

I Peter 1:3-9 - "Out of Death Came Life"

Easter 1, 4-19-2020 - St. Paul's Lutheran Church, New Ulm, Mn

1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In 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 can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Introduction

"**Death is not the End!**" was the caption on a church's Easter splash on the back page of their local newspaper. Death IS NOT the end! This weekend after Easter we look with the Apostle Peter as to why this is so true as we look at what God inspired Peter to write in I Peter 1:3-9. There God reassures us of the wonderful fact that "**OUT OF DEATH CAME LIFE!**"

1)...for Christ

JESUS IS DEAD When we left Jesus on Good Friday, he was dead. Early on Easter morning the women went to the tomb to finish the burial process. When these women arrived at the tomb the once-sealed stone at the entrance of the tomb had been rolled away and sitting on the stone was an angel. The ladies were frightened and bowed with their faces to the ground. What did the angel have to say? "**Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen!**" (Lk.24:5,6)

JESUS IS RISEN What happened? God raised Jesus from the dead. Just before he died, Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" By raising his Son from the dead, God the Father said, "**It IS finished!**" There was nothing left to do when it came to Jesus' work of saving people. He had done it all. He had become our righteousness through his sinlessness and perfect obedience to God. He had provided our payment for sin through his suffering and death on the cross. Jesus' resurrection was God's message that Jesus' work was great. It provided us with the forgiveness of sins. As Paul says, "**He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**" (Rom4:25)

BLESSINGS OF THE RESURRECTION But the resurrection signified other important truths. The resurrection also proved Jesus to be the son of God as Jesus claimed - also a statement that God's word is true. The resurrection also shows us that there is life after death and the resurrection of the body. As Paul wrote, "**Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**" (I Cor 15:20)

PETER In the opening verses of his first letter, the apostle Peter doesn't deal with the resurrection of Jesus to the extent that the Gospel writers or the apostle Paul did. Yet, Peter praises the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the reasons Peter alludes to is in v. 3 - the resurrection of Jesus. With the resurrection, for Jesus, out of humiliation came exaltation. Once risen, Jesus would ascend into heaven, be seated at the right of the Father and rule over all things to all eternity. In the resurrection, for Jesus, out of death came life.

2. ... Faith

Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection have made it possible for Christians that out of death would come life, spiritual life, faith.

GIVING US NEW LIFE Everything that Jesus did was for not just for some, but for everybody. **"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...(Jn3:16)** Jesus obeyed his father, suffered death and rose again for the whole world - even the terrorists and criminals whose cruelty and callousness are both incredible and horrible. Jesus provided forgiveness and life for everyone. But only those who believe in Jesus receive these blessings. John 3:16 goes on to say, **"...that whoever BELIEVES IN HIM should not perish but have eternal life. "**

DEAD None of us by nature is equipped with this faith. By nature each of us is alive physically, but not spiritually. So what God sees as we are born are people lying in spiritual caskets. Before our conversion, we were dead. We couldn't believe in God, love God, or do anything pleasing to him. We were **DEAD!**

This is what God sees right now in those who do not believe in Jesus. You're spiritually dead and destined to hell if you are not raised from your spiritual death.

POSSIBLE Sin made a second, a spiritual birth, necessary'; Jesus' resurrection made it possible. Peter wrote, **"In his mercy he (God) has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead "(v.3)** Because of the peace with God which Jesus provided by his innocent death and proved for us through his resurrection, God has reason to have mercy on us and bring us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

GOSPEL Christ has also provided the means to do this – the gospel – the good news of Jesus. Through the gospel, whether read, heard, or applied in baptism in Baptism, God gives new birth. At the end of this chapter, Peter wrote, **"For you have been born again, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring Word of God."** Near the end of chapter 3 Peter speaks of **"...baptism that now saved you also it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."(v.21)** Baptism is a means by which God gives to people new birth, spiritual life as Paul indicates when in Titus 3:5 he calls baptism **"a washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit..."**

CHANGE Christians, God has given us new birth through the gospel. He has brought us from death to live. He has changed our hearts and minds so that rather than being dead to him, we are alive in him. We believe in him. We love him. We want to serve him. We don't want to keep on sinning; rather, we want to fight sin and live for him according to his law.

