passage that says, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

**Don:** Yes. Thank you, Doug. Mm-hmm. Sin, unbelief. The big thing, especially in our culture, is just all the distractions that we have. I was listening to a conference last week from Ligonier, and Tim Challies. Maybe some of you are familiar with him. On the Internet, all the distractions we have. I heard one in the background, you know,—the phone going off!—texts and emails, and stuff that vies for our attention, the media and other things. All of that may hinder our joy inexpressible, just to be before the Lord and to want to be with Him. Absolutely.

**Participant:** Brother Don?

**Don:** Yes, sir?

**Participant:** I have a question for you. Whenever you had mentioned—well first, I wanted to go back to the Scripture, to confirm that Jesus is God. In Hebrews 1, I believe it's verse 8,—

**Don:** Yes.

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**Participant:** Where, actually, God says to the Son, He addresses Him as God.

**Don:** Yes. “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.”

**Participant:** Yes.

**Don:** From Psalm 45.

**Participant:** I’m thinking that the other thing I just wanted to mention. Whenever you had said, in regard to bin Laden, and a few other people you named, and you said that we long for every knee to confess. And I was just thinking that, you know, as followers of Christ, right now, in the present day, just thinking of the longing that, as Stephen was being stoned, he said, “Do not hold this sin against them.”

**Don:** Yes.

**Participant:** So just thinking that, I just wanted to say that for us to ask the Lord to help us to have compassion and mercy, and long to share the truth of the gospel, that some may come to saving faith.

**Don:** Oh, amen. And to pray for those who are our enemies, that they would come to saving faith. You’re absolutely right, Jay. Thank you.

All right. We receive the end, the purpose, or the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls. We’re justified right now, and we’re full of joy in Christ right now, at least we should be. But the completion of our salvation, the consummation of it, is going to be at the coming of Christ, forever and ever.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** And John Newton said,  
“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise  
Than when we’d first begun.”

Now what should be our response? I will simply conclude with two Scriptures. Rich, would you read Colossians 3:1-3, please?

**Rich:** “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

**Don:** Okay. And Jay, Matthew 6:19-20, please?

**Jay:** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**Don:** Amen. Let us pray. Father, we thank You for the instruction that You’ve given us in Your word. We thank You, Father, for the promise expressed by Your apostle. And Father, we praise You for Bruce, and we thank You, Father, for the opportunity that he has today. We pray that You would strengthen him and embolden him as he speaks today. And Father, may we take these truths that we’ve learned this morning to heart during this upcoming week, in Jesus’ name. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.” Thank you.

**Men:** Thank you, Don. (*Applause.*)