

Kept by God

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Christ and the power of God to keep us from sin and give us an inheritance that is incorruptible and reserved in heaven.

Duration: 40:47

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Security"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of inheritance and how it relates to the Christian faith. He emphasizes that the inheritance we have in Jesus Christ cannot be corrupted or taken away. The speaker uses the example of the inflation in Germany after World War II to illustrate the temporary nature of earthly inheritances. He also highlights the importance of using our resources wisely and generously, while reminding listeners that our ultimate inheritance is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Oh, to the loving, blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer, Gladly I'll forfeit all of my treasures, Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to earth, Oh, to be like Thee, oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art, Come in Thy fullness, come in Thy sweetness, Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart, Oh, to be like Thee, loving Spirit, Holy and harmless, patient and brave, Meekly enduring cruel reproaches, Willing to suffer others to save, Oh, to be like Thee, oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art, Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness, Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart, Oh, to be like Thee, while I am pleading, Pour out Thy Spirit, fill with Thy love, Make me a temple, meet for Thy dwelling, Fit me for life and heaven above, Oh, to be like Thee, oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art, Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness, Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart. Will you turn please to 1 Peter chapter 1. I read from the third verse to the fifth verse. We were there the first to the third this morning.

We'll overlap a little and go from the third to the fifth. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 to 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Now remember this letter was written to beaten, hounded, hunted, hurt, persecuted men, women, and young people that had been scattered, that had

been driven in persecution because it's 60 A.D. Persecution has arisen and the church has already undergone that first fire that's going to continue to burn at it.

For they thought, you see, that if they persecuted the church they could exterminate it and only learned later that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And so Peter is writing to these people that have fled from tyranny and from terror and have sought for protection and life and witness and ministry elsewhere. And he wants to comfort them.

And thus he has stated that because Jesus Christ rose from the dead because He rose from the dead now everything in our faith rests upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead. You understand this. You realize this is the foundation of our faith.

And there are those, you know, who say, well I like to believe the Bible but I don't believe in the bodily resurrection but that really doesn't make any difference. It makes all the difference. All the difference.

It isn't Christianity unless it is Christ triumphantly raised from the dead. It can be metaphysics or it can be some other type of mystical religion but it isn't Christianity. Christianity rests upon the fact that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture and He was buried and He was raised again the third day according to the Scripture.

And less than this is neither Christian nor gospel. The whole of the, this is the keystone in the arch of Revelation. Oh everything is important.

And of course we realize that the arch will fall with any stone removed. But this is the keystone, the one that's in the center, that holds it together. For in the absence of resurrection, in those days between, the disciples have every reason to go back to their nets and return to their tasks for what had seemed to them to be a grand expectation had become just a vacuous vision.

And thus they've gone. But when the word is brought to them by Mary that He is risen, it all is changed. Everything is changed.

It's all different now. For He has died and been buried and He's been raised from the dead. This is the keystone of the arch.

But notice, on this rests their confidence. As Peter writes to them, he says, If you believe that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, if you know that He has been raised from the dead, then you know that you have been, having been born into the Father's family, it is to an inheritance that's incorruptible. They've left their inheritance.

You understand what happens when you're persecuted and disenfranchised. Your father's willed you a farm. You're living on the farm and you're tilling the farm.

And then they come along and say, If you don't give up your faith in Christ, you'll die. And you say, Well, I'd rather not, if you don't mind. What's the alternative? And they say, Go.

Go as you are. Leave everything you have. Go.

And so your inheritance is defiled. It's corrupted. It's gone as far as you're concerned.

It's taken away. You haven't anything left. And you start out, as multitudes have, because of war and famine and privation, persecution, captivity, and leave everything behind.

But as these people have become pilgrims, pressing into lands where they are strangers and foreigners, Peter says, I want you to know that the fact that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, that He sits at the right hand of the Father, that there's a man in the glory, is the certain assurance that you have an inheritance that can't be corrupted, that can't be taken away, of which you can't be robbed. And so there's a great deal of consolation, you know, in that. Oh, the comfort there is to sit down to a bowl of thin gruel and realize that whereas you may have less tomorrow than you've had today, and that your life may be involved in it, there is an inheritance that's incorruptible, that your goods were not involved in acres that could be surveyed and barns that could be painted and filled and stock that you could cow.

This was not the measure of your wealth. These were but tools for your temporary comfort and convenience, but that your inheritance is incorruptible. Because, you know, as I've said, the acres can be taken from you, the barns can be burned, and the stock die.

