

The Gift of Easter Sunday: An Imperishable Inheritance

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[0 : 00] Simon Peter answered Jesus, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you indeed that in the Bible, in Jesus' words, we have the words of life. And so we pray today as we hold out these words that we will be those who come to believe that you are the Holy One of God.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Turn with me now, if you can, if you have your Bibles with you, to 1 Peter as we consider this passage here, the first chapter of Peter's letter.

For those who do not know me, as Benjamin said, my name is Alfred. And as he said, if you think that I bear a passing resemblance, a look and manner to your pastor, and notice that I share a certain surname, well, that is no coincidence, I am his brother.

And we bring greetings to you from London. And one of the great joys of being a Christian is that we have brothers and sisters and family everywhere throughout the world.

[1 : 13] And it's amazing, isn't it? And I feel great privilege to be able to stand before you today and share in the celebration of Easter with family, with church family.

And it's a real privilege for me to be able to proclaim God's word to you this morning, and this being Easter Sunday, doubly so, as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I cannot tell you what an honour it is to be able to share in that celebration as we consider what the word of God has to say to us today. Let me begin, though, by asking you a question.

Who are you? Who are you? Now, that's perhaps a strange question to ask, but I wonder whether you ever stop to think about this.

Who are you really? What is your core identity? What defines you? Because that often drives how we behave, isn't it? What we think are our priorities in life, what we aim for in this life.

[2 : 18] Maybe you defined it by what you do. Doctor, lawyer, teacher, banker, YouTuber. Maybe you define it by your relationships.

Are you a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, an aunt, a grandparent, a brother, a husband or wife?

Or perhaps your ethnicity. Are you Chinese? Iban? Bidayu? Kayan? Or our nationality? Malaysian? Singaporean?

Sarawakian? And of course, we are a combination of all these things. But deep down, who are you really? Who am I? And of those of us who are Christians or who call ourselves Christians today, of course, that itself forms the very core part of our identity.

We are followers of Christ, we say. Indeed, we are Christians first and foremost. But what does it mean to be Christian in this world? Who are you when you say you are a Christian?

[3 : 28] Now, as we look at this passage from the first chapter of 1 Peter this Easter Sunday, I would suggest that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead has secured for us a completely new identity.

And if we call ourselves Christians today, Peter tells us that we need to remember who we are in Christ to be able to keep going in the Christian life.

Notice with me then, as we start and look at this first few verses of 1 Peter, how the Apostle Peter addresses the Christians that he writes to. They are a scattered bunch, a ragtag bunch, across Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, which is a whole swath of land across what is now modern-day Turkey.

Notice how he starts the letter, verse 1. To gods elect exiles scattered throughout the provinces. Two words, two words.

Elect exiles. That's how Peter describes them. Gods elect exiles in this world. Let's begin with that word, exiles.

[4 : 43] That does not sound like much fun, does it? We'll set the scene here quickly. The Apostle Peter is writing to Christians in the Roman Empire in the first century AD, the early church, Christians who are starting to feel the heat as they insist on worshipping the one true God.

They are viewed as atheists by their Roman neighbours for not worshipping the emperor, not worshipping the Roman gods. They are scorned as weak, a bit suspect for not following the social standards of the day, and living a moral life in accordance with Christ's teaching.

And while at this stage anyway, persecution is not state-sanctioned, so at this stage in the church's history, there's no kind of overt persecution yet that will come later.

So they're not being arrested yet or not being executed for their faith yet. Yet being a Christian, even at this stage, is hard. It's starting to cost.

They face social ostracisation. Perhaps something that some of us may be familiar with even now. And indeed, that may be our very experience today.

[5 : 59] Not too different from what we may encounter as we seek to live for Christ publicly in this country, or in the schools, in our workplaces. Being a Christian means that others may make our life just that little bit more difficult for them, for us.

Perhaps a bit of gossip against you because you're a Christian. A bit of slander against you for not following the ways of the world. Perhaps some of you may face people not wanting to do business with you because you have honesty and integrity as Christians and are not willing to play the game.

