

His Resurrection, Our Regeneration

1 Peter 1:3

31/03/2024

Joshua Koura

Camden Valley Baptist Church

www.cvbaptist.com

TRANSCRIPT:

I'd like to read from 1 Peter 1:1-9. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."

Let us pray. Father, we come before You in the name of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we ask now that You would send the Holy Spirit to strengthen our hearts, to open the eyes of our understanding that we may see, for the power of the Holy Spirit, for the power of Your word, Christ Jesus, the risen Lord, and that we might have fresh bow before Him today as that risen King and Savior of the world. We ask this in Jesus' name.

This morning, I'd like us to consider verse number three particularly, but before we do that, it is important to understand the context in which these verses come to us. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was writing to the dispersion, these believers that had been persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ, here called the elect, those that had been chosen by the Father, but those who were also called pilgrims, meaning that they had been dispersed into different parts of Asia Minor for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because of the testimony that they held regarding this risen Lord

and Savior. They believed that Christ was risen; they preached the message of the risen Lord, and for their belief in the resurrected Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the preciousness of that gospel, these people came under persecution and were about to come under even more violent persecution for the name and sake of Jesus Christ. They were dispersed, and they were persecuted, and it is amazing how Peter begins his epistle here in addressing these people. He does not begin necessarily with consoling them in their persecution by reminding them that it's okay, everything will just work out fine, although he does deal with God's purposes in persecution as we go through, but Peter first and foremost wants their eyes to be on the risen Lord, their eyes to be on what that risen Lord has accomplished for them in His resurrection.

Peter begins in his epistle in verse number three by saying this: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The first thing that he points to in the understanding of these persecuted people that were afar is the praises of God. In fact, Peter himself praises God in this epistle; he bursts forth with exuberant praise and blesses the Lord. "Oh, his soul," he says, "bless the Lord, blessed be God, the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And he says this, "who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The first thing that Peter tells these scattered, persecuted believers is this: not to remind them what they have been going through, but rather to remind them what has been done for them in the mercy of God. He doesn't remind them of the sufferings that they are experiencing, but he reminds them of the mercy and grace that they have received from a merciful Father. And he praises, and he wants them to praise with him, to bless this Lord, the God of heaven and earth, the Father. Charles Simeon said this, "How did the Apostle address them? In terms of pity or condolence? No, but in terms of the sublimest congratulation. He thinks not of what man has done against them, but of what God has done for them." He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of His abundant mercy hath begotten us again." He goes on to say, "The recollection of the mercy vouchsafed to them by regeneration swallowed up all thought of their trials and superseded for a time all mention of their sufferings."

And this is what the resurrection of Christ does. Peter begins by bursting forth in praise with a sense of joy and declares the praiseworthiness of God. But why is God meant to be praised? Why is God worthy of praise? Well, look what he says in verse number three: "We should bless this Lord. I'm blessing Him; join me in blessing. Why? Who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope." Peter reminds his hearers

here that what has happened to them as God's people is that they have received from God regeneration. In fact, the ESV translates these very words here as "He has caused us to be born again." And Peter tells the people there, this scattered, persecuted church, he says, "Listen, you are suffering, yes, but bless God, bless this God because He's good, and He's great, and His mercy is abundant and abounding. How? Wherein is this mercy? How is it that His mercy has come to us?" He says, "Well, your Father, God Almighty, has begotten you again. He has raised you from the dead. He has caused you to be born again."

This is the great joy of a Christian experience, to enter into the life of God, or should I say, the life of God in the soul of man. That we, once dead in trespasses and sins, God has come to us in our state of deadness, in our state of sinfulness, and He has caused us to be born again. He has breathed the breath of life and raised us from the dead. Peter says this is cause for blessing. This is God's great mercy demonstrated to us, that God Himself has done this. He has, as it were, now our Father because He has begotten us. This is the language of childbearing. This is the language of John chapter 3, is it not, where Nicodemus and Jesus are having a discussion there, and Jesus says to him, "You must be born again." "How can a man be born again where he's old? Shall he enter into his mother's womb the second time and be born?" "No, no, Nicodemus, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not, don't be amazed that I say unto you, you must be born again. The spirit blows where it wills, and you cannot see it, but you can, and you don't know where it's coming from, as it were, but you don't hear the sound thereof, but you know the effects of it, and so is everyone that's born of the Spirit."