But this inheritance is incorruptible and undefilable. Well, what is this inheritance? What is it? Well, we are joint heirs with Christ and everything that the loving Father has prepared for His Son, the Son has deigned and desired to share with His Bride. And therefore, the exhortation to endure hardness and suffering and persecution and death is founded on the fact that since Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, our inheritance is not to be counted in negotiable stocks and bounds or deedable acres.

Now, these things are tools, they're conveniences, they have their place, they're not to be despised. But by the same token, we should not let our happiness be bound up in them. We should not let our joy be bound up in them.

We should use them while they're ours and available to us and that they're taken from us. We should go on rejoicing that our inheritance is incorruptible and it's undefiled and it fadeth not away. It isn't one that's going to evaporate with the winds.

It isn't like the inheritance of someone in Germany after the Second World War, measured in marks and counted as wealth. Then the time came due to inflation when they would have to put a million marks on an envelope in order to mail it, but that wasn't enough. So they surcharged these and they put ten million marks and still wouldn't carry an envelope.

So then they surcharged the surcharge and they put a hundred million marks and still wouldn't carry a letter because it had lost its meaning. It just had faded away. And so he said to these and he said to me and he says to you, labor not for that which perisheth.

But at the same time he said we are to work that we may have to give to them that have need. And so there's a very right and proper economic relationship of every Christian to his economy. We are to use it, not abuse it.

We're to have it, not hold it. We're to employ it, not love it. And if we can have more than others, we're to use it more wisely than others.

For to whom much is given from them, much will be taken away. But there's just one thing, don't let it be tied up with your happiness. Don't let your happiness depend upon it.

Don't let your joy depend upon it. Don't let your peace depend upon it. If your happiness and your joy and your peace depends upon the style of clothes you wear or whether the fins on your car fenders go up or down or whether the control board on your stove is up on the top or on the bottom because even now these are status symbols.

If your happiness depends upon such femoral things as these, goodness knows you're in for a dreary time in life as a child of God. And so he said, just recognize to these dear people that you've left your family, your heritage, you've left your wealth, you've left all these things behind, but you haven't left him behind. He's with you.

And everything you have that's really worthwhile is reserved in heaven. You have an inheritance incorruptible, undefilable, unchangeable. It won't fade away.

Well, it's wonderful to get a letter like that, isn't it? If you were out there as a refugee in some camp somewhere in Pontus or Galatia or Cappadocia, wouldn't you have liked to have had Peter? Peter, who had a fishing business and he left it, had a good fish store down the main street in Capernaum and he closed it down, put a for sale sign up. And he took all that he had and gave it to the Lord and forsook all and followed Christ. Here's Peter.

He knows a little about this. Here's a man that's writing not out of theory. He's writing out of experience.

And he's found you and you're sitting down there in a little camp somewhere and you're feeling sorry for yourself. And you know you've got a good case, as my friend said down in Dallas, Texas, about a student at the seminary there. He said the only trouble with him is he's got a case of the pole-knees.

You know, poor me. And he was sitting there sort of enjoying the pole-knees. And then the letter comes and it says, Here's your inheritance.

It's incorruptible. It's undefilable. And it's unchangeable.

What are you worrying about a few acres? What are you worrying about that? Look, this is your inheritance. Everything that's his is yours. Everything that he is, he is to you.

You know, that would be encouraging, wouldn't it? Well, it ought to be. It ought to be encouraging to you tonight. Then he said it's reserved.

It's reserved in heaven for you. It's wonderful to find things reserved for you. For instance, when you go to the airline and you've just got to make a trip and you're a standby.

Oh, it's just a little discouraging, you know. Have you ever been a standby? And here you want to go and you're anxious to go and you called up and they said, Well, we're awfully sorry. There's just too many people ahead of you.

And all we can do is put you on the waiting list and you're a standby. And so you stand by. Now, they mean standby.

Don't let me, don't misunderstand. And you stand by in terms of where your name occurs on the waiting list. And if there's 20 people ahead of you and you're number 20 on the waiting list and there are 20 vacant seats, maybe you'll get on.

But it's wonderful to go and you present your ticket and they check, let me check your reservation. They call in and twist some IBM things and digits and gadgets and so forth. Everything's all right.

Say you go by and you look at those old standbys over there and you're just so glad that you have something reserved. Reserved. Go to a restaurant, you know, and it's busy and you look out and there's a line of people.

And you say, Oh, it's going to be hard. And someone with you says, Well, no, it's all right. See, I called in and I made reservations.

