

Resurrection Sunday—1 Peter 1.1-9—The Great Mercy of God

- I. Introduction
 - a. Practical atheism is a term that describes **people who profess to believe in God but live as if there is no God**.
 - i. I want to ask these two questions at start:
 1. Would you live your life differently if the resurrection of Christ were not true?
 2. Does your life look any different because the resurrection of Christ is true?
 - b. Good Friday is not good without the resurrection. Paul affirms this: (1 Cor. 15:17-19) ...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.
 - c. I believe the Bible to be God's holy, infallible, errant word. I believe the obvious historical evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - d. If this is not true, I wouldn't be here. I'd seek to be the happiest I could be doing something else if all I had was this life. I really wouldn't have much motivation to be very good either. I would live for myself at almost all costs and run over anyone who got in my way. Why not, if the resurrection isn't true?
 - e. But it is the truth. And we come to this letter from the Apostle Peter trusting that some 500 eyewitnesses affirm the resurrection of Jesus and because of it, we who have been born again live differently because we too will be raised with him.
- II. Main Point
 - a. Peter's highest and first reason for the worth of God's praise rests on God's act of mercy through the resurrection.
- III. Outline
 - a. To the chosen Sojourners
 - b. The Great mercy of God
 - c. The response: In this we rejoice
- IV. Exposition
 - a. To celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I decided to look at a passage that rests our hope squarely on the amazing act of God's mercy through the resurrection which gives us some amazing truths to live by in this present evil world as we wait for Christ's return. As you read this letter, you discover that he's writing to believers who are suffering. These chosen sojourners need to be reminded of the rock solid, immovable hope that is in Christ through the resurrection.
 - i. We've been looking at this promised King who would come and rule God's eternal Kingdom. This King would rule in righteousness and all who take refuge in him will have the blessings of the Blessed King! We discovered the King that YHWH had installed was Jesus of Nazareth who fulfilled all that was spoken of him by the prophets. He was declared the promised Son of David to reign forever.
 - ii. When we left off last week in Matthew 21, he left Jerusalem and lodged outside the city which seems strange after a coronation of a King. And after hearing God's plan for this King from Psalm 2 and discovering who this King was from Matthew 21, what follows is very unexpected.
 - iii. Because, as the week went on, it got much worse. If you were here for our Good Friday Service we walked through that dark night.
 1. We heard the agony of Christ in Garden of Gethsemane.
 2. The betrayal of Judas with a kiss.
 3. The Sanhedrin's condemnation of this man
 4. The denials of one of his own, Peter and the judgment of Pilate
 5. The crown of thorns and the scourging with whips
 6. The bearing of the cross and brutal crucifixion.
 7. His death and burial in a tomb

- iv. A King on Palm Sunday and a criminal worthy of death on Friday.
- v. While we have been talking about this promised King to come and rule all under his righteous reign forever, we need to be reminded that even though that is a certain reality right now; the fullness of that rule has not yet begun.
 - 1. We have talked before about the already but not yet understanding of the Kingdom. Indeed, Christ is King and he is seated in the heaven with all authority in heaven and on earth.
 - 2. But for now, he is building his Kingdom by the proclamation of the gospel through his messengers. This King was coming to build God's house and that's exactly what he is doing.
 - a. Here's how Peter says this: (1 Pet. 1:23) ...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.
 - b. The House Jesus is building is not another Temple as before, but we are the temple of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.
 - c. And God the Spirit can dwell in us instead of destroying us because sufficient payment has been made and we have responded to God's salvation by faith in his Son.
- vi. Peter opens his letter to these believers who are suffering with some very encouraging realities.
 - 1. He begins by addressing them as elect exiles. Like Israel, those who have come into the Kingdom are described as the chosen people of God.
 - a. "Members of this community are such because of the direct intention of God; the process by which their divine election occurs in Christ happened before the foundation of the world." (1 Peter 1:20) (P. Achtemeier, Hermeneia p. 80)
 - i. You can rest assured in this: (1 Cor. 1:26-31) ²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."
 - ii. The election of God silences the proud and produces praise for his great mercy just as we see in the letter.
 - b. Well, elect is describing what kind of exile they are. It seems very clear that Peter is writing to Jew and Gentile Christians.
 - i. Exile has a specific meaning rooted in the OT. However, that does not seem to be the meaning here.
 - 1. Some of your translations may have sojourner or alien or stranger.
 - 2. The word is used in Gen. 23 when Abraham's wife, Sarah, died while in Hebron. Abraham said to the people there: (Gen. 23:4) ⁴ "I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

3. Furthermore, it would seem really odd that Peter is writing this letter to only Jewish Christian in churches that Paul has planted that have both Jews and Gentiles.
 - a. And many of those people are living in the same places they grew up. So, they wouldn't necessarily be strangers because they have known them their entire life.
 - b. That means we need to understand exile to mean something like this: "Used of all Christians, it describes the fact that because of their unwillingness to adopt the ways of the world, they can expect the disdainful treatment [which often comes to] exiles."
 - i. "...and despite such treatment, they must nevertheless continue to practice their faith in the midst of those who abuse them." (P. Achtemeier, Hermeneia p. 82)
 - ii. This becomes more and more clear throughout the letter.
 - iii. Like this: (1 Pet. 2:11-12) ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
4. So, no matter where we live, we are strangers because we believe God decides what is right and wrong. And in trusting him, we walk in his ways.
 - c. It was necessary to set this initial context in order to understand the magnitude of the importance of the resurrection.
 - i. If the resurrection is not true, then why suffer for obeying our King? Join them and be happy if this life is all there is.
2. The next identifying mark is that they are elect exiles according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.
 - a. "Foreknowledge refers not simply to God's ability to know what is to occur, but also to the fact that what occurs does so in accordance with his plan." (86)
 - i. This is intended to be of great encouragement that "God's plan for them is gracious and redemptive, despite contrary appearances in their life in the world." (86)
 - b. Indeed, God designed this and has been accomplishing his plan of redemption since the beginning.
 - i. His purpose was to save a people for himself by setting them apart by the Holy Spirit, there in verse 2.
 1. For obedience to Jesus Christ who is the reigning King.
 2. For the sprinkling with his blood.
 - a. Glad submission to the King is made possible by the carrying out the New Covenant promises of sprinkling our hearts clean with the blood of Jesus.