Perhaps you are being excluded socially. And that is the same situation that Peter's readers are facing. And indeed, it is a repeated theme throughout this letter. If you have your Bibles with you, you can turn with me to chapter 4, verse 12.

This is what Peter says. Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you're suffering as though something strange were happening to you.

It's no surprise that they're suffering trials. Or indeed, chapter 5, verse 9, Peter again continues, you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.

[7 : 14] Christians throughout the known world were facing the same sort of trials. Now, Peter's not quite talking about the suffering that's common to all people here as we live in a broken world, but the specific suffering that comes from being a Christian.

As we said, not quite jail yet, not quite torture or execution, but the mocking, the ridicule, the snide remark that they don't truly belong, they're not part of the Roman Empire in quite the same way.

It's not surprising then that Peter calls them exiles, isn't it? It's a language that's meant to be evocative, something that Israel in the Old Testament, God's people, are all too aware of as it brings back images of Israel's exile in the Old Testament, when because of their disobedience, they were taken from the Promised Land by their enemies to live in foreign lands, longing for home.

While the Christians here are not exiles because of their disobedience, but nonetheless, they are acutely aware that the world they live in is not their home. And sadly, today in a war-torn world with displaced people all too common throughout the world as we read the news headlines, we're all too familiar, aren't we, with that concept of exiles.

You might be aware that with the onset of the Russian-Ukrainian war, many Ukrainians have been forced to flee in the U.K., the government has initiated, for example, a scheme to try to house them as many flee to U.K.

[8 : 45] and to other parts of Europe to flee the war. Many, including Christians, have been generous and kind in opening their homes to welcome them given their difficult circumstances.

But these people, even as they arrive in the U.K., even as they find refuge there, they feel like strangers in a foreign land. Same way, we know that this world is not ultimately our home.

We find ourselves in a place that we do not ultimately call home. Refugees, aliens in this world. Against this backdrop in this context, and it's no wonder that Peter's writing to encourage them, isn't it, to stand fast, to hold firm to the faith.

5 verse 12 is helpful because it tells us what Peter, when he writes this letter, wants to do. So here it is in writing. Peter says this, I have written to you briefly, dear Christians, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God.

Stand fast in it. What is this true grace of God that Peter seeks to remind them of? Well, it's this, who are they? Not just exiles, but that second word, elect exiles.

[10 : 00] Elect. In other words, chosen by God. This is what Peter wants them to remember. This is who you are as a Christian.

This is what being a Christian means. Stand fast in it. Not just exiles, but elect exiles. Chosen by God.

And chosen by God to be part of God's family. As verse 3 puts it, given new birth by God. So this Easter Sunday, remember this, Peter says, because of the resurrection of Christ, because Jesus has risen and is alive today and forevermore, God has given us a few things.

Number one, he's given us a reborn identity into a living hope. a completely new identity. As strange as it may sound, a reborn identity.

Let me read verse 3 to 5 again. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

[11 : 24] This inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

You see, what we celebrate today, Jesus' resurrection changes everything. It changes us. On Good Friday, we remember his atoning, sacrificial death.

his payment for the price of our sin. He's taking on God's curse and punishment that we so richly deserve. But if he stayed dead, how can we be sure that his work on the cross is effective?

How can we be sure that it is enough? That it is sufficient? How can we be sure that he has really secured for us the forgiveness of our sins?

that we've been completely cleansed and made new? How can we be sure? Well, we can be sure because of Easter Sunday. On Easter, we know the tomb is empty.

[12 : 31] The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed. It means that he has been vindicated by God. It's proof that his death on the cross had more than paid a price for our sins if we put our trust in him.

It means that he has conquered death. It means that Christians are no longer under the curse of sin. Nor are we slaves to sin. We have a living hope, a completely new creation.

Reborn, as it were. Now, don't get this wrong. This is, of course, not the Buddhist or Hindu idea of reincarnation, which, of course, is tied to the idea of karma, being born in the next life and the next life and the next life.

Live a good life and you may perhaps be born into a better life next time. Live a bad life, you may very well fall down the pecking order and be born as something else down there.