And you walk right up to the head of the line. You give your name and they say, Yes, we have a table reserved for you. And you go right in ahead of all the others because you just made preparation in advance.

That's what he said. Preparation has been made in advance. This inheritance has been reserved in heaven for you.

Your name is on it. It's already settled. It doesn't have to be probated.

It's already fixed. It's settled. This is your inheritance.

It's settled. I think that people sitting around in a refugee's tent somewhere up there are going to be awfully glad that they have an inheritance that's reserved in heaven for them. Oh, I know Nero's soldiers or Caesar's soldiers are everywhere.

You don't know where to find them next. And the Jews in their hatred for the Christians are going to report them. They're everywhere, spying, finding out these people of the way that are hated now because they've become a threat by their very purity in life.

And so they're exposed, and they're imprisoned, and all they have is forfeit. And off they go, sent away. But it's wonderful to know that they have an inheritance that's reserved.

But for whom is it reserved? This is the point that I've said for you. Well, is it reserved for you? Well, let's see. Let's see if you are identified with this inheritance reserved for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now, who are these that share in this inheritance? Well, they are the kept ones. They are the kept ones. And so we might think that God is unjust, and just because a person has been identified with a church by some creedal or ceremonial right, that they have an inheritance.

You know, because your name is on church roll doesn't mean that you have an inheritance reserved for you. You may have registered with the church clerk, but that doesn't necessarily equate itself with a registered inheritance in heaven. I'm sure that the angel of the Lord who keeps the records of God's books doesn't check with church clerks to find out who's going to be there.

I just know he doesn't. And I just know that a lot of people are trusting in the fact that as babies their parents took them to church and they were baptized. And so they say, well, everything's settled.

I was baptized. Well, I'm just certain that that's not where God gets the reservation list. He doesn't get it off of the baptismal rolls.

He doesn't get it off of the church membership rolls. I don't even think he gets it off of decision cards. No, I don't think so.

I don't think that God gets it from the reports from summer camps. As happy as we are for reports of our children that have gone to a pinnacle, I don't believe that this is going to be the place where the reservations of inheritance are made. I don't think so.

You know where they're going to be made? They're going to be made as God in sweet and sovereign grace sees someone that has been utterly helpless and completely hopeless, had nothing to bring but his unworthiness, nothing to offer but his uncleanness, nothing to confess but his sin. He came just with need. That's all he had to bring was need.

Need from the top of his head to the sole of his feet. He scraped his accounts and coffers and couldn't find one shekel that was coined in the kingdom into which he wanted to come. And so he had to stand at the door broken, self-confessed, hopeless, helpless sinner and cry out to the watchman on the gate, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And the door was open and a nail-pierced hand said, Come in, wayfaring pilgrim. And when he stepped inside the door of repentance and faith, the robes of his uncleanness were stripped from him and the filth that he'd accumulated was washed from him in the crimson of the precious blood. And then robes of righteousness were put on him by the attending angels of the Lord.

And his name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life and a seal was put on his heart. And he said, Now you can call the king of this place his Abba Father. And then there is at that time a reservation made of an inheritance that's incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.

And for these are those who are kept by the power of God. Now, how are we going to distinguish between the people that say, Well, I've had baptism and I've had church membership and I've had decision and I know the plan of salvation and I have a claim to an inheritance. How are we going to distinguish between the two? Well, it's evident.

You see, the ones that are his are kept by him. This is it. The ones that are his are kept by him.

This world is too great a foe for me. You say, Well, I've heard it said and I've said it undoubtedly and so have you. I can't hold out.

The pressure is too great. God knew that. He knew you couldn't hold out.

Isn't it marvelous that he didn't put it on that condition that you could hold out or hold up or hold on or hold in? He just didn't do that. For he said, We are kept by the power of God. And all that God is, he's made available to these that have been washed in the blood of his dear son and born into his family.

Isn't it wonderful now as you go back to this place of failure last week, place of temptation, place of battle, place where you were twisted and turned and pulled and put on the rack and they just stretched you until you'd break? Isn't it wonderful that you can go back there this week? Not to tremble in fear and say, I'm going to be destroyed. I'm going to fail and fall because it's kept by the power of God. If I were to say to you, Now look, you failed the Lord last week.

You know, you did this, you said that, you thought the other. Now are you going to promise that you won't? You say, well, it isn't a matter of promising that I won't. I don't want to, but I find no strength in me.

Yes, that's right. And that's exactly what he said. Kept by the power of God.