Fellow Christians, when I look at you and you look at me, we are seeing people of whom an angel can say, "He/she is risen." If there are any unbelievers among us, this same thing can happen to you through the Word of God and the Spirit of God who works in it. Hear God's word. Study it with Christians. Christians, be of help to those who don't know of Jesus but want to learn more about him and his resurrection. Pray for them. Our prayer is that through God's mercy it will be said of you, "Out of death came life - faith."

3... Hope

LIVING HOPE Out of death came life – hope. Peter points out that as we came to faith, we entered into a living hope. This is not the kind of hope where I hope the weather is nice on the Fourth of July. This is biblical hope - being able to look forward to something unseen confidently knowing that it will take place. We have a living hope because it rests on a living God who in love keeps his promises. We have a living hope because this God has promised us eternal life with Jesus in paradise. This living hope is the inheritance and salvation of which Peter writes in vs. 4. Through faith we have the certainty of it now, in eternity we will come to know the full reality of it.

When a Christian dies that person's soul goes to be with Jesus in paradise. For whatever reason, God directed Peter to jump over this fact and to focus on the day of Jesus' return, referred to here as **"the last**

time" and "**when Jesus Christ is revealed.**" That's the time when the bodies of all the dead in Christ will be raised from death, glorified like that of Christ and granted the same joy of heaven that the soul received at death. (At that time bodies and souls of the living believers will glorified.)

On that day, body and soul will receive "**an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you.**" **(v.4)** Mold, mildew, rust, and rot can't harm this inheritance. Inflation can't lessen its value. There isn't anything in this world that is so well preserved and certain. Its kept in heaven for you. It includes "**praise, glory and honor.**" **(v.7)** Praise is God's approval. Imagine that, because of Jesus, we will receive eternal approval from God. **Glory** includes the idea of majesty and splendor. **Honor** has the idea of being highly valued.

If Jesus doesn't come in glory soon, many of us, possibly all of us, will see death. But even if we all do die, because of Jesus and his resurrection, it will be appropriate to say of us Christians, "**Out of death came life.**"

WE SUFFER SEVERELY I like that thought. I like Easter with its message of victory and its atmosphere of praise. But the fact is, we still face problems like covid-19, cancer, family troubles, budget troubles, temptation, persecution because of our faith in Jesus, unemployment, loneliness, fatigue, depression, etc. Peter refers to them as "**all kinds of trials.**" We may wonder, "If I'm going to inherit eternal paradise, why do I need to be dragged around potholes and the pits of trouble?"

God says of your trials, "**These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.**" **(v.7)** Just as gold is refined or purified by fire, so trials and hardships in our lives have a way of testing and strengthening our faith.

Many here today can point to times of intense suffering when they felt so helpless that all they could do was turn to God, who then delivered them. As a result they were strengthened. There are those here today can point to times in their lives when in weakness and ignorance they ignored God's will and were walking away from God. So, in love God used hardship and suffering connected with his word to turn them from their sin and lead them to repentance. God used these trials to bless them and work for their good. You see, in God's eyes, if you have faith in God, you have everything; but if you have everything except faith in God, you have nothing. Faith is worth more than gold. God uses trials to keep faith vibrant and alive. So we can even rejoice in trials - they are a sign of God's love.

HOPE IN TRIALS But trials in life aren't easy. You know this, I know this, and God knows this. So to make sure that we make it through our trials and receive our inheritance God makes sure that we "**...are guarded in God's power through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed on the last day.**" **(v.5)** God is with us to guard us with his power. This has the picture of guarding with soldiers. In Ps. 34:7 we're told, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear (trust) him, and he delivers them." But not only is God at work around us to preserve us through trials so we can receive our inheritance, God is at work within us. "**Having believed, you marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession.**" **(Eph 1: 13 ,14)**

CONCLUSION Folks, I don't know about you, but I think it a privilege to be able to to celebrate Easter again. What a privilege to sing songs of joy. But do you know what beats all? The truth that because of Jesus' resurrection out of death came life - for Christ and for us Christians. "**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!**" (v.3) Amen! **(DRS)**