



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 1: 3-5

Summer 2024

"A Living Hope"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are continuing our studies that we began last week in 1 Peter, and we're going to look this morning at 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 3 through 5;

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1: 3-5

I want to conclude this reading with a passage in Proverbs 23, verses 17 & 18;

¹⁷ Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But *live* in the fear of the LORD always.

¹⁸ Surely there is a future,
And your hope will not be cut off.

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, what a privilege it is to be with Your people on the LORD's day, and on this LORD's day when we have an opportunity to read a glorious text, such as the one we have read and what we will consider; a passage about our hope, "a living hope." (vs5). So Father, help us to understand this, help us to appreciate the glorious future that's ours; as well as the *secure* present—and *meaningful* present life that we have.

This is not it; there's far more to come. We have a kind of, 'down payment' for we have a taste of the heavenly gift and what's coming. But the glory is beyond our comprehension, and it will, "be revealed in the last time", (vs5b), when our Lord returns. We have that hope; encourage us with it; help us to reflect deeply upon that. Bless this time of study that we would understand these things.

To do that we need the ministry of the Spirit of God. We are studying Your inerrant Word, the unique Word of God that is, 'alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword that divides our thinking between the thoughts and intents of the heart.' (Heb 4:12). It examines us, but it does that because the Spirit of God is in it, and He opens hearts to receive it and understand it. Otherwise it's a mystery to us; and so we ask, LORD, for that ministry this morning—that the Spirit of God would open our minds and open our hearts to the great truths that Peter has given to us by inspiration, which is to say, it is, 'God-breathed.'

So LORD, teach us the meaning of this text this morning—and not only its meaning, but its application to us. Encourage us, motivate us to live a life that's pleasing to You—and helpful to others that we be lights in this dark generation.

And bless our time now, LORD, as we continue this service with a hymn, and then with a time of study together. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) Last week the Wall Street Journal ran a story of a man, age 50, father of two, and a professor at MIT, who parked his car on a bridge three miles from his home in Cambridge and jumped to his death. His wife wrote the story. She called it, "An effort to make sense of something senseless." He had friends. He had a loving family, a prestigious job, but he was getting older and suffering the signs of age. He had sciatica,

he had sleep problems and couldn't sleep more than two hours a night, and ringing in his ears. (I'm very sympathetic. I could check each of the three boxes on that.)

But still, you wonder why a person would take such a drastic, final step as that. Well, the day before he died, he told his doctor he felt *hopeless*, and was contemplating suicide. It was a senseless and sad act, but it happens when people feel hopeless. And in a materialistic age and world, in which we live, there is likely widespread hopelessness.

Science is telling us, 'There is no hope.' I have at home a book by an astrophysicist titled, *The End of Everything*. It was published, maybe, two years ago. It gives a number of theories on that very thing; and all of them state that the universe will end and what follows is nonexistence, annihilation, meaninglessness. —That's hopelessness.

The Bible has a different explanation. The Bible is the Word of God; it is the final authority. And when we open it to 1 Peter chapter 1, the apostle tells his Christian readers that they have "a living hope". (vs3). Now that simple phrase, *a living hope*, is full of light; it's not empty optimism. It's not the wish of a person who just can't face reality. The Bible is reality. It's grounded in fact, it's grounded in history, it's grounded in the resurrection of Christ. That's how the passage begins in verse 3.

But first Peter gives praise to "God the Father", for, "His great mercy", that he said, "...caused us to be born again to a living hope." (vs3). Now remember, these Christians to whom Peter wrote this letter, (who were scattered across Asia Minor), were suffering persecution—that's stated later in chapter 4, verse 12. It was a very difficult time; it's called "the fiery ordeal." So his instruction here, and praise to God, has that in mind.

It's always good to praise God for His goodness, for His wisdom and power; but here, it is not only appropriate, it is practical. A remedy for discouragement is giving praise because when we praise God we recount His ability; His great power, His wisdom, and that He does all things well; and His love is for us—which is unconditional.

No one, and nothing is, "...able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord", Paul wrote in Romans 8. (verse 39). —Not tribulation, or distress, or persecution, peril or sword. And through all, that they were experiencing, they could rest in the fact that God was with them through all of that great ordeal—and that He would never forsake them because His love for them is eternal.

