

1 Peter 1:3

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 June 2007

Preacher: Donald Macleod

[0:00] Let's return to 1 Peter chapter 1 and the words we find in verse 3. 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 3.

In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you. He has given us new birth into a living hope. Now those words come from the depths of Peter's own bitter experience.

He received a special revelation from God as to who Jesus was and he affirmed his faith in those great words, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And following on from that affirmation, there was the great hope of his involvement in Christ's messianic kingdom, the glory of the Messiah himself, the glory of their share with the Messiah in all the kingdom's triumphs.

[1:28] And then suddenly it had all gone dreadfully wrong. The arrest, the trial, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, and then it's burial.

And with that burial, all hope had gone. All those dreams of messianic kingdoms, dreams of messianic glory, all lay in that tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

And now that was rendered, all the more bitter to Peter, for the knowledge that he himself had denied, the Messiah denied, Jesus, his Lord, denied with curses in the most vehement way, all knowledge on this man.

And then the cock had crowed. The Lord had looked at him. He'd gone out. And he wept bitterly. And I suppose that for the next two days, all he did was weep. All his hope gone. All the dreams in the tomb.

[2:52] And all that bitter knowledge of his own cowardice and his own fail. And there he was in the pit of despondency and despair.

But then again, equally suddenly, it had all changed once more. The Lord had risen.

The glory of the resurrection. And suddenly, all the hope came flooding back.

And then, to Peter's own reinstatement, Simon, do you love me? Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs. And that's what he's speaking of here. God had begotten him again. Given him a new birth into a living hope. He's not talking of what John calls the new birth, being born again.

[4:01] He's talking of this sudden transition in his own experience from despair to hope. And all due to this one great moment of the resurrection.

that no two. It's not simply begotten him that he gave me a new birth into a living hope. But he has given us a new birth.

Because Peter stands with all his fellow believers enjoying this same great hope. God has given all of us this hope.

That's what Peter said to us here tonight. And I want for a moment to explore with you as time allows something of obvious hope and its role in our own Christian lives.

First of all, what kind of hope is it? It's a hope that's based four square on the fact of the resurrection.

[5:07] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That resurrection had changed everything.

It had changed in a way the nature of history and the nature of time itself. Because history was that within which the dead never rose.

in history the dead stayed dead. In time the dead stayed dead. But then suddenly we have this different kind of history.

A history in which the dead rise. A time in which the dead rise. And I hope it's not too elusive for us.

It's such a tremendous thing. That history is no longer that within which the dead never rise. But history has this holy new character in which the tomb is empty.

[6 : 16] In which the angel says he is not here he has risen. Within history the dead rise. This revision of the nature of history itself.

But it was more than that. It was the elevation of the crucified Messiah to a height and authority from which he could deliver all his promises.

All his promises all his dreams all the hopes had seemed at first to be nailed to the cross of culinary and to be buried in the tomb.

But now this man who had made all the promises was once again in a position to deliver. He was risen.

He was living. He was ascended. He was sitting at the right hand of God. And the great change was not simply that history his whole nature had been altered.

[7 : 27] It was also that the governance of the universe had suddenly been changed. There was a new regime. There was a new government.

The regime of the crucified and the risen Messiah. He was at God's right hand. He was in the centre of the throne.

He had all the authority in heaven and in earth. And suddenly all those promises which the cross had negated and the cross had said no he can never deliver them.

They had said see you said you build the temple in three days. Well come down and build the temple in three days. That's what they said. And now suddenly he could build the temple in three days.

Suddenly he could raise the dead. Suddenly he could regenerate the heavens and the earth because he was risen. And that's going to change the whole other frame of reference.

[8 : 35] The whole kind of world in which you live, in which we work, in which governments operate, in which culture operates, it's all changed.

Because this Christ has risen and this Christ has the whole world in his hand. And part of the glory of it all is that Peter's vision for the future stands so firmly on his convictions about the past.