No, rather the Bible talks of us being reborn because God in his great mercy has given us a new heart, made us a completely new person, remade us into what he always meant us to be, the full image of God restored, based not on how we perform, based not on how good we are in a past life, but simply because we are dependent on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 58] Now, if you're here today and you won't call yourself a Christian, we say that this is the linchpin of the Christian faith. If Jesus is not risen, then we have no living hope. But if Jesus is risen, we have everything.

And if you want to know a bit more about that and want to know why it is that Christians really do believe in the historical truth of the risen Christ, of Jesus being raised from the dead, then perhaps you can speak to me or to Pastor Brian or to any of your Christian friends around because there is compelling evidence and it is a historical fact that Jesus indeed did rise from the dead.

And with his resurrection, with this new rebirth, we do not just assume any old identity because we know and because we've become part of Christ's body, because we know God the Son, God too knows us as his sons and daughters, as family.

We are reborn to become part of God's family. I'm sure all of us are familiar with the idea of inheritance, aren't we? Here's the thing. The one thing we know about how inheritance works is that you need to be part of the family to inherit it.

It's children who inherit. It's Prince William who will be heir to the throne because he's part of that family. He's the son of King Charles. Only those of us who are related can become heirs.

[15 : 31] And that's the picture being drawn here. We become part of God's family in this new rebirth and that entitles you to inheritance. If you are a child of God, then you stand to inherit.

And see, this is not just any old inheritance, but verse 4, this is an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. I love the way another translation that the ESV puts it.

It's an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading. Imperishable, undefiled, unfading.

Now, as Ben mentioned, as Benjamin mentioned, one of the privileges I have in London is to be involved in workplace ministry among workers in the city. In London, the city means the central financial district.

And through that, I have the opportunity to study the Bible with a group of men every Thursday morning. They are people who are often wildly successful in the world's eyes.

[16 : 34] Partners in law firms, senior investment bankers, fund managers, CEOs. Some come from very wealthy families who will stand to inherit the family wealth. Others have become wealthy through their work in the city and are trying to put in place, as you can imagine, inheritance plans for their own children.

But over time, many of them have come to realise that really nothing lasts. Nothing lasts. Many work in the financial sector and experience has told them that it can all go just like that.

The inheritance they sought so much to give to their children will not last. Perhaps they will earn enough, and indeed many of them do, to give something really substantial to their children.

Perhaps we ourselves are those who are privileged enough to be entitled to a big inheritance. nothing wrong with that in itself. And for a time, perhaps, you and I will get a sense of security to be able to get on something or to be able to pass on something.

It feels like it will last. But the truth is, it only takes a little something for everything to go. Many of the guys I've worked with in the city have worked there long enough to go through the great financial crisis in 2008, when almost every big bank in the UK came near collapse and required the government to bail it out.

[17 : 58] And 10 years later, 12 years later, just when people thought everything was safe, you may have heard in news a few weeks ago when the Silicon Valley Bank in the US collapsed suddenly when they experienced a bank run.

A 40-year-old bank with \$200 billion in assets, and yet within six hours, gone. just like that. If you had any money in the bank as a depositor, if the government had not come in, if the US government had not gone in to guarantee those deposits, it would be gone just like that.

Matter of six hours. But consider this inheritance we have in Christ, the inheritance of eternal life. Life in a new creation.

Life in a perfect relationship with God, our Creator, and with each other, when we will see God face to face in all His glory, when we ourselves will be clothed in glory.

A permanent, everlasting inheritance. Verse 4 again, an inheritance that does not perish, spoil, or fade.

[19 : 10] Now it seems to me that there are two ways you can lose your inheritance. Two ways. And you can imagine as a Christian, you may think, well, there's a long time in this world, from our perspective anyway, before we either pass on or before Christ comes back again.

What will happen? Two things may happen. One, the inheritance itself may disappear. Imagine, if you will, that you left the family home, your family home to your children as their inheritance.

But one day, there is a flesh flood. We've noticed that recently in Cushing that it kind of rains really badly and flesh floods occur quite quickly. Or perhaps, a fire.

And that family home is destroyed just like that. That is the end of the inheritance. Nothing you can do about that. But not here, not here.

