

Our Safe Inheritance
June 12, 2005

How many keys do you carry? I carry eleven. I also have a few more for both church and home that I don't carry. Some people carry a ton of keys. I was at the Odenton Post Office one day and they had a display of things that had been left by people visiting the Post Office. There were several key rings. One must have had twenty five keys on it. I thought to myself, "That person must be desperate to find those keys."

I need keys to get in my house, in my car, in the church, in my study. I use them everyday. We carry keys because we lock doors. We lock doors to protect people and possessions. We use locks to keep our family secure, our home secure, our vehicles secure, and our possessions secure. We don't want anything we have to be stolen.

In addition to physical possessions, Christians have spiritual possessions. They are a great encouragement to us. And we want them to be safe too. Specifically, we want to know that our salvation is safe, that nothing can happen to our salvation.

God wants me to calm any fears you may have that something might happen to your salvation. You may fear either that something could harm your salvation or that YOU could do something to lose your salvation. I lived through a time of such worry about my salvation until God pointed out some key truths to me. I want to share those with you today in order to calm any fears you may have about losing your salvation.

I start by reminding you that: **Our salvation comes in three portions.**

The first portion we have already received.

The second portion we are receiving now.

The third portion we will receive in the future.

We can see hints of all three portions in our key passage this morning. Look with me at 1 Peter.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -- kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is read to be revealed in the last time.

This passage points to all 3 portions of our salvation possessions.

> Verse three of this passage speaks of the first portion of our salvation.

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV) In his great mercy he has given us new birth...

That new birth occurred when you first received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. God did several things when you entrusted your life to Jesus. You were justified, that means you were declared by God to have a right relationship to Him. You were born again. You

were given a new heart. You were adopted by God. The Holy Spirit took up residence in you. And you were forgiven of all of your sins.

All of these you received in the past. All of these spiritual possessions you received in the moment that you prayed to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. All of these spiritual blessings you received when you became a Christian.

Can you lose these possessions? Not at all. Think about this. All of these are permanent changes. All of these are unchangeable events. Adoption is forever. A new heart is forever. You can't go back somehow to having again your old heart. You can't become un-adopted. These are permanent changes. They cannot un-happen. Paul the missionary to Christians in the city of Corinth writes of this.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

In Jesus, you are a new creation. You are something that did not exist before you put your faith in Jesus. You may not feel different or look different, but you ARE different. God did something to you that cannot be reversed.

This is a plastic cup. We cannot make it back into what it was before. We can burn it, bury it, rip it apart. But we can't change it back into the petroleum and other substances that it was before it became a plastic cup.

If you are a Christian, portion one of your salvation consists of things that are irreversible. A permanent change in YOU has occurred. And a permanent change in your relationship to God has occurred. Be encouraged by these truths this morning.

> Verse three also speaks of the second portion of our salvation.

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV) In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope...

What are we hoping for? Our hope is for the completion of our salvation package. Our salvation comes in three portions. We have only received the first portion. The third portion is yet to come to us. We have not yet experienced the third portion. And we want to. We are looking forward to it. We are hoping that it WILL take place.

The second portion of our salvation, we are experiencing now. The first portion included several different things that all happened at the same moment. The third portion will include several different things that will occur at about the same moment. But the second portion the one we are experiencing now is a process. It is something that is taking place and will continue to take place until our hope is realized. That is, the second portion will continue until the third portion comes to us.

So what is this second portion of our salvation that we are receiving now? It is the transformation of us into the character of Jesus. We are becoming holy, pure, godly people, devoted to living out the will of God.

Now you might be saying to yourself, "I don't see that in verse 3." Let me tell you what is happening right now in every Christian in this room. The Holy Spirit, who joined with you at your conversion, is working all the time to change you on the inside. The Holy Spirit is

revealing the meaning of spiritual truth as you read the Bible. The Holy Spirit is convicting you of sin that you need to admit and repent of. The Holy Spirit is guiding you in the living out of God's will.

As you or others see evidence of this work of the Holy Spirit in you, this is confirmation of your salvation.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV) Having believed, you were marked in him (Christ) with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...

The presence of the Holy Spirit working in you is evidence of your salvation. And when you experience this, you know you are saved, your hope for the completion of that salvation will increase and grow. Your hope is a living thing within your heart. And that IS spoken of in 1 Peter 1:3.

