

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/3/94
I Peter 1:3 "Living in light of the Resurrection"

Order of Service:

Welcome & Explanation of service
Offering (congregational singing during offering)
Hymns
Ministry in Music
Message
Singing of congregational favorites
Testimonies: "Because Jesus is alive, I..."
Hymn
Communion
Hymn

Intro: Today is Easter Sunday. Jesus is alive! We serve a Risen Savior!

What effect should the resurrection of Christ have on us?

The Gaithers wrote a song a few years ago, that reflected on this great subject, "Because He lives I can face tomorrow, because He lives all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives."

What difference should the resurrection of Christ make in our lives? The apostle Peter, in one brief verse, answers that question for us.

Peter wrote a letter to believers facing hard times. Christians found themselves living in a very non-Christian, even anti-Christian society. Persecution was not merely an idle word. It was a reality.

The year was A.D. 65. The church was under attack, by hostile critics, by aggressive antagonists. Some believers had lost jobs and homes. Some lost family members. Not a few would eventually lose their own lives.

How do you encourage someone in that situation? How do you encourage anyone who is living in tough times? The same way Peter did.

How was that? How did Peter encourage His needy friends?

He focused their attention on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! Notice I Pt 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope, by the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Notice the key phrase: "BY the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

"By" is a linking word. It links concepts together. It reveals the means or cause of something. For instance, if you said, "How did you get to church tonight, by your legs or by your car?" I would answer, "By my car." My car was the means by which I got here.

"By" indicates the means or cause of something. Now notice that phrase again, "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter says the resurrection of Jesus Christ produces some very practical benefits in our lives.

What are these benefits? Peter highlights 3.

Proposition: According to I Peter 1:3, the resurrection of Christ is linked to three benefits in our lives.

- I. Benefit #1: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Past Benefit.
"hath begotten us"
- II. Benefit #2: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Future Benefit.
"a living hope"
- III. Benefit #3: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Present Benefit.
"Blessed be the God and Father"

Let's unveil these benefits.

**I. Benefit #1: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Past Benefit.
"hath begotten us"**

Notice this. God the Father has begotten us. What does that mean? He gave us new birth, a second birth. We were born into this world dead in sin (Rom 3:23). We were without hope and without help in this world (Eph 2:12). But the Spirit of God did His supernatural, sovereign work in our cold hearts, and lit the fire of new life in them.

God the Father gave us new birth. We were born of the water and of the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5). We were born again (Jn 3:7). God adopted us into His family.

Now, how did this happen? By what means, by what power, did God the Father do this?

"BY the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Key: We experienced New Birth because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Never forget that. We who were once dead were made alive because He is alive!

The key event in all of human history is the death AND resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yes, we thank God for the cross. But were it not for the empty tomb, the cross would mean nothing. Lots of great men have died. Only One has conquered death!

And His resurrection is the basis of this benefit, something that happened in the past. Our new birth.

Do you remember the day you were born again? That was made possible because of the resurrection of Christ.

Tran: The first benefit focuses on the past. Now let's highlight the second.

**II. Benefit #2: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Future Benefit.
"a living hope"**

A living hope. What a pregnant phrase! It's not just any hope that we possess. We are heirs to a living hope! And the reason it's a living hope is because it's based on a living Person!

The world offers an empty hope. I am grateful for the peace talks in the Middle East. I pray that God might use these to stop the needless and brutal bloodshed that's

going on even as we speak. And great leaders are dialoguing, and offering their peace proposals to war-torn people. They offer hope. But it's a shortlived hope.

Do you know why?

Because hope in the world is not possible until there is hope in the hearts of men. And there's only One person who can do surgery on the human heart, and remove fear and hatred, and replace them with a living hope.

Now watch this. Hope is a future perspective that unleashed wonderful effects in the present. We have a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know that there's more to life than meets the eye.

When I was growing up, there was a phrase tossed around once in awhile, "He's so heavenly minded that he's of no earthly good." That is a danger.

But the American church in the 1990's faces an even greater danger. We have raised a generation of believers that tends "to be so earthly minded we are of no heavenly good." We're locked into living the here and now. We live for the NOW. We are afflicted with a severe case of spiritual nearsightedness.

What's the remedy for this disease? Listen to Peter. We need to think about the resurrection more than we do. We need to ponder the living, resurrection hope more than we do. We have a living hope because of the resurrection.

What is that hope? Notice that v 3 ends, not with a period, but a comma. God has "begotten us unto a living hope...TO AN INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in HEAVEN for you."

Where is our hope? In CD's? In government programs? No. In heaven.

I challenge you to chew on that thought on your own.

Tran: There's a third benefit linked to the resurrection of Christ. The first was Past. The second is Future. Any guess as to the third?

III. Benefit #3: The resurrection of Christ is linked to a Present Benefit.

"Blessed be the God and Father"

Notice that v 3 is a statement of fact. Peter begins His letter with a blessing call. He invites us to bless God for Who He is, and What He has done.

You say, "Well, how is that a benefit?"

Key: We are able to bless God because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There was a time in our lives when we didn't bless God. We couldn't. We had no desire to. We ignored God. But the resurrected Christ changed that!

Now we bless God.

You say, "How do we do it? How do we bless God?"

First, we must recognize that God IS blessed. V 3 is a statement of fact, "Blessed be the God and Father..." God is blessed. Even now, the angelic beings praise Him. So do the saints who have gone before us.

Second, we need to realize that God deserves to be blessed by His people. We belong to Him. For what should we bless Him?

1. For His Salvation (3-5)
2. For Suffering (6-9)

And third, we bless God when we live in a way that honors the resurrected Christ. Here and now. No matter what the cost. V 6 "In this ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials."

What's the potential result of a tried faith? V 7 "...might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Our Risen Savior is coming again! We long for that. But until He returns, we have the privilege to bless Him now by living for Him.

Conclusion:

What difference does the resurrection of Christ make? His resurrection is linked to three wonderful benefits. In the past, we experienced the new birth. In the future, we will experience the fulfillment of our living hope. And in the present, we are able to bless God with our lives.

All because of the resurrection of Christ!

In a moment, I am going to give you opportunity to respond to this truth. We are going to have a public testimony time. You are invited to stand, and complete the statement: "Because Jesus Christ is alive, I..."