

The Living Hope of Christ's Resurrection

By Pastor Matt Black

Bible Text: 1 Peter 1:1-5

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Resurrection Sunday

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Introduction: Open your Bible to **1 Peter 1:1-5**. The title of the message this morning is "The Living Hope of Christ's Resurrection". My hope is not in this world. It wasn't too long ago people were hoping in their stock market portfolios for their retirement. Now they have no mutual funds. My hope is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was crucified and buried. But His body is no longer here. He has risen from the dead, just as He said.

The resurrection is not just a historical fact. Jesus Christ lives in me. He is alive. No matter how bad things get on this earth, my hope is not in this crumbling planet. My hope is not in the ruined economy or in any person on this earth! People fail. Banks fail. This earth will one day pass away. But Jesus Christ never fails. He has risen from the dead. He lives in me. That is my hope. This is the hope of all true Christians. We see this in 1 Peter 1. Would you stand for the reading of God's Word?

1 Peter 1:1-5, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which **according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time".

[Prayer for Guidance]

- I. Because of our new life and living hope of the resurrection of Christ we are "**STRANGERS**" in this world (**verse 1**). As I said the resurrection is not just a historical fact. Jesus Christ lives in me.

Two words are used to describe these early Christians: "strangers" and "scattered". They were rejected by the popular culture that they lived in because they would not go along with it. The Romans of the first century worshipped the Emperor as a god. They could worship whoever or whatever else they wanted but they had to worship the Emperor. The Christians worshipped Jesus exclusively. They would bow the knee to no one else. So they were hated in their society. They could worship no one but Jesus because as verse 3 says, "**hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** 4 To an inheritance

incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." They had a different home.

These Christians were strangers, but they were not only in Rome. They were scattered throughout the Roman empire. They were everywhere. Christians today are scattered everywhere.

Things have not changed much since the first century. Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we too are strangers in this world. We can no longer live comfortably in this world. If Jesus Christ lives in you, He has opened your eyes to the vanity of this world.

A. **Context.** Peter is writing to a church that is undergoing the worst kind of circumstances of life. The believers are facing persecution, hostility, rejection, animosity and hatred. Some of them are even dying for their faith. Just before Peter wrote this letter, in 64 AD, Rome burned down to the ground. 70% of the city was gone, and many believed the Emperor Nero ordered the fire so that he could found a new city on Rome's ruins (which he did). Nero accused the Christians and began the first official persecution against Christians, and it was brutal.

Early Christians were [persecuted] by Roman officials to the point that they were forced to hold their services underground, quite literally in [the underground burial tunnels called] catacombs. They were unpopular and accused of...setting the city of Rome on fire under the reign of the Emperor Nero...Nero tortured Christians.¹

Taticus, one of the first century historians wrote of this persecution:

"Perishing, they were additionally made into sports: they were killed by dogs by having the hides of *animals* attached to them, or they were nailed to crosses or set aflame, and, when the daylight passed away, they were [tied to posts, set aflame, and] used as nighttime torches."²

B. **Application:** What is it that can give you hope when everything in life goes wrong? What will give you hope if you lose everything?

You may not be lit up as a torch or fed to the lions as the early Christians were, but you will most certainly one day lose everything you have in this life. Within one hundred years, every one of us in this building will be dead. Our bodies will be eaten by worms, but our soul will live somewhere forever. You will lose everything. What is your hope?

And you will go through devastating valleys in your life. What was it that gave these early Christians hope that this would turn out good even when they had to die? What is it that is going to give you strength if you lose everything? I will tell you what the hope of every Christian is: **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. You can dig for His body all around Jerusalem. You can look for it any where in the world. You can search every tomb. He is not there—He is risen from the dead as He said! Jesus Christ is alive.

¹ Steven Levi. *Use History Like a Tool* (Los Angeles: Silver Lake Publishing, 2003), 7.

² Ibid.

