

# Membership Has Its Privileges

## **I Peter 1:3-5**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **All Stand and Read Scripture**

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

#### **Prayer**

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

As I was preparing this message, the slogan "Membership Has Its Privileges!" came to mind. "**Membership has its privileges**" is an advertising slogan made famous by **American Express**.

June and I carry a couple of cards in our wallets that give us certain privileges not available to the "general public." First is our "Sam's Club" cards. They identify us as members of the warehouse superstore and enables us to purchase things for the church or at home for less than what we would generally have to pay elsewhere.

Second is our Staples Rewards card which really saves us money! June was able to purchase a \$269 computer monitor that was on sale for \$179.99. She had accumulated enough Staples Rewards money, ink recycling credit, and bonus coupons to purchase it for \$2.38.

Granted anyone could choose to become a member at Sam's Club or a Staples Rewards member and get the same privileges, but not everyone does.

It is important to note that Peter was writing to Christians (God's chosen people) in various cities throughout what is now mostly modern day Turkey. Sometimes we put too much emphasis on becoming a member of the local church instead of emphasizing that we are actually members of Christ's church. We are members of the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup> For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> But now there are many members, but one body.

God has given each of us specific talents that can be used for him. When we accepted Christ and became a member of His church, we started a new relationship with God. We turned away from our worldly ways and started living a life based upon how the scriptures teach us to live. We start a relationship with God, trying to be like Christ's based upon His example for us as He walked this earth. We cannot think that I have accepted Christ, therefore I am saved and I can continue to live life however I want.

### ILLUSTRATION:

To live that way would be much like a man who was about to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary. He asked his best friend, "My 50th wedding is coming up and I am trying to decide what to get her."

His friend asked, "What did you get her for your 25th wedding anniversary?"

The man said, "I took her to Hawaii. **(Pause)** Maybe I should go back and get her!"

Our relationship with God must be continuous. We have turned away from worldly things and now have no desire to live that worldly life of sin. We must have a true relationship with God by praying to Him, keeping our minds on Him continuously, and sharing our faith with others. We will still sin! We live in a sinful world, but we no longer desire to do sinful things. We want to be like Christ in our life.

As we saw in verse 2 last week, we must allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify us or make us Holy.

As members of Christ's church, we truly have prerogatives or blessings that are given to us as a free gift from God.

### BODY:

#### I. Our Hope.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again **to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Jesus went to the cross and died for our sins...but we know that He rose again. Peter declares that because God raised Jesus from the dead, we (the Christian) can live with Hope. The word "hope" here is not wishful thinking such as we have when we buy tickets for the lottery. Hope in the bible speaks of a confident expectation of things to come. Our

hope is in a bodily resurrection of our own. Our hope is in Christ. It comes from the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Since He was raised from the dead, we have the assurance that we also will raise again to an eternal life with God in Heaven. Our hope is eternal life. And this blessed living hope was supplied by the Father... Notice again verse 3.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope

Apart from Christ we are pitiful, desperate, wretched sinners who lived with NO HOPE!! But God In His "great mercy" provided a way of salvation for mankind. One of the benefits of this salvation is this "living hope" that Peter speaks of. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead we live with the hope of a literal, bodily resurrection. This hope of a resurrection is promised to us in the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB)

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

That is not wishful thinking! It is the confident expectation that we possess as believers! And that is something we can get excited about! Not only can we get excited about the hope of a resurrection, we can get excited about what comes after the resurrection! In verse 4 we see that:

## **II. Our Promised Inheritance.**

We Can Get Excited About Our Inheritance

1 Peter 1:4 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup> to **obtain an inheritance** *which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

Peter says that there is a priceless inheritance that is reserved in Heaven for those who are saved! An inheritance is something that is received as a result of a personal relationship. You would not leave your estate to someone that you do not know. The inheritance that is waiting in Heaven is only available to those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Let's consider a couple of things about this inheritance.

### **A. The Attributes Of Our Inheritance .**

*"an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled"*

Our Inheritance Is "**Imperishable**". The people that Peter was writing this letter to had watched as the Romans had destroyed their cities. He wanted them to understand that they possessed an inheritance that could not be taken away. It was a valuable! In fact a priceless inheritance! Our inheritance is in a place that cannot be invaded by the enemy. The Greek word for "imperishable" literally means something that is not ravaged by an invading army

Not only is our inheritance imperishable...

Our inheritance is "**Undefined**"! Undefined speaks of something that cannot be "soiled or stained". Our inheritance is and will remain unpolluted and unstained by evil. Heaven will not and cannot be touched by the things that defile this world.