And what Jesus is telling Nicodemus is that your life, your chances of seeing the kingdom of God, lie in the abundant mercies of God through the sending of His Holy Spirit to make you alive again. So that all that experience regeneration can be called the children of God, God being their Father. This is the great joy of the Christian experience. Ephesians chapter 2 says it so plainly to us that we were dead in trespasses and sins, but it goes on to say that even though we were dead in trespasses and sins, He has made us alive. Why did He make us alive? Well, the Bible teaches us why He made us alive. It says because He loved us with this mercy, wherein He loved us, that even though we were dead in trespasses and sins, He quickened us and made us alive together with Christ, for by grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

The grace of regeneration reaches into the dark recesses of a dead human soul and brings them to life, generates life within the soul, that they might see the kingdom of God, that they might come to the kingdom of God, that

they might believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. This is the great mercy spoken to us of in John chapter 1, where it says, "For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Jesus is saying to us there, or John is saying to us there, that it all depends on this great mercy that God displays, the great mercy of God reaching to us so that it might be said that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

And so, God has shown great mercy to His people. God has shown great mercy to His elect, scattered, persecuted, wherever they may be. And what mercy is that? They have received resurrection life, life from the dead. And he goes on to explain this, that we were born again, or God here has begotten us again, not to nothing, but to what? A living hope. A living hope, you see. Regeneration is evident by a living hope. How do you know those that have been born again of the Father? How do you know those that have been made alive by the Holy Spirit? Well, their hope, their faith can be described as a living faith. How do we know those that have come and seen and had and tasted of the life of God? It is evident by a hope, not just "I hope so," a sense of doubt there, no, but a sure hope, a sure expectation, a hope that is described here to us as a living hope. It is not like the stagnant waters of a pond, but as a rushing, flowing river where there is life, as that river would be teeming with life. So it is those that have been begotten of a Father. They are the ones that have a faith that can be described as a living faith, a faith and a hope in God.

A Christian experience, if I may say, is described as full of vitality, not marked by cold indifference, not marked by a sort of inoperative deadness that exists within their life. It is not just the outward form of ritualism that marks people as those that are children of God and those that are not children of God because they darken the door of a church perhaps twice in a year, or when the special occasions arise, or because they simply, you know, do their rituals or pray their prayers. The Bible is teaching us here that when God breathes life into the dead, their faith is a living faith. It is a faith that is translated in life, and it comes out through their life, that there is a radiating energy that is pulsating from the soul of those that have come in touch with the life of God.

You see, regeneration is marked by life, and when God gives life to the soul, when there is conception taking place in the womb of a woman, that life very soon makes itself manifest. Oh, it may be in embryo stage, but you see, as time goes on, that little embryo grows to start kicking, and the woman that bears that embryo knows, "Oh, there's life here." It's one thing

for the doctor to tell her that there's life here; there's another thing for her to experience the life there. And beyond that, when the child then gives birth and comes forth, there's the crying, there's the expectancy of care and crying. This is exactly what happens in the new birth. God plants the principle of life within the soul of the dead sinner, which breeds life into the soul, and there's life evidence in birth, in crying, in calling upon the name and mercy of God.

The same is true of what the Bible teaches about regeneration with regards to a seed. A farmer plants a seed into the ground; it just looks like a dead seed, and it goes into the ground, and it's covered, and it's, by in a sense, hidden there. But life comes into the seed, and from that life, there's things happening under the ground, but it bursts forth into a great expression as it breaks forth through the ground, and you see, "There is life, there is life." But one thing that is true of both illustrations with regards to regeneration is this: that regeneration is always evidenced by life, for it is God giving us life.

And so, for us to understand what Peter is saying here, he's saying that God has begotten you again, not to a dejected kind of cold indifference whereby you just simply say that you believe in God, but there is no experience of God. What God has done is that He's brought life into the soul, and that life bursts forth into a living hope, where the faith is lively in those that know the Lord. This is what takes place in our hearts.