Peter indicated that clearly in verses 1 and 2, which we covered last week, where Peter wrote that God 'chose' them, elected them, 'according to His foreknowledge', which means His 'forelove'. Again, as we covered last week, *foreknowledge* here is not prescience—that is, it's not foresight, it's not seeing into the future and learning who would have faith and choose Christ, and based upon that foreseen faith, that He chose them to be 'His elect'. That's not biblical.

God has foresight; God is omniscient; He knows everything from beginning to end because He's planned it all. But '*knowledge*', '*knowing*', is a Hebrew euphemism for *love*—for a deep, personal relationship. And that's the meaning here: He chose us because of His sovereign grace because He had an eternal relationship with us. And if that's not clear enough, Peter developed the thought further in verse 3, where he states that God gave us new life according to His mercy—"His great mercy", as Peter put it.

Now that statement alone rules out the notion that God chose us and regenerated us because of some foreseen faith, or good works—or something of that nature. If that had been the case, then God's choice of us would not have been "according to His great mercy", (ibid), but according to our great insight or discernment. Peter didn't say that; it was, 'according to mercy'. And he emphasized there, and our complete need of that, by calling it "His great mercy."

Mercy can be understood as, 'help for the helpless'. That's how Paul described us in Romans chapter 5, verse 6, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." —the undeserving, the unable. We really have, in that very

statement, mercy and grace together: Grace is God's goodness, His help for the unworthy; Mercy for those who are unable.

Adam's sin put us all into that situation. It brought wreck and ruin on the whole creation—but especially on mankind; it left us spiritually “dead”, that's how Paul describes us in Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 1. In and of ourselves we, “cannot please God”, Paul wrote that in Romans chapter 8, verse 8. That means we cannot, of ourselves, in our own strength and ability, believe in Him, because, He says in the Book of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6, that, “...apart from faith, it is impossible to please *Him*.”

The only way to please Him is by faith, but in Romans 8, Paul says, ‘We can't please Him’, we don't have it in our nature to do that—which means we don't have the ability to trust Him. In fact, Paul says, ‘The natural man, apart from the grace and the mercy of God, is at war with Him, at *enmity* with Him.’ (Rom 8:7). That was us—all of us!

So we needed grace, we needed unmerited favor, we need mercy. We need great mercy. And that's what God gave them; that's what He gave to these saints scattered across Asia Minor who were suffering; and what He's given to us if we're believers in Jesus Christ—and to every believer, throughout the long history of this world.

That's Old Testament theology as well as New Testament theology. Jeremiah wrote that we could no more change our spiritual condition than ‘a leopard could changes its spots’, Jeremiah 13, verse 23. But then, in Jeremiah 31, verse 18, he confessed that, God could do that; “...turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou *art* the LORD my God” he wrote. ‘Give me repentance and I shall repent’, that's his meaning. And that's Saint Agustin; “Give what You command, and command what You will”; ‘Then I'll be able to do it—but You must first give it.’

Now, all of that may be controversial—in fact, it is very controversial but it is also completely Scriptural, (which really settles the issue). And it is encouraging—if we understand it. I know we struggle, some struggle deeply, with these things: But recognize that this is what the Bible teaches. This is the Word of God; recognize it, —

submit to it, and God will teach it to you—and you will come to know it, and you will come to appreciate it...and that it is encouraging.

As I say, it's intended to be that. If God shows us great mercy when we were lost, when we were ungodly, when we were at war with Him, rebels—what won't He do for us now that we are His saints, His friends, His family? There's nothing that He will not do for us—He loves us infinitely. This is the antidote, this is the deterrent to discouragement: Praising God, reflecting upon these great acts of His mercy and grace.

But Peter then added to that a description of our salvation; we have been “born again to a *living hope*”, he says. (vs3b). That *hope* is a certain expectation of life to come. But in what sense can we say that this hope is “*living*”? It's ‘*living*’ in the sense that it's *real*. It's not a wish, it's a *hope* that is a certainty. So it's *real*.

But it's also ‘*living*’, because it *grows*—it increases in strength with age and knowledge—and increases in its benefit to us. The new birth is life, now, and forever. It is *eternal life*.