Without Jesus Christ you have no hope (**Ephesians 2:12**). You might have false hopes. People trust in all kinds of things that bring a false sense of security. A job, money, another person. Everything and everyone will eventually fail you. There is only one hope that can never fail. You must trust in Jesus Christ.

II. Because of our new life and living hope of the resurrection of Christ we are **PROTECTED**. Come what may, I know that God loves me and God is bigger than any one of my problems. In Christ I am safe and secure. No matter what your situation is, **God is bigger than your situation**. **Verse 2** tells us that the Triune God is involved in keeping you safe, and guarding you for His purposes.

A. You are **Selected** (chosen) out of this world by the foreknowledge of **God the Father**. Peter says I've been "**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**". No matter what you are going through you are safe, because God chose you for Himself in eternity past before you were ever born.

So many people will live for this life and go the Hell for eternity. They will live this life as if it is the only thing they have. A Christian lives this life as it is. It is passing away. We have a bigger purpose. No job, no amount of money, no amount of fame or pleasure is big enough to get my eyes off of my real treasure, which is God. He chose me before I was born. He didn't choose me to be controlled by possessions, pride, or popularity. He chose me to be controlled by Him. I've been selected!

1. Election is made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This choice by God is only possible because of Jesus Christ who is resurrected from the dead. A holy God cannot love me without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His resurrection not only from the grave, but his resurrection to live in me! That is why Jesus Christ is "**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**" (**Revelation 14:8**). His electing love is not cheap. His foreknowing of me and his love of me before the world began cost God everything.

2. Your election means that God has loved you since eternity. You are "**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**". Nothing can harm you without His permission. He has set His love upon a wretch like you.

What is God's foreknowledge? Foreknowledge means to "set regard upon" or to know "from eternity with distinguishing affection and delight" and is virtually equivalent to "whom he foreloved."³

Some believe that God looked down the corridors of time and saw who would choose Him, and He chose those who would choose Him. There is really a lot wrong with that theory. First, if that is true, God did not make a choice. **He simply confirmed your choice**.

The clearest understanding of foreknowledge is found in the Old Testament in **Jeremiah 1:5**, where God tells Jeremiah personally, "**Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out**

³ John Murray. *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 317.

of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

He says it another way in **Jeremiah 31:3**, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

The world cannot understand God's love in my heart. I love Him because He first loved me. The lost person thinks he loves God, but Jesus Christ is not alive in the lost person's heart. No one loves or seeks after God (**Romans 3:11**) until the Spirit of God draws that person. They shall all be taught of God.

B. Christians are safe because we are **Sanctified** (CLEANSED) by the **Holy Spirit of God**. **Verse 2**, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience". God has given me His presence!

Peter is saying to those who are about to be burned alive for their faith—look God is on your side. Your purpose is not to be rich and famous, but your purpose is to be holy. You may lose all that this world offers, but I've not called you to be part of this world. I've called you to be holy.

"[Peter] was not giving them a command or exhortation to be obedient."⁴ He assumed that they would be obedience because the Spirit dwelled within them and sanctified them. It is this union of the Spirit with my spirit that makes me acceptable to God.

You know you are safe, because God has put His Spirit in you to give you the power to do His will. Peter is referring to one of the most important passages in the Old Testament. Look over at **Ezekiel 36:25-27**, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." The Spirit's presence is sent into your heart to cleanse you and keep you in obedience. This obedience does not save you. It proves that you are saved. The Spirit gives us the power to do the will of God in a wicked world.

We know we are chosen because God has put His Spirit in us to go against the current of this world. For the earliest Christians that meant being burned alive, or crucified, or fed alive to wild animals.