All that God is, he's willing to make available to you. Poor Peter, you know. They look at him and say, Well, there's the Lord, Peter, out there on the water.

You're the biggest one around here. You're the big fisherman. You know what to do.

If there's anybody that ought to walk on water, Peter, you do enough talking. You ought to be the fellow. And so the boys in the boat say, Peter, you do it.

And Peter puts his foot up there on the side of the boat, you know, and he looks out and the Lord says, All right, Peter, come on. And he steps out. And one step is all right and two steps, and he turns around and says, Look, fellows, I'm walking on the water and look at those waves.

And down he goes. And in the midst of his own helplessness, his eye turns on the Lord Jesus and he says, Lord, save me. And he's kept by the power of God.

As long as he thought he could do it, he had to fall. And if you think that you're adequate for this coming week with the tests and pressures that are going to face you, I have news for you. You're going to get wet.

But if you are prepared to realize that you can't but he can and we're kept by the power of God. Now, I'm sure that the Lord lets us get wet because it's the only possible way that he can show us how utterly frail and absolutely weak and totally dependent we are. Someone says, Is there any good that comes out of sin? Well, there's three aspects.

First, it makes you realize that you're utterly unworthy in and of yourself for mercy's past or present or future. And secondly, it makes you realize that you're utterly helpless. And thirdly, it stirs in your heart a new sense of your absolute dependence upon him.

And fourthly, it tests whether or not you've been born again because if you are, you abhor yourself and hate your sin. Kept by the power of God. Now, someone might turn around and say, Well, that doesn't mean that we're kept from sin.

That means we're kept from hell. Well, I'd be willing to accept that if the word a little further didn't say Be ye holy as I am holy. But since it says that, then I've got to understand that the ones who are kept from hell are the ones who are kept from sin.

And the means by which we are kept from sin is through faith. Through faith in the finished work of Christ. Through faith in the intercessory work of Christ.

Through faith in the present help of the Holy Spirit. Through faith in the power of the word of God. Through faith in the means of grace.

Through faith. Kept by the power of God through faith. And the evidence that you are a child of God with an inheritance to your account kept in heaven for you is the fact that you hate sin, you realize you aren't adequate to overcome it, you realize the Lord Jesus is, and you're confidently going into tomorrow not depending upon you, but depending upon Him.

Kept by the power of God through faith. Faith is the means that releases all that God is because it's an admission of that we are all that we know ourselves to be and that He has done everything that He said He would do. Kept by the power of God through faith.

If it was up to us to keep ourselves the battle's over and we're defeated and as good as gone. But I'm so glad that He has set His love upon you and upon me and He has said if you're just prepared to admit that you can't and that I can and that if you'll look to me and let me I'll do for you what you need and be to you what you need I don't need to tremble too much at tomorrow. If I had to depend upon me I'd be afraid to face it.

But if I depend upon Him it's then kept by the power of God through faith. And I can look to Him as did Peter Lord save me, I can look to Him as did Peter I can, I can look to Him in my weakness Lord and release Him to do it. But I can't do it.

Now I'm responsible to do it and if you find someone who says well I find the word says I'm kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation doesn't make any difference how I live or what I do but they've missed the point. The evidence that you have an inheritance reserved is the fact that you are being kept by the power of God. Now notice in closing through faith unto salvation.

Here are people that have been begotten by and to a living hope. Here are people that have believed in the resurrection of Christ from the dead and in believing they've utterly abandoned all they are and have to Christ because in the New Testament that's what it means to believe in Christ. Just as Paul seeing that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead could only have one response Lord what wilt thou have me to do this characterizes everyone that believes in Christ an absolute surrender to Him.

Now certainly we'll say this is salvation won't we? We'll have to admit that they've been forgiven and pardoned and justified. They've been born again. They're being kept from the power of sin but he says unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We saw this morning that sanctification is past, present and future. Now tonight we're seeing salvation is past, present and future. I was saved.

I am being saved and I shall be saved. I was saved from the guilt of sin. I am being saved from the power of sin and I shall be saved from the very contest with sin and the possibility of sinning.

Salvation ready to be revealed. Oh that glorious day when our salvation is revealed. Right now we have an earnest.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have joy. We have love.

We have His presence with us comforting and assuring us. We have victory in the hour of test. But one day that which we by faith hold by sight shall see and it will be a glorious day.

And so Paul writing to these people and I want you to identify yourself with them in your mind and heart for there is much that we have in common and millions of our fellow believers have it in literal sharing today. Oh dear heart that you can realize that the best is just day. Salvation to be revealed.