In the past there was that empty tomb and the future there was this hope of a glorious inheritance. And so first and foremost it's a hope based upon the resurrection.

And then he says this to us, it's a living hope and it's living in the sense that it is perennial and it is irrepressible.

It just keeps welling up and dwelling up constant replenishment of this hope as a living and imperishable hope.

[9 : 49] Now of course in many ways that hope will be severely tested. It was being tested for these people by those manifold trials of which Peter speaks by the furnace of persecution and by constant harassment and by all the sufferings of the present time.

And one day down the years Peter would himself face the ultimate sanctions of anti-Christian law and made of his life for a saviour.

And yet in the midst of it all, in the midst of his own terrified self-knowledge following upon that moment of denial, in the face of all the harassment and all the floggings and all the persecutions, this hope had just waxed up.

It was very irrepressible. You know, in the Scottish crops and farmland, it's easy enough to dig a hole, and when it rains, the rain from above will fill the hole.

But when the rain stops, the hole dries. rains. But if you find a spring where the water wells up from the depths and the bowels of the earth, then drought or no drought, there is water in the well, what the old people called rising water, spring water, down from the depths of the earth maybe, in some parts of the world today, thousands of feet below, in those rain water bearing strata, below the earth's surface, there the springs of water.

[11 : 54] And so it was here, this living water, not simply there in times of showers of rain and blessing, but it was always the hope springs eternal, rooted in the resurrection, in the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, so that amid all the variations of circumstance, and all the ebb and flow of our own emotion, amid all the terrifying discoveries of self-knowledge, that all the while, this hope was there, this living, living hope.

And you see two of this, it is the hope of an inheritance. And you know the great thing about inheritance is this, you don't pay for it, and you don't earn it.

It is the free deed and gift of the benefactor, of the person, whose will it is. And that's how it is with this great Christian hope. It's a promise. It's a promise given by a covenant God.

It doesn't depend on our earning it. It's been earned for us on the cross of Calvary. and we are heirs of God and we join heirs with Christ, heirs of the promised land.

[13:40] And no matter all we learn about ourselves and all our own failings, we still know that that inheritance is ours, that promised land which is ours by bequest, by deed of gift and grant on the part of God to mankind lost.

Let me pause for a moment over this because you know way back in the 18th century around 1720 there was a great debate in Scotland about the free offer of the gospel.

And mainly Thomas Boston used this language of the deed of gift and grant. And they were trying to emphasize for us the freeness, the sheer gratuitousness of the Christian salvation.

And they would say as preachers, I have this great estate to offer to you. And here are the title links. And they bid out your name.

And you say, well, what must I do to earn this great estate? What price must I pay? what must I do? And they would say, no, no, no. Your name was already in the title deeds.

[15:00] You simply take it. It is your inheritance. And that's for tonight of all who are God's children. And with all the variations of talent and usefulness and depths and shallowness across all those differences, still this great fact, we are heirs equally.

No matter our contribution, no matter our merit or demerit, it's an inheritance, it's a promised land and our title rests on the promise of God himself.

And so it's based on the resurrection. It is a living hope, it's the hope of an inheritance. And it's kept for you.

And I think that means that it is something that is kept for us in God's own eternal purpose and decree and for ordination.

It's kept for us in God's book of life. That's where the deeds are, in God's own eternal purpose, there it reposes in this great book of the heavenly scenes.

[16:30] It's there kept for us with our own name in that book. book. And it takes us back to this fact from which I can never get away, that God never was without loving us.

God never was without that book of life. And that book never was without your name in it, my name in it.

Those of us who are God's children, our names have always been. You know that in many books and many lists in which we don't figure, we may not even have our names on community controls. No matter, no matter at all, that what matters is of our name in this book with a record of all the beneficiaries and all the heirs of this promised land.

And so it's kept there. It's kept there to inviolate by God himself. Moth can't corrupt it.