And not only have we been begotten to a living hope, what Peter points out here in this passage is very, very important. He says this: "We've been begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Think about that for a moment. We are born again, the Bible says, by God. He causes us to be born again. We're born again in this same epistle by the Word of God. We're born again in this epistle by God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And the Bible teaches us that we're born again by the Spirit of God in John chapter number three. And in James chapter number one, verse 18, he says that we've been begotten again by the will of God. So, you think, how does all this come together? How does this all work out?

Well, the Bible teaches us that God is the first cause, for He, in mercy, regenerates us, and He, by the means of the Spirit and by the Word, imparts that life to us. And what is happening here in this passage? Well, it is upon the grounds and by the effectual power that was evidenced in Jesus Christ being raised from the dead. You see, when Jesus there was laying there in the tomb, and He was dead, He was not merely resuscitated, neither was He simply just swooned, and He was just out of it, and then all of a sudden, His senses came back to Him, and He got up. In fact, He

wasn't even raised from the dead as Lazarus was, because Lazarus was raised from the dead to die again. Yes, He was raised from the dead as Lazarus was, actually from the dead, but He was raised in a new life, in a resurrection life. His resurrection, He was raised to die no more. It is the guarantee of our resurrection, that we will be raised in the very same way, to die no more, not like Lazarus, as it were.

But what happens there in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that a great power was demonstrated there, 2000 years ago, in that tomb. While the boulder was there, blocking the entrance to the tomb, and darkness was in the tomb, and as our Savior's body there lay in the tomb, as there was a watch set upon the tomb, and what seemed like death and only death was met with life, and that life eternal. And there, God Himself, and the Bible even says Jesus Christ Himself, and the Bible says that the Holy Spirit, the Godhead altogether, raised up Jesus from the dead. And there was a bursting light, and there was a shining light, and resurrection power burst forth that day. And the grave, He could not hold Him, and death could not hold Him, and He rose triumphant from the grave. And when Satan and his enemies and his angels thought that they had finally gotten the Lord and got Him down in the grave and killed Him and snuffed out His life, there in the tomb came the resurrection power of God that broke forth in splendor and might that changed the lives of those who witnessed that resurrected Lord throughout all the history of the Christian Church. It was great power; it was resurrection power.

And what Peter is reminding us here is that when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, it has been part of the fact that we have been made alive, that God raised Christ from the dead, and we who believe in Him are raised with Him from the dead, so that we might be walking in His newness of life. Turn with me to Romans chapter number 6, verses 4 to 6. Romans 6:4-6, a beautiful passage here that Paul shows us in the depiction of baptism and his glorious view of the resurrection power of Christ. Chapter 6, verse 1, he says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection."

And what Paul is reminding his hearers here is this: that when Christ died, you died with Him, but Christ didn't stay dead; He rose again from the dead. And those that are united to Christ in His death are also those who are united to Christ in His life. And so, to declare that we believe that

Jesus Christ died on the cross and to yet continue in sin is to show that we do not believe that He rose from the dead because He conquered sin and He conquered death by His resurrection life. And the Bible's teaching us here is this: that just as you have been united with Christ in His death, the sure and certain consequence is this, that you shall be raised to walk in newness of life.

Now, here's the thing: He is not talking about in this passage our resurrection which is to come; He's talking about that resurrection of which we have tasted since we first believed in Jesus. And what he's saying to the people here is this: you cannot live in sin anymore. How can you? Christ died for sin; you were united in His death. But beyond that, Christ now lives, and you have been united in His life, and therefore, what should be evident in your life is that resurrection power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. And what is the evidence of the resurrection power that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? It is that the sin and the power of sin that He broke in His victorious conquering of the grave should be evident in our life by the newness in which we walk, that our lives should be marked by a holiness that shows that we are not dead in trespasses and sin no longer, but that we have been raised with Christ in newness of life. And the life that we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. We're united to Him, and being united to Him, His life should be evident in our life.

And this is what Jesus was teaching His disciples when He said unto them, "I am the vine; you are the branches. He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing." What He's saying to His disciples is this: that if you are united to Me by faith, if you have received the life which I give, if you have believed on Me and been joined to Me in life, My life is your life. Evidence in My resurrection power should be in your life, that holiness that should proceed from it.

