

## ***An Inheritance Kept for Us!***

### **I Peter 1: 3-12**

*<sup>3</sup> 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,** <sup>4</sup> **and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.** This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> **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.** <sup>6</sup> **In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** <sup>7</sup> **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.** <sup>8</sup> **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,** <sup>9</sup> **for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***

*<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup> trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. **Even angels long to look into these things.***

As we aged, we hear more and more about inheritances. I personally do not have rich relatives to inherit from. So, what I have received, I count as a blessing. The only inheritance I'll most likely ever receive of any substance, is from the Lord. Something we all can receive. I also have begun to understand more clearly, *that the longer I serve Him, the sweeter he grows, the more love I show Him, the more love He bestows.* A song I have sung many times in the past, but didn't fully understand what I was saying.

I know of a family, who were "lifelong friends," of people I know, who own thousands of acres of land, in a particular state, which they refer to as "**the Estate.**" One of those persons, shares a story I think we can all understand that deals with their future "Inheritance."

As the story has it, there wasn't a holiday get-together that passed, without the family meeting, and thus they would all vote on different issues regarding the property known as, "**The Estate.**" It got really messy with eight brothers and sisters, each having strong opinions, about what should take place. You see, each of these siblings, owns an eighth of this massive estate.

Now, some of the relatives, and/or siblings, have long since moved out of state, and want nothing to do with the discord, struggles and trials, or, the small dividend checks that come every quarter from their inheritance. They are simply tired of the battles.

Most of them believe that their father would never have wanted his children to breakup family relationships over something as petty as money or property, yet, resentments have grown, angry emails have been written, sides have been taken, and, most of all, relationships have been damaged, destroyed and lost forever. Sadly, this family's inheritance story is not rare: there are many families who have similar situations, and often those involved, have more money at stake than most of us will ever have.

Greed, envy, jealousy, and entitlement, seem to win out, with every discussion of money and inheritance. Each of them has an idea of what is just, what they deserve, and what they believe they are entitled to. Battles lines drawn over inheritance, can be brutal. That is what possessions can do to humans, when we place to high a priority on them. Holding them tight.

In his book, ***“Examining the Parables from a Middle-Eastern Cultural Context,”*** one professor and missionary, Kenneth Bailey, unlocked some very interesting features of the parable of the prodigal son, as he focused on what it meant to ask for your inheritance, before the father had passed away. This is what he discovered.

He says: *“For over fifteen years I have been asking people of all walks of life from Morocco to India and from Turkey to the Sudan about the implications of a son’s request for his inheritance while the father is still living. The answers have always been emphatically the same ...*

*The conversation runs as follows:*

- Has anyone ever made such a request in your village? Never!*
- Could anyone ever make such a request? Impossible!*
- If anyone ever did, what would happen? His father would beat him, of course! Why? The request means—he wants his father to die.”*

People, can become obsessed with material things, so much so, that even as believers, their families can be destroyed over what will be left behind, an inheritance. I have seen it personally with multiple families I have dealt with. But what we read today, gives us a totally different view or perspective on an inheritance. This story speaks of the Godly inheritance given to all who accept Jesus, and seek to live for Him. Something we can look forward to receiving. No need to battle over it, because it is great enough for all of us. We will all get more than we have coming.

Let's look at key parts of this inheritance ,which all of us can obtain.

### ***First ~ This Inheritance begins with Jesus!***

***“<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade...”***

This inheritance is a gift given to all who accept His grace, His mercy, to all who accept NEW BIRTH found in Christ. A ***“New Birth”*** into a ***living Hope***, the Word says, through Jesus' resurrection. If Jesus had not -paid it all, we would have nothing to inherit.

Just like our worldly fathers and families, who have worked hard to provide and care for us, Jesus gave His all to provide for us, and for the eternity to come. His suffering, His death and resurrection, provided for all who accept Him, an inheritance which will never perish. The stock market cannot consume it, it will never spoil, the weather or storms of life cannot destroy it, and whatever the earth does, cannot decay it, it will not fade, it will never lose its power.

Worldly things are always temporary. They rust, decay and/or spoil, and one day they will be gone. So, I wonder, ***“Why do we pursue with so much vibrance the things of this world and with so little vibrance, the things of God?”*** Why are we so caught up in the material things of today, rather than the spiritual things that last forever?

What Peter tells us here is simple, this is something worth seeking for. Something someone else paid for with His life, for you and me. What a gift or inheritance... So, what else do we find here?

### ***Second ~ Our Inheritance is held safely for us.***

***“This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> 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.”***

He is holding our gift in heaven for us, right now, for each and every person who has accepted Him, and are living by ***“Faith,”*** in Him. ***And it is this faith*** that places a shield around us and this inheritance, by God’s power. That is a shield that will not be penetrated. Held their until when? ***“The coming of Salvation.”*** The fullness or completion of our time here on earth.

Most of us hold on to things, somethings, often far too tightly. As we do, we start worrying about who will take them, or abuse them, or will we lose them, before we need them. We worry about the loss of these things, because we begin to realize that we cannot protect them very well with our limited abilities.