And Peter explains that God brought about the new birth through, “...the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (vs3c). The Lord's resurrection secured resurrection life for all of God's people: Meaning, ‘Spiritual life *now* in regeneration, (the new birth), and physical life later in the resurrection of the body.

His resurrection sealed the victory of the cross. If He had not been raised, then He would not have triumphed—and we would not either, (and we would be without hope). In fact, Paul told the Corinthians, (in the classic passage on the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, verses 12 through 19), that, ‘If Christ was not raised, we will not be raised—and we, of all men, are most to be pitied.’ But He was raised from the dead!

And Paul wrote in Romans chapter 4, verse 25, “He...was raised because of our justification.” Meaning; ‘His sacrifice obtained salvation. That's where the victory was won, at the cross; and God showed that the victory was won and that He had accepted the sacrifice by raising His Son from the dead.’

It's because our justification had been won that Christ was raised. So the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the historical proof that God accepted His Son's sacrifice, and proved that salvation is only in the person and work of Jesus Christ. But also, in giving life to His Son, God gave life to all who are attached to Him by faith—all who have joined themselves to Him through faith. He is our head; and by giving life to the head, God the Father gave life to the body—to the church. So it's on the basis of the resurrection, that God will give us new bodies in the future, just as He has already given us a new heart in the present.

We now have new life, which is *resurrection life*. That's how Paul speaks of it in the Book of Philippians. It's spiritual life, supernatural life; and we will have resurrection bodies. That is the future, and that is our hope. Hope looks to the future—and we have that.

But the ancient world had no hope like that. Its outlook on the future was just as bleak as it is today in these modern times, these 'enlightened times' of science and philosophy. It was an age of philosophy that was often 'naturalistic'—as philosophy is today: 'Naturalism'. The Epicureans, (one of the great schools of philosophy of that age), were materialists and believed that the soul could not survive death; and so there's no afterlife, there's no future, no future blessing, no future judgment. So life is a dead end—everything is over at death. Well, that's a gloomy, hopeless outlook on life. Only the Christian has the hope of the resurrection.

Paul spoke on this subject, and it is recorded in Acts 17, when he was in Athens, and those Epicureans were there too. They were among the different philosophical schools present there that were discussing things with each other when they find out that Paul is preaching this strange message. They invite him to come speak to their group on Mars' hill and explain things—and he did that. Afterwards they mocked him. None of them believed in the resurrection: The Epicureans didn't, the Stoics didn't. They

mocked what he had to say because in their mind, especially in the mind of those Epicureans, death ends everything. —They are materialists.

Well, we don't have that kind of 'hope', as I've said earlier, because the Christian's hope is better than a dismal alternative; that 'Death ends everything and we just can't face that reality.' Ours is a real hope because it is revealed in the Scriptures. It's been made known to us, and it's real because it is grounded in fact—and that fact is based on history. That fact is the resurrection; and it is an historically proven fact demonstrated in Paul's record of it in 1 Corinthians 13, verses 3 through 8.

So in addition to the four Gospels, which all give a detailed account of the resurrection and those to whom Christ appeared, Paul in his epistles, gave an impressive list of witnesses to Christ's resurrection: All of the apostles, (He appeared to all of them), and then he points out He appeared to more than 500 brethren at the same time, this massive group of people at the same time—and he says, 'many of them are still alive and you can go talk to them.' And then he says finally, "He appeared to me". He appeared to Paul. —Paul saw Him.

"...this has not been done in a corner." (Acts 26:26). That's what Paul told King Agrippa and Festus when he's standing before them and giving his defense before them in Caesarea. Festus is unbelieving: he says, "Paul, you are out of your mind!" (Acts 26:24). And Paul says, "I am not out of my mind." 'These things were not done in a corner, and the king himself knows about this.' (Acts 26:25-26). This was a very public event. People saw Christ, the resurrected Christ. They talked to Him; they touched Him; they ate with Him. And He was with them for 40-50 days.

The bodily resurrection of Christ was witnessed, and therefore it has the verdict of history. It is the clear teaching of Scripture; from the Old Testament where it was prophesied, to the New Testament where the fulfillment is affirmed. We know it by faith. We know it because we believe the Word of God—and we believe the Word of God because our faith is a miracle—God opens our eyes to it.