And this is the message that Peter is reminding his followers of, that you've been begotten again into a living hope, a living hope because you've been united with Christ by faith, and you in that resurrection power, and now to walk with Him. As the hymn writer said, "Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed with righteousness divine," we have been made alive in Him by the resurrection. And so, that Paul could say in Corinthians chapter 15, he goes, "If Christ is not risen, what's the point? What are we doing here today? Why do we care to hear the Word of God? What is the purpose of celebrating the cross if there is no resurrection? What is the purpose of declaring God's mercy if we are begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Because if we have not been, if Jesus Christ has not been raised, we're still dead in our sins. There's no point to preach the gospel; there's no point to rejoicing in God; there's no point even to die for the preaching

of the gospel of Jesus Christ if the dead rise not. But no, the dead do rise, for Christ is risen, and all those that have been raised with Christ, the promised resurrection bodies, for in Adam all die, and in Christ all shall be made alive."

And so, what does all this mean for us? It means a lot. It means if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior here this morning, you are yet dead in your sins, and your hope is not a living hope. And to you, you must hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who said this: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And to you, the word of consolation comes that those who believe in the Son shall have everlasting life. And to you, you can see that there is a hope, a living hope, a living faith, and you can come to Jesus Christ through God's mercy, by God's grace, and believe on Him who is risen from the dead and experience His life. This is the hope that you may have in Him if you believe on His name.

But also, for those who have been saved and regenerated, this comes to challenge, does it not? That the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just simply about a historic fact that it happened 2000 years ago, that we come to remember as an abstract idea, but it is something that should have deep effect in the practical lives of those who believe on Christ's name. And that it is not sufficient to have an orthodoxy that He's dead, and it's not sufficient to confess the things of the Christian faith but do not have the life of Christ upon whom that faith is founded. And to us, it comes as a challenge: how is it that we can live lives of dejection? How is it that we can live lives marked by discouragement and not marked by life? Although we struggle, although we are burdened down, although we may be persecuted like the people here, let that hope be that Jesus Christ, who has raised us from the dead, is coming to give us life forever in His presence. Our hope is a living hope; we look beyond the grave to resurrection life because we have tasted of that life here and now.

The Christian Church should not be marked by indifference, not marked by coldness, not marked merely by head knowledge, but they should not be marked by the newness of the power that comes from the risen Lord who lives within their hearts, who communicates that power to their soul, to their life, that they might walk in holiness, walk in righteousness, walk in purity of life, walk in joy, walk in peace. That these persecuted church here, he says, "Though you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible, full of glory." Wow, how is that possible? How is it that these people, being persecuted and scattered abroad, in their trial of affliction, in their trouble, Peter said with assurance to them, "Even though now you are afflicted, and you don't see Him, yet you believe in Him, and believing in Him, you are marked by rejoicing that is inexpressible and full of glory."

Words could not describe such rejoicing. Why? By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, they were walking in that power that was found in the resurrected Savior.

We should be like the disciples of Jesus, no different now. They cowered when Christ was in the tomb, but after they saw Him, after He appeared to them, the same people that cowered in fear stood in confidence in the face of their oppressors, in the face of those that persecuted, and declared that Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. And they said, "Stop preaching in this name." "We cannot," they said, "but speak the things which we have both seen and heard." And the Bible says, "And with great power, the Apostles gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." What had happened to them? They had seen the Lord risen, and they were marked by a vibrancy about them, not a flippancy, but a vibrancy. They were serious about their faith, even to the point of death, because they had seen Him.

For those of us that have believed in Jesus, we also have seen Him with the eye of faith as He's communicated to us through the scriptures. We have tasted and seen His mercy, and should not, therefore, we declare Him with the same confidence? Or should we be ashamed of our Lord who has risen from the dead? Should we not declare with confidence and power and grace and mercy upon us that Christ is risen, He is risen indeed?

Church of God, arise from our slumber and our lethargy. Do not sleep any longer in fear or in a sense in which our hope is not alive, but come forth, as it were, afresh. Remember what Christ has done to us, what God has done in mercy for us through the power of resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Remember that we have been united to Him in faith, and His life is in us, and let us, therefore, live in the power of that new life without any excuses for our coldness and for our apathy. Let our lives be marked as victory, just like the open tomb, the empty tomb was marked by the victory of the Son of God.

Let us pray.