Verse 4b, this inheritance is kept in heaven by who? By God Himself. stored somewhere completely safe, stored in heaven itself where no thief can enter, where no moth can destroy.

[20 : 18] Kept guard by God Himself. Or think about the second way that you may lose your inheritance. Not so much that the inheritance itself is destroyed, but what if you, what if you as the beneficiary become disqualified?

What if you are cut off from your will? Perhaps, imagine the situation where a person, a child, manages to displease his or her parents so much that they cut him or her off from the will.

Or imagine, tragically, that the beneficiary is struck down by illness and dies before coming into that inheritance. Well, they stand to inherit nothing then.

What then? But notice with me what verse 5 says here. Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Notice, who is being shielded by God's power here? Now, when I first read those verses 4 and 5, I always thought that since the inheritance was kept, that was what was being shielded by God's power.

[21 : 29] But if you read verses 4 and 5 carefully, this inheritance is kept for you who through faith are shielded by God's power. In other words, verse 5 is not talking about God shielding the inheritance, although that is indeed the case that the inheritance is kept in heaven by God for you.

It's talking about God shielding the person who stands to inherit. You, Christian, there's no doubt that you will inherit because God is shielding you.

There's a double protection here. The inheritance is kept for us, yes, God will keep it safe in heaven. But you, you, or me, or anyone else who has trusted in Christ, they themselves are shielded through faith, through our continual dependence, our clinging on to Jesus as our Lord and Savior, shielded by God's power itself.

God himself guarantees that we will not be cut off from his promise until we see the inheritance in full, when the fullness of our salvation is revealed when Jesus comes again in the last time.

That very same power that raised Christ from the dead on Easter Sunday, that very same power is the same power that gives us new birth, and it is the same power that will shield us until we see and taste that inheritance for ourselves.

[22 : 58] If Jesus is truly risen, then our inheritance is secure. Let's think of those words again, imperishable, unfading, undefiled.

And of course, if that is the case, then indeed, we can greatly rejoice, even though the present Christian experience may be difficult. So secondly, second point, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has given us not just a living hope, by an inexpressible joy, despite trials.

Let me read verses 6 to 9 again. In all this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

[24 : 10] Now as I read that, I wonder whether you noticed the constant refrain, the constant repetition of though, even though, although. Though now for a little while you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials, though you are tested by fire, though you have not seen him, first though, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Now the joy that God gives through the resurrection of Christ, it's not all about fake smiles and pretending that everything is alright, even when it's not.

It's not that sort of joy. Rather, it's a deep joy that comes from a sure and living hope. In what lies in store for us. That there's to say, I cannot understand what is happening now, but I know that God is good, and I can rest content in him.

That says that I don't feel like it, I feel terrible, I feel despair, but I have all I need in Christ, and therefore I can rejoice. Though now, even if, life can be or is difficult now.

Now the apostle Peter is nothing if not realistic about the life, about our life here and now as Christians. After all, remember, we are exiles, journeying through a world that is ultimately not ours to call home.

[25 : 33] If you're here today again and you do not call yourself a Christian, perhaps you've been invited to church by a Christian friend to come and find out why we celebrate Easter. Perhaps you're just a curious visitor, wanting to investigate Christianity for yourself.

Well, let me not give you the wrong impression. Yes, believing, worshipping, following Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is the only way to life, to true and abundant life.

But Christianity, Jesus himself never promises and does not promise you an easy, trouble-free life now. There's no promise of health, wealth and prosperity right now.

Sadly, there are some so-called Christian churches who will try to sell you that. Be a Christian and your business will be successful. Your bank balance will grow. Your children will be amazing. You will never be troubled by sickness.

Now, yes, God can and does grant us many blessings in this life, but what do you say to the Christian who's being persecuted? What do you say to the Christian in North Korea, in Afghanistan?

[26 : 35] What do you say to your Christian brother or sister who's being ridiculed at work for being Christian? What do you say to your Christian neighbor who's been shunned by his family members?

for not bowing down to their family gods? No, the truth is, the moment you become a Christian, you're saying that I'm no longer a citizen of this world and that will invite trouble.