C. Christians are safe because we are **SAVED** by the blood of **the Lord Jesus Christ**. We are not saved by our obedience. Amen! We will obey because the Spirit is inside of us. We will be cleansed and do the will of God. But Peter adds that we are elect through "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" so that we will know we are NOT saved by our obedience. Obedience is a result of the Spirit's presence. Your obedience does not cleanse you. It

⁴A.W. Tozer. *I Call It Heresy!: And Other Timely Topics From First Peter* (Camp Hill, PA: WingSpread, 1991).

does not help you one bit on the Day of Judgment. We have another way of righteousness which is outside of the Law.

1. We are not saved by the works of the Law. **ROMANS 3:11-21**
2. We are saved by the blood of Jesus. **ROMANS 3:25ff**

1 Peter 1:1-5, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which **according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time".

III. Thirdly, because of our new life and living hope of the resurrection of Christ we are **TRANSFORMED!** Verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which **according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

A. I have a new **blessing**. I'm no longer complaining about my life. Now anything that goes right or wrong, I bless God. If something goes wrong, I know I deserve much worse than that. I don't deserve for anything to go right. You see I can bless because He has given me what I don't deserve. Verse 3, "**according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**".

I have nothing to complain about. I've been given God's abundant mercy. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only thing that is going to set you free from death and the judgment of God.

B. I also have a new **birth**. I can bless God because "**according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**" (verse 3). I've been born again. I have an entirely new nature. Regeneration is literally the "new genesis" in the heart of man. It is the creation of a new heart and a new nature in people that before could seek only our own will.

1. How has God given us the new birth? "**by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**" (verse 3). We are raised up with Christ in his resurrection to "walk in newness of life" (**Romans 6:4**).

Jesus Christ came to this earth to die for my sins so that He could make His home in my heart!! He came to give me a new birth and walk in me and live in me!

2. Scriptural support.

He says in **John 15:4**, "Abide in me, and I in you".

Christ Himself lives in you if you are a Christian. **Galatians 2:20**, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:

and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”.

There has been a resurrection—you have been raised with Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 2:4-6**, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just a historical fact. He lives in me! He is alive in me.

C.I have a new **home in heaven!** Peter says in **Verse 4**, We’ve been elected and born again “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”. I can now look past earthly trouble to eternal inheritance. We are taught by the resurrection of Jesus Christ to look past our earthly trouble to what God has reserved for us. People fail. Banks fail. This earth will one day pass away. But Jesus Christ never fails.

- 1.**Definitiion.** Now the key word is "inheritance." You know what that word means, it's that which is passed down to you from your father, it's that which you receive as a gift, a legacy given to you because you are a member of a certain family. It is not something you really earn, it is not something you buy, it is something you receive as a gift because of the family you were born into.
- 2.**Example.** Remember the people of Israel were given the Promised Land as an inheritance. They didn't deserve it. Abraham was a pagan in Ur. The Jews were slaves in Egypt. But God brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea to the land of Canaan. What a picture of our inheritance. We don't deserve it. We were slaves to sin. But God will one day bring us through the Sea of Death to our eternal promised land.
- 3.**Application.** We are going through trials constantly, and we need to be living not for earthly satisfaction, but for heavenly satisfaction. Paul makes the application in Paul says in **Colossians 3:1-3**, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” If you are risen with Christ, look past your earthly troubles to your eternal treasure!

D.I have a new **power!** **Verse 5**, “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”.

Power comes through faith! Keep looking at the death and resurrection of Christ. When Jesus Christ died, everyone thought it was over. But no, there was a power beyond anything heard of before that would raise Him from the dead!

Quietly come with me to His tomb!

Matthew 28:1-9, “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the

sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” Jesus Christ is God. He is risen. Are you worshipping Him? Worship Him!

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead!! His death is accepted by God for your punishment. God has raised Him from the dead.

Conclusion: You may be here today dead in your trespasses and sins. You may sense your own condemnation. We all deserve death and hell. But today Jesus Christ can raise you spiritually from the dead. He can give you a new life and a new power and a new home in heaven! Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. He is alive! Is He Alive in YOU???