You are looking forward to the coming of Jesus when your salvation will be completed. It will be then that what you are hoping for will no longer be a hope. It will be realized, fulfilled, completed. It will be time to celebrate. Be encouraged now as your hope grows in the experience of the Holy Spirit in you.

As sure as you are that Jesus was raised from the dead, you can be just as sure that you will be raised from the dead. His resurrection proves that there IS a resurrection. He is the first of all to be resurrected from the dead. And there is more to come after death.

> Our 1 Peter passage also speaks of part three of our salvation.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NIV) In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -- kept in heaven for you...

He writes of the third part of our salvation as an inheritance. Paul the missionary, in his letter to the Christians at Rome, writes that we are co-heirs with Christ Jesus.

That means that Jesus is going to inherit something. And when He does, we will inherit the same something with Him. What is this thing that Jesus will inherit in the future?

Well right now, most people on earth are either ignorant of Jesus or think he was just a moral teacher in earth's past history. They either never heard of Jesus or heard of him but do not believe he is God. So Jesus is receiving no importance from them. Jesus is receiving no consideration of His teaching from them. Jesus is receiving no glory from them.

But when Jesus returns to earth from heaven, everyone on the planet will see Jesus and know that he is Lord of all the earth. Everyone will suddenly realize just how important a person Jesus is. Everyone will bow before the authority of Jesus. He will receive the glory that is due Him as Lord of all the earth.

And we will be recognized as His true followers. We will receive glory with Him.

In addition, when Jesus returns, we will be transformed into our resurrection bodies, bodies that will not age or weaken as these earthly bodies do. What's more, we will be free from the presence of sin, free from pain and grief, and we will remain united to Jesus for eternity in the presence of God. We will have eternal life.

This last portion of our salvation is future. We are still living in hope of its coming. But there is no need to worry about its safety.

Your inheritance cannot deteriorate.

Note that it can never perish, spoil, or fade. Clothing wears out. The sun fades the colors. Washing fades the colors. Washing and wearing deteriorates the fabric a little at a time, causing it to wear thin. And then clothing tears.

We buy fruits, vegetables, milk, bread, meat. All of these, even if put in the fridge, will eventually spoil.

Plastic chairs left outside will fade, and turn brittle. Eventually they crack and break.

Everything possession on wears out. Books fade and the pages turn yellow and eventually the pages tear and crumble. You can buy ebooks. But the memory of a flash drive or device will deteriorate and fail over time. Everything on earth perishes, spoils, or fades.

Metal loses its paint and rusts. Cars and trucks are all temporary possessions.

There is nothing permanent on earth. Everything rots, corrodes, or weakens.

But our salvation is not like anything on earth. Our salvation is safer than if it were in Fort Knox. It is safety guarded by God. He can keep it secure until you receive it and keep it fresh as new for all eternity.

Your inheritance can never perish like water evaporating in the sun. It can't spoil like rotting fruit. It can't fade like curtains hanging in a sunny window. It can't be stolen or shrink in any way. It is protected and preserved by God.

But there is another fear you may have concerning your salvation.

You may worry that you could do something, or not do something, that would cause you to lose your salvation.

I struggled with this at one time. I worried that my sin, my ongoing sin, was cause for God to take away my salvation.

But let me calm any fear of this that you may have. When Jesus chose to die for us, He knew we would not be perfectly obedient. He knew we would continue to struggle against temptation and sin. He knew our love for Him might grow cold. He knew that some life circumstance might quench our Christian zeal. He knew we would remain sinners even as we try to obey. And He chose to die for us anyway.

Your salvation did not begin after you started working to repent of sin. It began the moment you prayed to receive Jesus. That is because your salvation does not rest on

what you did. Your salvation rests on what Jesus did. Your salvation rests on the death of Jesus.

You cannot lose your salvation.

Once you belong to Jesus, He isn't going to let you go.

Your salvation is not just in the future. You have already received part of it. You are living it now. These cannot be undone. Be encouraged in your secure salvation. Praise and thank God for it.

You cannot lose your salvation. Erase any doubts concerning your security in Jesus. Once you are saved, you will remain saved.

Invitation

What we have reviewed this morning may sound attractive to you. Let me assure you that if you are not yet a Christian, you can leave here today changed forever. You too can be saved and receive this great salvation in Jesus.

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Prayer: Lord, help me to believe more fully in your salvation. Erase my doubts and worries about my security in You.