A friend of mine about ten years ago, he came to trust in Christ and he was a bit perplexed because he said to me, you know what, it seems as if since I became a Christian, life has become harder for me.

Is that right? Am I doing something wrong? No, he's not. As he becomes more aware of his sin, as he tries to live as a Christian publicly, life can and indeed often will become more difficult for him, for us.

Peter himself knows this very well. Most historians and writers of the age record that Peter himself was later arrested by the Roman Emperor Nero and executed around AD 64, tradition holding that he too was crucified like our Lord.

[27 : 50] He knows this. Do not be surprised, brothers, when you face fiery trials. So Peter is entirely realistic about what we live, how we live as Christian in this world now.

Though you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. Just speaking from our experience in the UK today, UK is hardly a Christian country.

Perhaps it never was. It often is seen to have a Christian culture but it's very clear that it's very much a post-Christian culture where secularism and atheistic thought is very much dominant.

And Christianity is either met with indifference nowadays or perhaps even downright hostility. not just that Christianity even to the point where Christianity is not just tolerated but seen as morally bad.

As the kind of secular culture as UK celebrates, a culture where the self is God, where we ourselves determine what is right and wrong. A Christian faith that teaches that Jesus is God and that his word makes demands of our lives is very much seen as fundamentalist, bigoted, morally bad.

[29 : 14] The latest UK census is clear that for the first time in this history, the majority of the English would not call themselves Christian. In fact, this is in stark contrast perhaps to Sarawak where I saw that official statistics at least a couple of years ago would demonstrate that more than 50% of Sarawakians call themselves Christian.

So UK, in that kind of secular culture that's UK now, I have seen that sort of downright hostility to Christians. Among the Christian workers that I come across, again there's nothing overt yet, but you can see that slowly the tide is turning against them.

A guy I know, a lawyer in a law firm, is not allowed to publicly organise even just informal prayer meetings, meeting with his Christian colleagues to pray. even though the firm says that they will provide a prayer room for Muslims to pray.

Although, even now, even now as we face trials of this kind, and yet Peter says, we can still rejoice.

Really? Why? Because these trials are only for a little while. Skejab ajab. Compare that with a certain and sure living hope we have, completely secure even right now.

[30 : 37] Compare that with the inheritance we have as sons and daughters of God. Though, we face trials now. Second though, though refined by fire, our faith may prove genuine in the last days.

Indeed, Peter goes on to say that not just that we face trials as Christians and that we can still rejoice in that, but in fact, these trials are there for a purpose, to prove the genuineness of our faith.

Look at verse 7. In other words, though we may not fully understand God's purpose as we go through particular suffering or persecution, nor can we pinpoint accurately or precisely whether or how a particular situation is God's refining purpose for us.

We can indeed say in a very general sense that God does allow us to go through trials so that our faith may be proved genuine. It's that picture, isn't it, of a refining fire.

A couple days ago, my family went to Kempermai and although we didn't see it in action, there was a blacksmith's forge there. How does fire work? How does fire work to refine us?

[31 : 49] Well, in the same way that it works to purify metal. You melt the metal to high temperature and as it melts, the dross, the impurities come up and you skim that off so that what ends up in the end is pure and perfect.

That's the picture here, that we are being refined by trials like a refiner's fire. Even more precious than gold, it says, because gold, even though it's refined, will perish.

Now, if that worries us, that worries us, and we say, what if trials come my way and I fail the test? Well, that is to forget that this is not a test to show how resilient we are by ourselves.

But remember what Peter has said before that, that as Christians who face those trials, we are those who are being shielded by God's power. It is a refining process, yes, it can be painful, yes, but it leads God's work in us.

One commentator puts it this way. The teaching of scripture is clear. God sometimes increases the temperature of life in order to bring to the surface sins that are hidden in our hearts, so that we may repent of them and be made more Christ-like.

[33 : 11] Second, though, though refined by fire, our faith may prove genuine. And the third, oh, though, third, though, though you have not seen him, you believe and love him.

We sometimes think, don't we, that perhaps even more so on a day like this, on Easter, as we celebrate Jesus raised from the dead, that if we were there in the first century AD, if we were there along with Jesus and we have seen him in the flesh, of course we will believe, of course our faith will be strong.