#### ***Illustration:***

***“Four guys decided to go mountain climbing one weekend. In the middle of the climb, one fell over a cliff, dropped about 60 feet and landed with a thud on the ledge below. The other three hoping to rescue him yelled, ‘Joe, are you OK?’ ‘I’m alive, but I think I broke both my arms!’***

***‘We’ll toss a rope down to you and pull you up. Just lie still,’ and answered, “Fine.” A couple of minutes after dropping the rope, they started tugging and grunting together, working feverishly to pull their wounded companion to safety. When they had him about three quarters of the way up, they suddenly remembered he said he had broken both arms.***

***‘Joe, if you broke your arms, how in the world are you holding on?’  
Joe responded, ‘With my teeeeeeth.’”***

I wonder, ***“How tightly do we holding on to things, for fear of loss, maybe even life and death, which are not that important?”***

Here are a few things we find here we need to take note of.

### 1)The inheritance the Lord has for us ~ He is keeping it in Heaven....

Who can take care of this inheritance better than God? No one! So, when we are told that our Lord is holding an inheritance for us in heaven, we can count on it being there, without worry, as long as we first **“accept His forgiveness,”** and then **“strive to live for Him daily and always.”**

### 2)His shield watches over and protect us.

As we **exercise our faith**, our loving Lord gives us **HIS power** to stand firm until that day. **“Through our faith** ~ meaning that we must trust in the Lord – no matter what may take place, God will **“shield us”** with God’s power. Think about that for a moment. What do we mean by **“trusting in the Lord?”** It means, having faith to **believe** He will do what he said He will do. That is where His power is found!

#### **Illustration:**

*As a country, we are still reeling from many tragic events of the past decade of years. But there are a few flashes of hope coming forth from some of the stories of tragedy.*

•One is from a survivor of the 2015 San Bernardino shootings, 27-year-old Denise Peraza. Her life was spared, not because the shooters saw her and turned the other way, but because a valiant man named Shannon Johnson shielded her body with his own and saved her life. Listen to her recount the situation:

*Wednesday morning at 10:55 A.M. we were seated next to each other at a table, joking about how we thought the large clock on the wall might be broken because time seemed to be moving so slowly. I would have never guessed that only five minutes later, we would be huddled next to each other under the same table, using a fallen chair as a shield from over 60 rounds of bullets being fired across the room. While I cannot recall every single second that played out that morning, I will always remember his left arm wrapped around me, holding me as close as possible next to him behind that chair. And amidst all the chaos, I'll always remember him saying these three words: **"I got you."***

I will always remember, no matter what, remember these three words: **"I got you."** These are God's words for us in this passage today, **“I got you,”** not just in time of need, but all the time. He is our everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ, who will never leave you nor forsake you. He says to all of us, **"I got you, I got you, I got you."**

How long will He wrap His arm around us? **“until the coming of the salvation,** that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” Until we see Him face to face! As long as we hold on to Him!

### **Third ~ Genuine Faith is greater than Gold**

**“In all this you greatly rejoice,** though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> **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,** <sup>9</sup> **for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”**

As people in God’s church, we have often heard things like, **“I have faith,”** when in actuality, what is being said is **“I believe what he, she, or you, said.”** However, we sometimes make this kind of statement because we want to get out of the conversation we are in, or, assure someone we are fine. Sometimes, just to have them leave us alone, or, move one. Do we really understand what **“Genuine Faith”** is? **(Have them write these words down)**

**One definition of this is: Genuine faith includes repenting, committing, turning, coming, crying out, seeking, giving, and abiding.** Those are not just states of mind. They’re activities. They are actions. They involve changes in behavior. Once we accept Jesus, these words should come alive to us.

**Is life change obvious due to our accepting Jesus?** It, should be! So much so, that others see it whenever they see us?

**Illustration:**

All sorts of things are tested to prove that they are genuine. For instance: When you go to a bank and give a \$100 bill to the cashier, she holds it up to a special light. When you take a certificate to someone, they verify that it is real. Why would they do that? They are testing it to make sure it is genuine.

There was a time when they did not use a special light to determine the genuineness of the paper bills, and the bank teller or store clerk, would just hold the dollars close to the light and then examine the pictures, and see if the sensor strip was there, so they would know that the money or paper bills were genuine.

One time, a man was so curious what the teller was doing that he asked him how he knew that the dollar is genuine by just looking at it. Jokingly, and though the customer didn’t know he was joking, the gentleman who was examining it said:

**“If the hair on the picture of a man, on the dollar is not combed properly, the dollar is fake.”**

Good luck on that...

In our world today, EVERYTHING that has value will be tested. This includes our faith. In my opinion, **Faith that is not tested, is faith that cannot be trusted.**

As our faith is being tested, there are various things to consider:

**1) Trails will come.**

**“<sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”**

**Why?**

**“<sup>7</sup> 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.”**

## 2)Belief is found.

*<sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."*

God's Word tells us that ***"faith is the confident assurance of what is not seen..."*** So here we see that Peter reminding us that even though we do not see Him, ***we LOVE Him!*** Even though we do not see Him, ***we BELIEVE in Him!*** This is difficult for those with scientific minds, who eyes do not see. But as exercise out faith, it happens. We believe!

You know, I am excited about my inheritance. Are you?

Oh, what an inheritance! There is nothing like this inheritance, on the earth, or in this world, that even comes close to what the Lord has given His children.

Do you know why this is so important? The last sentence says it all:

*Even angels long to look into these things."* The Lord gave this inheritance to us, His creation as human beings. Just for us!

*There is nothing more authentic, hair due or not, then God's promise to His children... It can't be discovered by holding it up to the light of this world, but only by the light of His Word, and the genuineness of it, stands like no other...*

## ***Closing Prayer***