- b. The blood of bulls and goats did not clean anyone's heart. The promise of the new covenant was that God would give us a new heart that he sprinkles clean. And he would (Ezek. 36:27)...put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes and be careful to obey his rules.
 - c. In a world like ours that cannot define what a man and woman are, that puts us in a very strange and difficult place.
- b. These great realities in which God describes us as elect exiles according the foreknowledge of God now gives way to describing how that happened and what becomes of these things in our everyday life. Peter sums up what God has done by describing it as God's great mercy.
 - i. If you are not a Christian, I want to speak directly to you. And if you are a Christian, be reminded of these things. This act of love towards a people who have rebelled against God's ways is no easy task. It's not easy because God is righteous. In his righteousness, he is a God of justice.
 - ii. We are, on the other hand, unrighteous. In God's justice, he must punish all sin. To look over it would make him an unjust God. He simply cannot do that.
 - iii. However, in order to forgive us for our unrighteousness, sufficient payment of those sins must be accomplished. That is why he sent his Son to save us. And the way that happened was through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
 - iv. God accepted that payment and raises Jesus from the dead for our justification.
 - 1. Now, justification sounds a lot like justice. Justice and righteousness are inseparable.
 - 2. The good news is though we are unrighteous and God's wrath is against us, he has accomplished the humanly impossible by satisfying his justice on the cross.
 - 3. The demand is, repent. Turn away from your sin and put your trust in Jesus who made the payment for your sin.
 - 4. And when you do, God responds to your faith by forgiving your sins and justifying you. Not only will he clear your debt of sin, he will declare you righteous. In other words, you will have a right legal standing before God if you will take refuge in his Son, the King.
 - v. In his great act of mercy, God causes you to be born again.
 - 1. We were all born into Adam. We were all born into sin. We were all born without hope or inheritance.
 - a. This new birth isn't just a new start; you will be a new creation with a new heart.
 - 2. You might be wondering why you would want this?
 - a. Well, in God's justice, he will judge the world. For those who reject Jesus, they will pay the penalty of their sins themselves forever in hell.
 - b. (Jn. 1:12-13) ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - c. And when you are born again into the family of God, there are many blessings that come with salvation that are much better than the temporary American Dream.
 - i. Just as your Father, God will give you the eternal inheritance.
 - ii. Indeed, you are born again into this inheritance.
 - 1. An inheritance of eternal life in the family God. A life without death and pain. A life without tears and sorrow. A life without sin and shame. A life of glorious reward and abundance.

2. We've talked about this promised King for two weeks now. He gets everything. We get to look forward to the new heavens and the new earth with this King who rules a Kingdom without end.
 3. It is a life as it was meant to be from the beginning. A life with the triune God. (2 Cor. 4:17) ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.
 4. All that is his is now ours. All that is good and right and glorious.
- vi. I could go on and on about the glories of the eternal inheritance in God's eternal Kingdom under the eternal reign the righteous King.
1. The King who came and died and was buried.
 2. But none of this is possible apart from the resurrection.
 - a. No resurrection. No inheritance.
 - b. No resurrection. No hope.
 - c. No resurrection. No reward.
 - d. No resurrection. No salvation.
 - e. Let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.
 3. All of this rests squarely on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
 - a. That's why Easter is so important. Everything depends on it.
 - b. It has been said that "if Christ is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen—nothing else matters." (Jaroslav Pelikan)
 - c. All of this points to the future reality that God has prepared for us who trust in Jesus.
 - d. We do not have a dead hope. We do not hope in vain. Because Christ lives then our hope is a living hope.
 - e. Without the resurrection, this inheritance is not possible. As Paul says in (1 Cor. 15:50) ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
 - i. If Christ was raised from the dead, then all who take refuge in him will also be raised.
 - ii. Only those who have been raised from the dead can receive the inheritance of God's eternal Kingdom.
 - iii. And this inheritance will not perish. It will not be lost in the records at the courthouse. It can't be stolen by another family member.
 1. It's kept in heaven for you.
 2. It is being guarded by the power of God through faith.
 3. It will be given to us when Christ returns.

V. Response

- a. There remains only one response for those who have been born again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - i. (1 Pet. 1:6) ⁶ In this you rejoice!
 1. In this great act of God's mercy, we who have been born again, rejoice.
 2. Even though, right now we are grieved by various trials.
 - a. But only for a little while.
 - b. And these trials have a purpose. They are not meaningless.
 - c. We are grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of our faith—more precious than gold—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- d. We long for that day. But that day has not come. Though we do not see Christ, yet we love him. Though we do not see him now, we believe in him and rejoice with joy that cannot be expressed and filled with glory, obtaining the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.
 - e. "O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll; the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend; even so, it is well with my soul."
 - f. (1 Cor. 15:55-57) ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. I want to leave you with these two questions:
- i. Would your life look different if the resurrection of Christ were not true?
 - ii. Does your life look different because the resurrection of Christ is true?