You understand it because a mysterious work of regeneration has taken place in your life, in your heart, and you can understand it. It's the gift of God, this faith that we

have—and this understanding. And while it is something that takes place within us, it is an objective truth within us; our minds have been opened to it. The result of regeneration—as Peter put it, being, “born again to a living hope.” (vs3). Just as Christ gave sight to blind people, He has given spiritual sight to us. That's His mercy, “His great mercy.”

And in verse 4, Peter expanded on that future hope by describing it: It is, “...an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” (vs4).

The Jewish Christians in these congregations would have been especially familiar with this word, *inheritance*. It's a word used in the Old Testament to describe Canaan, which was Israel's inheritance. Joshua 11, verse 23, states that: Joshua gave the land, “...for an inheritance to Israel by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.” “Rest”, in the Book of Hebrews is part of the inheritance that we have; ‘we rest from our labors.’ (Heb 4:10). Well, He gave the land rest from war; and then each family and tribe had a part of the promised land as their inheritance from God.

And when we think of an inheritance, we think of something like that: We think of something earthly; we think of land or possessions of some kind. But those things decay, or they are destroyed. The inheritance Peter described is different: It is a place in the world to come, and its blessings. And it is “imperishable”; it cannot decay, it cannot be destroyed. Our resurrection bodies will be fit for it, compatible to it; and they will be imperishable.

Next Peter wrote that it is an inheritance that is “*undefiled*”—it is holy and pure; it's unstained by sin.

Canaan was only a shadow of that; it could be defiled by sin. In the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, God warned Israel not to defile the land, as it had been defiled by the Canaanites. In Leviticus 18, the LORD listed the previous acts of the Canaanites that defiled the land and what Israel was to avoid. And the LORD warned them,

in verse 24, "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things...." But they did, and they suffered terrible consequences.

But the Canaan to come, our inheritance, can't be defiled. It is clean. There's no sin there, no more guilt or grief, no tears. It is undefiled; it's pure, clean.

Thirdly, Peter wrote; it "will not fade away." It's permanent; it's forever. We will never lose it; we will never fail in any way to possess it. Peter wrote it is, "reserved in heaven for you." (vs4b). Peter put that in the past tense, so it has already been stored up for us. It's there—God has "reserved" it for believers in heaven. Paul wrote something similar to that in Colossians chapter 1, in verse 5, "...of the hope laid up for you in heaven...", so it is in a safe place.

How many inheritances have divided families, and been fought over, and squandered? Many. Charles Dickens wrote a classis lawyer novel about that very thing; *Bleak House*. A big book and takes a long time to get through it. It's about this vast fortune that was contested. The case went on in the courts for years. "Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on..." it begins. Well the book ends with a verdict in favor of one of the young heirs—but he received nothing because the large inheritance had been absorbed over the years in lawyers' costs.

Our inheritance is in the safest place. 'It's reserved for you', (vs4b), Peter said. He makes it very personal: God has every believer personally in mind in this inheritance. He is managing it; He's keeping it. He cannot lie—it will be there, an inheritance pure and imperishable that will never be denied us.

Peter knew that to be true because he heard the Lord's teaching on this very thing, in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 6, in verse 20, where Jesus talked about, "...treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal." That's what you should invest your life in—that's the certain things that can never be taken away from us, and are forever.

That's what a wise man and a wise woman invests in: It is an inheritance that is glorious beyond comprehension; it is kept for us forever to be possessed. We are sure to have it, not only because God is faithful to His Word and protecting it for us, but also

because He's protecting us. He's preserving us for it. His saints will all persevere to the end.

Peter's readers may have doubted that, as they encountered various trials and hardships, 'the fiery ordeal'. (1 Pet 4:12). Just the term itself is kind of chilling; imagine what these people were going through. They were under intense persecution and they may have wondered whether they would stay faithful as they faced these terrible challenges that were before them.

So in verse 5, Peter assured them that they would. The heirs are as secure as their inheritance. The saints persevere because the saints will be preserved. We are "*protected...*", (or 'guarded') "...by the power of God", (vs5), Peter says. And so we are safe; we're kept safe.

Wayne Grudem, in his commentary on 1 Peter cited a number of passages from both biblical and extra biblical sources to show that this term, (*protected, guarded*), is frequently used in military contexts: It's used of land being protected from attack, "so strongly guarded it could not be taken away or overrun." It's used of a city being guarded; "so carefully that no one could escape."