[17:52] Rust can't destroy it. No enemy can invade it. No ungodliness can defile it. Time makes no impression upon it.

it's kept for us. It's kept for us by God himself. Then to knowledge this, that we too are kept for it.

It is kept for us, but we too are being kept for it. We might say, oh, that promised land, I read about that promised land, I read about it in the Old Testament, and you know, I noticed that lots and lots and lots of people, they left each into the Exodus, and they never made it to the promised land.

And what if that happens to me, what if I don't make it, what's the use of the land that's kept, if I'm not kept for the land, but always they're kept.

And you say, well, what keeps me? What will keep me? And you see how it is here. We are kept by the power of God.

[19:08] We are shielded by God's power. And you know, that in many ways shows us how vulnerable and how much at risk we are, that we need to be kept by the power of God.

you know, if you hope to be a Christian tomorrow by this time, 24 hours time, you hope to be that, do you?

So that you still be a follower of and believe in the Lord Jesus in 24 hours time. And you know that's going to be true. You need to be kept when you go to work tomorrow.

You need to be kept. For the rest of this evening, you need to be kept. And you may say, well, will a little keeping do? Oh, noises, the power of God.

Because there's a roaring lion. And there are terrible tests and temptations. But we are kept. Isn't a good keeper God himself kept by the power of God.

[20 : 26] We have our mind, God himself. And how long will this last? Is it while I'm young, I need to be kept?

While I'm just a novice of life of faith, is that when I need to be kept? Is it only for a few years? only for the first decade? Only to middle age? Oh, noises, it's right, it's down, until the coming of salvation.

Kept to the day of salvation. Kept to the very bank of the Jordan. Kept until we are home.

Because only the shepherd can't take us home. what need we have, the more one reflects on the casualties by the way, on the backslidings, on the apostasies, on the losses of faith, on the triumph of doubt.

[21 : 37] How urgent is this need for us to be kept to the very, very end, even on our deathbeds themselves, should God grant us time in such an empty room, we shall still need to be kept by the same power of God until the very moment of salvation, right up to our very last breath.

And so there are the qualities of this hope. Well, let me move on for a moment to define the hope a little more precisely in terms of its content, and this becomes in many ways a rather personal testimony as to what my own hope is, what hope means for me.

There is hope, first of all, with regard to this life itself. So far as one has a future in this world, as believers, we have hope with regard to that earthly and terrestrial future.

And what is that hope? My hope is this, that God will always give me grace to help me in times of need.

There is not much we know about the future, but we know this, it will have times of need.

[23 : 19] It will have times of pain, perhaps unendurable. It will have days of bad news, of setback, disappointment, and failure.

It will have burdens that will touch us to the limits of our physical and our spiritual endurance. it will have temptations that may come with great force, violence.

Others may come with great subtlety and demonic skill. I shall need help and I shall cherish that promise, grace to help in time need.

And we shall pray for that weakness, for that felt weakness, for that felt inability to cope that turns to grace and turns to God because in that weakness God's strength is made perfect my grace is sufficient for you.

I don't know if you feel the future. Sometimes it terrifies us all and where is our comfort, where is our consolation and encouragement only here that whatever God permits or God sends into our lives, His grace is going to help you cope.

[25 : 14] That surely is one fundamental part of our hope. Hope for this life itself that God's grace will always see me through.

And there is hope in death. Hope when the time comes to leave this world.

The Apostle Paul said that he longed to depart. We can't all say that, perhaps none of us can say it. They long because to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord, to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.

To cross not into a world of extinction or a world of unconsciousness or a world of fussy shadowiness and limitations to move from the world of this world of shadows into the light or the presence of Christ to be with him and to see him as he is in the glory of his present environment. To know as we have never known to see as we have never seen to taste that love as we've never tasted that love before.

[27 : 06] To find rest of our neighbors to sleep through Jesus to be with Christ which is far better.

the days in all earthly comfort are tremendously important and all the challenges that we face and all that terrified challenge of our final destiny to know then that to be absent from that body is indeed to be present with the Lord.