Revelation 21:27 (NASB)

<sup>27</sup> and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This shows us the importance of heeding the words of Jesus.

Matthew 6:19 (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Don't waste your time storing up earthly treasures. They will all pass away. Why not focus on laying up those eternal treasures that will last throughout eternity?

We not only see the **attributes** of our inheritance, we also see:

## **B. The Assurance Of Our Inheritance.**

"an inheritance *which...is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, **reserved in heaven for you,**"

This is really exciting!!! This inheritance is "**reserved in Heaven for you**"!

### ILLUSTRATION:

In New Testament times, many people grew olive trees. It took 23 years for a tree to mature to fruit-bearing age. These trees were often left as an inheritance, because the olives could bring large sums of money. However, the olive trees were always destroyed by invading armies, thus taking away the next generation's inheritance and ability to provide for itself.

Our inheritance is "**reserved**" for us. This word literally means that it is "guarded". Peter is saying that our inheritance is as secure as if we had already passed through the gates of pearl, inside those walls of Jasper, on the golden street and standing before our blessed Savior in our glorified body.

Keep in mind, the people Peter was writing to were suffering persecution. This is expounded in the following verses of this chapter. His goal was to point them to the eternal hope that they possessed in the midst of their current circumstances. You may be facing great difficulty in this life. Can I encourage you to press on! Keep fighting! Remember what is waiting when this life is over. Heaven is not a myth or a fairytale. You have an inheritance! It will not fade away and It cannot be taken from you. It is reserved, kept, guarded, and just as much yours as if you were already there! I don't know about you but that is something I can get excited about!

As we continue there is one more exciting fact that I would like to consider. In verse 5 we see that we can be confident about our security and assurance!

### **III. Our Security and Assurance.**

1 Peter 1:5 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter not only revealed that their inheritance was reserved, he also proclaims that they themselves were "**protected by the power of God**". If you are truly saved you are secure! There are many who do not know that they are secure, BUT THEY ARE!

Jesus put it this way:

John 10:28-29 (NASB)

<sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

We are not saved because of what we do! We are saved because of what Jesus did!! We are not secure because of what we do. We are secure because of Who Jesus is! Simply put, you did not work to earn your salvation and you cannot work to keep your salvation! You couldn't if you tried! Peter says that we are "**protected by the power of God**". We are told that when God begins something HE FINISHES IT!

Philippians 1:6 (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

If Satan or man had the power strip you of your salvation against our will, that does not say much for the power of God! We can be secure in the fact that God saved us! And God **WILL KEEP US!**

I don't know about you, but I know me! I know that if it were up to me to "keep myself saved". I would lose my salvation before I left the church building this morning. But I also know the promise that I am "**PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF God**"!..And that is something for us to get excited about!

### **CONCLUSION:**

Notice the progression in this text. Peter tells us that, as Christians, we have been GIVEN many blessings from God:

- We can rejoice because we are chosen by God!.
- We have an assured hope that we will be resurrected like Christ!.
- We are promised an eternal inheritance in presence of God!
- We have security and assurance that nothing can snatch our salvation from us!

## **Yes, membership does have its privileges!**

We who are saved have many reasons to rejoice.

In this world there is no shortage of troubles. And these troubles will often discourage us.

There are many sufferings in the Christian life...but they are temporary! And as we will see in the next sermon from this chapter, they are beneficial as well.

But we must focus on who we are, as well as, who we serve.

And we must remember the promises that have been given to us.

Maybe you have been focused on your troubles, trials and those heavy burdens. Why don't you take the opportunity to bring them before the Lord today.

Do as Peter says:

**1 Peter 5:7 (NASB)**

**7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**

**Membership** in the Kingdom of God **certainly has its privileges!**

God loves **YOU!**

Do you have:

- the hope of eternal life with God
- the inheritance of the Kingdom of God
- and the security of God in your life?

If you **do not** possess these free gifts that we have examined today...**you can!**

As we see in this text, **through His abundant mercy** He has made a way for you! Maybe He is calling you to Him right now. Why don't you come and accept His offer of salvation today? If so then I can assure you, you will inherit God's free gifts! When you become one of God's CHOSEN people, your name will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life and you will be able to stand righteous before Him on Judgment Day!

You cannot offer yourself to the Father as a perfect sinless person, therefore, you accept the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on your behalf." When you do, God washes away your sins with the blood of Jesus Christ.

**God Be with You till We Meet Again**

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,  
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.  
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.