Paul used it in both ways: Of God's Old Testament people, the nation Israel being, "kept in custody under the Law", in Galatians chapter 3, verse 23. And in Philippians chapter 4, verse 7, of, 'God's peace, *guarding* our hearts from doubts and fears.' So, Dr. Grudem pointed out, "The word may have both meanings: God is preserving believers from, 'escaping out of His kingdom', and He is, 'protecting them from external attacks'."

The idea fits other Scriptures: John chapter 10, verse 28, "...they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." No one, and nothing from without or within, can remove us from His goodness and grace—from His hand, from His kingdom. We cannot put ourselves out of it, and no one can snatch us out of it. We are secure.

That assurance is given in the Old Testament as well. In Psalm 121 it is repeated that God, "is our keeper." (vs5), and, "The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep

your soul." (vs7). And the meaning of Peter's statement is, 'We are *continually* secure.' It's a present participle; it indicates that it's an ongoing act of God. You are continually being *guarded* in the present, (and we always live in the present), therefore, we're constantly being guarded. We are secure.

That's a great encouragement—and actually it is an incentive to remain faithful throughout an ordeal, any ordeal, even 'a fiery ordeal'. And there are numerous examples in the annals of church history of saints, men and women, who bravely faced fire, and sword, and wild animals in faithfulness to Christ. It is all by God's power: We "are protected by the power of God...", Peter said. (vs5). All praise and glory goes to Him.

And yet we are active in this. The LORD protects us, "...through faith", Peter said. (ibid). The LORD uses the believer's faith in His work of guarding us. Again, Wayne Grudem put it well, "God is continually using His power to guard His people by means of their faith." Now that's a way of saying that God is constantly using His power to energize, to strengthen, and sustain us, personally, individually in our faith. He's strengthening our faith so that we do, in fact, 'persevere in faith'.

It's His work, but we're responsible to guard and nourish our souls. And we do that with knowledge through Scripture. Romans chapter 10, verse 17, "Faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Now we don't exclude prayer from that. —That is vitally important; we cannot grow, apart from prayer and an earnest prayer life. But to speak to God wisely, to pray properly, we need the wisdom of God; we need His thoughts, His ideas, His words, and that comes through His Word; through the study of Scripture. And what we learn from God's Word, from Scripture that strengthens faith is: 'Salvation is all of God, His free grace', and that produces love for Him, which is the strongest motivation of all to faithfulness.

And again, we learn that we, 'are protected by His power.' (vs5). The believer in Jesus Christ is absolutely, eternally, secure—and can never be lost. That is incentive to courage, to obedience, to steadfastness during trials; during difficult times. The believer in Christ can never be lost.

But a believer can think that he or she is lost. A loss of *assurance* of salvation results in a loss of hope and vitality. We're not lost from Him—but if we think so, then we lose joy, and we lose development in the faith.

It is the knowledge of Scripture that gives a believer the understanding of God's unconditional love and faithfulness to His people—and strengthens one's faith to persevere and be guarded. We need to continue in the Scriptures continually; for that feeds our soul and sanctifies our mind.

Everything we need is in the Word of God. And what Peter specifically gives here, as the object of our faith, (that he focuses on), is our *hope*, our *inheritance*, our ultimate *salvation*. It's that idea, it's that doctrine that is the great encouragement that he is setting before them. Verse 5, "...who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Salvation, here, is more than forgiveness and justification, (what every believer has now, at the moment of faith, and forever, important as that is), but that's not the focus that Peter has here. Here it is the *final* salvation—what will be revealed, "in the last time", (vs5c), it will be revealed when Christ returns. How do we know He will return? Well, we know because of what he based all of this on earlier: Because He is the resurrected Son of God.

So again, we see in verse 5, as we saw in verse 3, that, 'our hope of life to come' is tied to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. He's alive and He's coming again—and He's coming in great glory. That *hope* inspires joy and confidence in our faith.

So, this life is not all there is. Whatever losses we suffer in this life, as we live in obedience to the LORD, all those losses are only temporary to be replaced with blessings far greater than anything we lose.

What will that day be like? Well, it will be a day of triumph. Christ is coming back as a conquering king, to defeat the enemy, set things right, and establish His kingdom of righteousness on the earth. It will be glorious!