That in a sense not a debilitating not a weakening of our faculties but in every area a strengthening and a rendering more sensitive and more acute of all our powers and all our faculties to see him as he is.

So there is the hope we have for this life itself. There is the hope that we have as we contemplate death itself.

And there is the hope that we have as we think of the ultimate return of Jesus Christ to this world in the glory of the parousia and the consummation of human history and indeed of the history of the entire cosmos.

[29 : 00] And this is surely the great great fact in this hope that God has given us that the risen Christ is the Christ who one day is going to return.

And what is my hope with regard to that? Well, my hope at one level is this, that I shall come back with him.

That is, if he delays his return and if I go to him before he comes for me, those that sleep through Jesus, shall God bring with them.

When Christ comes, those who sleep through Jesus, they will come back with Jesus. He will come back in the glory of his Father.

He will come back with the voice of the archangel. He will come back with the myriads of angels, but we will come back with them.

[30 : 15] I said before to you, the resurrection has changed the nature of history and the nature of time. And you say to me, but in history, angels don't come in history.

And people don't come back into time. They don't come back in history, but look, history has been changed. The Lord has risen. In principle, everything is different.

That Christ who rose will one day return and we shall come back with them. And the second thing is this, and I do so long for it.

I long to see every knee bow and every tongue confess King of glory bow.

today, today, what despite is done to the name of Jesus. What blasphemy heaped upon his head as once there was around the cross itself when men spat on him and there spitting on him still and how it grieves as who love him to find his name as teaching his claims all so derided.

[31 : 36] it. And I long for that day, not perhaps so much I hope for what it will mean for myself but what it will mean for him.

I long to see every knee bow. I long to see every voice confessing King of glory.

I long to see the opposition silent and awestruck in the presence of his mighty and glorious Savior. I long almost for that other paradoxical expression of his silence in heaven as all creation sees the glory of the Lamb.

I long to come back with him. I long to see every in me above. and I long for the glory of the resurrection body.

He is risen in a body of glory. He has been transformed, transfigured, and we are promised that he, that is a risen Christ, this divine plenipotentiary of infinite capacity, and creativity and imagination, that he will change the form of my body, and give me a body conformed to the body of his own glory.

[33 : 14] What idea do I have as to what it's like? Well, I see his own body on the Mount of Transfiguration. I see his body on the Damascus Road.

I see his body in Revelation chapter 1. What eyes and what a voice and what a presence. I'm not going to speculate over much, but I know it's going to be a body in which I shall have all the stamina I need to serve him, and all the dexterity that I need to serve him, in which I shall have eyes to see colors in this world that my eye cannot see today, in which I will hear music I cannot hear today, in which I will smell perfume which I cannot smell today, in which I will feel textures that I cannot feel today.

That's part of what one longs for, a body like the body of the resurrection transfigured glory of the Lord himself.

I long to come back with him, I long to see every me bow, I long for my resurrection body, and I long to see that multitude that no one can number, gathered from all nations and peoples and languages and tongues, as humorous as the sand on the seashore, as the stars in the sky, all the children of God, all the brothers of Jesus, all who redeem the members of this mighty choir, who sing the song of the Lamb to whom loved us and redeemed us to God by His blood.

What a sight, what a convocation, what a convention. It's going to be this multitude, no longer a small flock, but this multitude innumerable and this multitude of such infinite variety, such levels of intellect, such levels of social background, such levels of economic background, such levels of temperament and personality.

[35 : 50] Lord, there are so many here, and Lord, there are so many different kinds of people here. Lord, every sort of person is here, Lord, this multitude, that no one can number.

Don't you long to see it? You're still a small congregation, you know, but week in, week out, I preach to thirty people, and one becomes conscious of this little flock, and yet these little flocks are building up this tremendous aggregate sun places today.