Of course we'll never have our faith shaken. And sometimes we think that the first century Christians had it good because they saw Jesus for themselves, they saw Jesus in the flesh. But we forget that actually by the time of the early church, in fact by the time that Peter writes, most of the Christians have not seen Jesus in the flesh.

Certainly when Peter wrote this letter, apart from the apostles and apart from some perhaps of the very early Christians who have seen Jesus himself rise from the dead and ascended to heaven, many, if not most, would not have seen Jesus.

Instead they've heard through Peter, through other apostles, through the apostolic testimony, and by the work of the Spirit, as they heard the words of the gospel, of the good news of Jesus, they have come to believe and to love Jesus.

[34 : 35] We also, aren't we, are the same. We may have more in common with this first century Christians than we think. We are also those who did not see Jesus for ourselves when he walked this earth 2,000 years ago.

We are also those who did not see his physical resurrection and his ascension. And yet we've come to believe in him as we have the same apostolic testimony recorded for us in the Bible, in this book, the very words of life itself.

In God's mercy he has preserved for us, made it accessible to us through the Bible. And as we believe in him and in his word, as we grasp the certainty of the hope we have, the complete assurance that our inheritance in heaven is secure, then we are verse 8, filled with this inexpressible and glorious joy.

Now sometimes children know this best. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of this inexpressible joy through them. You know how it is as parents, as you play with your toddler, that you kind of toss them up in the air and they laugh and you catch them again.

And that kind of sheer exuberance, the experience as they laugh, as they giggle, completely secure and confident that you will catch them. And they go again, again, toss me again daddy, toss me again mommy.

[35 : 58] That sheer joy and pleasure that they experience. That inexpressible joy as they bask in your love. over the weekend, as I said, we had a chance to go to Burmai for a family break and our children got to play in the sea and the squeals of laughter, of sheer joy as they jump over the waves, delighting in God's good creation.

That glimpse of inexpressible joy, or that joy is ours because of the resurrection of Jesus. The proof that his suffering is not in vain, that God has accepted the full and final payment for our sin, that we will see him face to face, and we will see the full and final outcome of our salvation when we can bask in God's great love for us.

As we see and sit before him on the throne room of heaven and bathe in his mercy and love for us. And Peter can say that although we wait for the fullness of that, the consummation of that in the last day, that this is a present reality for you, look with me at verse 9 as we end.

Not that you will receive the end result of your faith, but present tense, you are receiving the end result of your faith. Right now, at this very moment, if you trust in the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, you are safe, past tense, you are being safe, present tense, and you will be safe.

You will see that glory. Even though life as a Christian can be difficult now. Even though the refining process can be painful. Even though we do not see him now.

[37 : 49] Let me go back to that question again that I started. Who are you? Who are you really? Now, your experience now may make you very aware that you are an exile.

This world is not your home. This world can bring troubles. This world can be hard if you are a Christian. This world is full of fiery trials as you seek to live a good life, a life pleasing to God.

God. But know this. Know this. Through the resurrection of Christ, you have been given new birth.

You have a new identity. Your IC card has changed. You are elect. You are a child of God. You have an imperishable inheritance.

And as we close, that really is the application for us today. As we look at this passage, you will notice that there are very few imperatives. There are very few commandments. But what does Peter want for his readers?

[38 : 59] Not so much to do anything, but simply to know who they are. To stand fast and secure in their identity. Because that's what will keep them going in the hard times.

When their faith brings with it hardships in this life. When others throw a snide remark at you for being a Christian. When even their family, your family, may think of them as being a bit too religious for their liking.

For being so serious about following Jesus. When you fail to get promotion as a Christian because you don't want to play the same office politics as your colleagues. See what Peter says.

We can praise God. We can rejoice. We can praise God for his great mercy. Because he's given us so much, so much more. And that's where he goes to in verse 3.

And that's where we too will go as we end and close with a prayer using those words in verse 3. Let's close in prayer.

[40 : 03] Our heavenly Father, praise be to you. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in your great mercy you have 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.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen and amen.