It has been revealed. It is being revealed. But it is going to be revealed.

It is better by and by. The best is yet to come. Say it any way you want to.

Get any help you can from any hymn writer. Let your mind take everything that the Word of God has to say. Dwell upon it and revel in it.

We sing the half has not been fancied. This side the golden shore. Salvation ready to be revealed from heaven.

Now is this yours? An inheritance? Salvation to be revealed? How do you know? You hate sin. You want to live so as to please Christ. You realize you can't.

You realize you are utterly dependent upon Him. And your faith reaches out tonight to cast yourself upon Him and take from Him what you need for each step of the way. Such are those who believe.

That's what the Bible teaches as the perseverance of the saints. You know how God preserves His people? By causing them to persevere. Do you know how He's going to give evidence to the people around you tomorrow that you're a Christian? Just by what we've said.

You're persevering in the way of obedience, in the way of faith, in the way of trust. Persevering in prayer, in the reading of the Word of God, in witness. Just going on step by step in the certain assurance that there's an inheritance reserved in heaven for you who are being kept by the power of God through faith onto salvation ready to be revealed.

Now that's good enough for me. I'm going to go home and go to the house where I'm staying and put myself in the hands of the Lord and thank Him for today and trust Him for tomorrow. Because if He's going to be in tomorrow, I don't need to be afraid of it.

Do you? And He knows my weakness and He knows His power and He knows your frailty and He knows His power and He knows your test and He knows His power. And He has committed Himself to be everything you need for every step of the way. Now that's the word that Peter wrote to some people up there in Galatian, Cappadocia and Pontus and Asia.

I think it's a mighty good word that He will keep us by His power through faith onto salvation ready to be revealed. So if you've been saying, well I'd like to be a Christian, I can't hold out. I think tonight's the night that you ought to give in and realize that He knew you couldn't hold out so it was that He would hold you up.

He would be to you everything you aren't. So if that's your excuse, I hope you're through with it now and you'll just let Him come in to save. Let's bow in prayer.

How about you? Do you know whom you've believed? Do you know that you have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, unchangeable? Do you know that? Well, you say, how do I know it? You know it because tonight you hate sin. You know Jesus Christ is alive from the dead and you've abandoned to Him everything you are and have and can be. And you've embraced Him as the Prince and Savior the Fathers made Him to be.

You know it because you realize you haven't the strength but He has. But through faith you avail yourself of His strength moment by moment in your need. You know it because He's put into your heart to walk in obedience and in love to Him.

You're grateful for the experiences of the past but your assurance comes from the intention and the purpose of the present. Is that true? Perhaps I'm speaking to someone tonight who says, well, I wish it were true. But it really isn't.

I've been trusting in my church membership. I've been trusting in my baptism. I've been trusting in my decision.

But, oh, I need Jesus Christ in my heart. I'm not sure I've been born again. I invite you to stay.

In fact, I'd invite you even now before we pray, just get up where you are, slip quietly into the little room to my right, and go to prayer immediately. Others will join you and I'll come and talk with you later if you need me. Don't let anything get in the way of this.

This is the most important matter you'll ever consider. If you have your own eternal interest at heart, you ought to do that if there's a need for it. We're going to stand in just a moment.

But as we stand and as we wait, ask yourself if that of which the Apostle speaks is true in you, and if it isn't, don't let anything stand in the way of your making absolutely certain that it is true. Shall we stand together? We're so grateful, our Heavenly Father, that we have Thy Word. As our missionary friends leave for their fields and further training, they can go knowing that they're kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed.

We can't, but you can. As these, Thy dear children, go back to their homes, some to rooms of loneliness, some to tasks, great weariness, some, Lord, to discouragement, O God of grace, be Thou there with each of us wherever our homes and places of bode may be, and grant that we may realize that Thou art in this with us, and we can be kept by Thy power through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Show us that Thou art in this with us, that there's nothing that Thou dost allow to come into our lives, but what Thou art sufficient for it.

And grant that there may come into the heart of every one present a great passionate desire to persevere in the things of Christ, to walk on and on in the Word, studying and meditating upon it, in prayer, worshipping Thee, and in witness-sharing with others, and in our lives, walking obediently to the truth as Thou hast taught us. And grant, Father, that it may be evident to our hearts, step by step, that we're Thine because we're being kept by Thy power through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Seal now Thy Word to our hearts.

Let those who have need to stay, stay, knowing Thou wilt be here with them to meet them. Go with others to their homes. Bless, we ask Thee, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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