There are thirteen thousand people worshipping one congregation, that's great, but the great thing is that one day all the members of those mighty congregations, and all the members of our scattered small, tiny, rural congregations, so precious, in God's sight, I tell you, so precious, and one day they'll all be gathered into this multitude that no one can number, don't you long for, and when you want to work for it to bring that great illusion to pass, and don't you long too for a new heaven and a new earth, you want to see that new universe where my newborn soul and my new made body can find for itself an appropriate environment, you want to see that new heaven, that world with a river of water of life flowing through it, that world which glitters with light, that world with all those great trees being the fruit of eternal life, that world of what can descend to the more prosaic, where again there are colors and sounds and textures and perfumes beyond, our imagining and things to taste beyond, our imagining, a world you know which will speak of the glory of God in a way that surpasses even the eloquence of this marvelous world in which I live, the heavens declare the glory of

God, but our sin has marred our very environment, we have scarred the our surface, we have reduced its ability to speak of the glory of God, but one day we'll have a world again in which with a resistible clarity and eloquence God will bespeak the glory of his own creativity, his own artistry, such forms and such colors and such arrangements, such vastnesses, such variety, such attention to detail, the heavens will declare the glory of God.

I long to come back with them, I long to see every knee bow, I long for my new body, I long for all of these things, I long for this great multitude and for this new heaven and for this new earth, I long for all of these things, and I long to serve him a day and night in his temple, it's part of the glory of John's revelation that the saints reign with Christ and the saints serve, to reign is to serve, to serve is to reign, in that great eternal Sabbath, in that great universe which is one last temple, we shall worship and adore, and explore, and understand, and see, talk to, listen to, listen to, the one that we love, beyond that, let me say, it's not going to be purely theological, or purely spiritual, or purely liturgical, you know, when God made a human species, he put them in the garden, to till it, and to keep it, now, ensure that in that world, come, we shall find scope for every physical faculty, for all the powers of our imagination, and we shall work at the management, and the preservation, and the transformation, and the very glorification, of the glory, that God is going to give us.

[41 : 12] Two things briefly, in which says Peter, you rejoice, you Christians are happy people, what makes you happy?

Is it this hope? Is it not this hope? your careers are their ups and downs, your relationships are their ups and their downs, and your congregations, and so many other variables are their ups and their downs, but in this, you rejoice, this is your comfort, keep on saying, there is no earthly comfort, in this you rejoice that one day, all these tremendous things are going to happen, and you're going to be part of all this tremendous reallocation and rearrangement of all the forces in the universe, that's what we are going to rejoice in, are you happy?

Bubbly Christians, are we happy, happy, happy, why are we happy? You know, it makes all the difference in the world, why are we happy? We are searched by that, what makes us happy, and why are you cast down when you have all this tremendous prospect before you, in which salvation you rejoice?

you've just heard something, not for the first time, but you've heard it once again, you have come into an inheritance, you just heard that you have beneficially earned a will, whose will, the will of the living God, God, and what she's given to you, what she left you, all that he has, he's left me everything, he's left me absolutely everything, all things I'll use, and so we are to rejoice, unendousness, blessed be God, and what else is there, thank you, oh my

Father, for giving us your Son, blessed be the God and Father, praise to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you wish you could say it, more eloquently, more poetically, more dramatically, more powerfully, but then you remember the words of Robert Layton who once said, you know, he said, love will stammer when it cannot speak, and we shall stammer our praise to God when we cannot speak it, praise to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I almost

say tonight if I dare that this is in some ways a keynote speech, it's writing the keynotes, the keynote for the church, and the keynote for the church of

[44 : 51] Jesus Christ is, praise be for the God and Father of the Lord Jesus. I wish I could strike it more accurately and more moodily, but that is the keynote by which you live, and the note by which you set your tone for the whole of your earthly pilgrimage as disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Do not go flat, and don't go off key, but go through life on this note. Praise be to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.