In Matthew 19, verse 28, Christ told His disciples, (and this was in the context of after the rich young ruler walks away, and them asking, 'Lord, we've left everything. What is there for us?' They were worried that if a rich man can't inherit the glories to come, what about them?) And He explains to them that they are going to have everything in the future—He said, "...in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel." (Mat 19:28).

"In the regeneration", this world is going to be 'born again'. We think of the kingdom as being like this, (our world as we know it now). It's not going to be like this—it's going to be beyond anything we can imagine. It's going to be 'regenerated'. It will be paradise regained; it will be the Garden of Eden reborn; an age described in Isaiah chapter 2, as a time when the nations will, 'never again learn war; there will be peace and learning. And they will expand in their learning and they'll go up to Jerusalem to be taught.'

And that millennial kingdom of Revelation 20: 1 through 6, will become, "a new heaven and a new earth"; described in Revelation 21 and 22, and it is described in metaphors because it's beyond our understanding, (and that includes heaven, presently, where the dead in Christ are now).

In Colossians chapter 1, verse 5, (that we read a moment ago), Paul wrote of our *hope*, (and what Peter wrote of here in verse 3). Paul wrote of, "...the hope laid up for you in heaven...". But then in verse 12, he wrote of, "the inheritance of the saints in Light." It is "in Light", because He who is, "the Light of the world" dwells there and fills it

with His Light and glory—with His truth and beauty. —And that gives us a sense of what it's like.

But again, we know very little of heaven or the world to come. Our minds can't comprehend it—it is that great. But what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 9, I think gives us a sense of the greatness and glory. He can't describe it, but he can describe it as *indescribable*. He quoted Isaiah, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Cor 2:9). That's what awaits us.

And that should strengthen our faith and give us perseverance. It has many in the past—those martyrs who died without regret, strengthened by the living hope gained by Christ's death and resurrection. There are many examples, but one that's come to my mind was the English reformer, John Bradford, who is known for saying, when he saw a gang of criminals led off to the gallows, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford."

Now that led to a great love of the LORD because of the grace that was shown to him. And that bore fruit later because he was later martyred: He was later burned at the stake for his faith by Queen Mary. And as he was led off to die ... to die a terrible death, 'a fiery ordeal' ... he said to a fellow martyr, "Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord tonight." That's the confidence that our living hope gives. —That's reality.

But that's not the vain speculations of modern materialists who describe man's ultimate destination as 'nonexistence'. Every believer in Christ, every saint, has, 'the inheritance in Light', which Christ is. If we want to understand that hope and inheritance better, then we need to know Him better—and that really should be the goal of our life here on earth, to know Christ increasingly. Because really, that's what our great hope is: It's to be with Him; in a glorious place with the other saints—but to be with Him.

We should be thinking about that for it is a sanctifying influence upon us: It increases our faith; it strengthens our hope, and makes us useful today, and ready for

eternity; and thinking of the hope that we have which, at the center of it all, is being with the Lord Jesus Christ.

So again, as Solomon put it in Proverbs 23, verses 17 & 18,

"Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But live in the fear of the LORD always.
Surely there is a future,
And your hope will not be cut off."

Well, do you have that hope? Maybe some of you don't. Maybe you're here with a feeling of hopelessness. The Good News is, that's not necessary; there is hope in Christ. This world is not all there is; our existence is not meaningless. Christ died for sinners so that all who look to Him, all who believe in Him, will have forgiveness of sin—and life everlasting.

Psalm 145, verse 18 says, "The LORD is near to all who call on Him, To all who call on Him in truth." The Gospel of salvation in Christ is truth—call on Him for a living hope. He will answer, and He will save.

(Closing prayer) LORD we do thank You that we have a Savior, the One who is completely sufficient, who accomplished it all on the cross, and whose sacrifice You accepted and demonstrated by raising Him from the dead. That is the proof, the historical proof, that we are saved through faith in Him. He accomplished it all for us; and He's coming back. That's a glorious thought, that the fullness of our salvation will be revealed in that future day when we have glorious bodies united to perfect souls, and we'll have a glorious eternal future together with the other believers, together with Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You for the salvation You've given us, the hope that we have. Help us to understand it better and live in light of it, we pray. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)