

“Mercy: From the Heart of God”

1 Peter 1: 3 – 9

In verse three, the key word is mercy. The new birth, salvation, comes only to us because of the mercy of God. Without God and his mercy, there would be no hope for eternity with him. The most obvious benefit of the new birth is eternal life, but we here find Peter sharing some profitable and enjoyable fringe benefits.

1. A living hope – (verse 3). “Living” denotes that which is dynamic, vital and alive. Such hope comes only from God himself. “Hope” is a uniquely Christian word which makes no sense without the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our faith and hope is in God alone.
2. A heavenly inheritance – (verse 4). This inheritance comes through the new birth and there are several outstanding characteristics with it. (1). Incorruptible – it will never perish since it is based on God’s promises. (2). undefiled – It will always be fresh and untarnished and will never spoil or decay. (3). Unfading – It will remain bright and clear forever. (4). Reserved – This inheritance is kept and guarded for us based on the promise of our Lord.
3. A powerful shield – (verse 5). Through faith we will be shielded by God’s power as we live day by day, we know we will be kept through life.

From words of affirmation and encouragement Peter moves on to offer loving counsel for those who are facing trials and suffering. He gives three specific results of the trials which God has allowed to come into our lives.

1. The grief of trials. – (verse 6). Grieving is a normal human emotion and it is alright to grieve. A period of grieving is a time for healing of the inner being. To deny the grief brought on by the often undeserved, unexplained trials which come upon us is only to exaggerate the pain of the trials.
2. The purpose of trials – (verse 7). In the midst of grief, God is assuring us there is a positive purpose in our suffering. God is not the cause of suffering and pain, but he does not allow it to be wasted. He uses every trial for our good if we commit ourselves to him and the words of Romans 8:28 verify this; “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” There are two specific benefits we can experience from every trial if we are walking in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (1). Trials may come our way so that our faith may be proven genuine. (2). Trials may help us prove worthy to offer praise, honor and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. Trials are only temporary, an inconvenience for the present. God in his mercy and grace uses them for our eternal good.
3. The joy of trials – (verse 8). The joy of the Lord does not come from the externals of life. The possession of joy is always dependant on being fully alive in our relationship with Jesus Christ. To have joy through trials defies explanation. However, the joy of the Lord can shine through the tears of our lives. Joy does not come from the abundance of things we possess but rather joy comes from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives. So according to (verse 9), the goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls and eternity in heaven with God made possible by the deep mercy of the Eternal God.

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