

The Trinity; and Our Hope!

Last week we looked at v2 of 1 Peter 1. I entitled the sermon 'Saved For Obedience to Jesus!' And having examined God's Choosing and his "foreknowledge" the previous week, v2 continues "through the sanctifying work of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling by his blood." Yes, the triune God working in perfect harmony for the choosing, the setting apart and the cleansing of His People! That word "sanctifying", the setting apart and purifying of believers. That process through which God is chiselling away at the old person with its old nature and ways of sin. Yes saved once and for all by God's grace through Jesus, but "sanctified" throughout the whole of our lives, until Jesus takes us home!

From Matthew 5:8 I explained that Jesus said "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"; that those who "are pure in heart", who obey Jesus 100% of the time, these people in their own power do not exist! The Lord was talking about the purity of intention. That righteous desire within our hearts (which He has placed within us), to obey Jesus, though we fail miserably! Romans 7 Paul said "the things I want to do I do not do. No the evil I hate, this is what I do" Just like Peter, when he denied Jesus, his intent no doubt was to do that which was pleasing to God, to stand firm. And yet when the crunch came, like everyone else, he ran!

Yes our "sanctifying" leads to our purpose of being saved. "Obedience" to Jesus! So if we want to know what God's Will is for us 100% of the time, there it is. Obey everything which Jesus taught and commanded. Matthew 28:20.

And finally, "the sprinkling of his blood": How from Exodus 24 when God commanded Moses to "sprinkle half of the blood of those sacrifices upon the altar, and half on the people." Upon the altar to symbolise payment for sin by Jesus on the cross, and on the people, to bind them to obedience to that covenant. That's what Jesus does. Upon the cross He pays for our sin, and then he pours the Holy Spirit into our lives, cleansing and washing us clean with the sprinkling of His Own Blood!

And that's where we pick up the text this morning. 1 Peter 1:3-4 'The Trinity: And Our Hope!' Beloved, in these two verses we have one of the most amazing statements of blessing and assurance throughout the whole of the Bible. Verse 3 alone, if you had no other text of scripture from the whole of the Bible, verse 3 could carry you all the days of your life, and you would carry it with you into glory!

So Peter begins in v3 "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now friends, though it may not be Peter's intention here, may I suggest that in effect, hidden within this verse, we have a second occurrence of the doctrine of the Trinity. In v2 we have Father, Spirit and Son. And then in v3, we actually have the same thing. Let me explain. To state the obvious, Peter has just declared that God is Jesus' Father. So we have the Father and the Son. But you see, at the incarnation of God the Son becoming man from Luke's gospel, when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and revealed to her what was going to take place, we read: Luke 1:34 "How will this be? Mary asked". 34 "The Angel answered "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one born to you will be called the Son of God." So then, who was present at Jesus' conception? Father Son and Holy Spirit. So every time we read of Jesus as being God's Son we are in effect seeing the doctrine of The Trinity!

Why am I making this point even though it may not be Peter's intention? Well, it's because sound doctrine is the solid foundation upon everything that we place our Hope in. And there are those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, for whatever reasons. Now brethren, you may disagree with me here and that's fine. But if we deny any of the Godhead, (remember 3 persons in one God), yes if we

deny any part of the Godhead, then we deny the whole. And if we do that, we cannot be saved! There are things which are not Salvation issues, but the Trinity is not one of them. The Jews claim Yahweh (one of God's Names in the Old Testament), but not Jesus, His Son. Jesus Himself said, "no one comes to the father except by me." So if they don't come through Him, they cannot be saved!

The so-called Jehovah's Witnesses, (and I say so-called because they are not in any way the witnesses of Jehovah of the Bible), deny the person of the Holy Spirit, and also as some other heretics, they say that Jesus was a Son of God, not *the* Son of God. As though we can all be who Jesus was! Now in regard to the Holy Spirit, when we think about it, since it is the Holy Spirit who is poured into our hearts making our bodies and souls God's Temple as the Scriptures tell us, (even sprinkling and cleansing us I explained last time), yes if we deny the person and work of the Holy Spirit, how can we then be saved? No Beloved, the Trinity is not optional for the believer.

I also explained last time how in each of the 1st 2 verses it was important for Peter to make it clear that it is indeed only God Himself who chooses His people. In both verses he speaks of God's choosing. V1 "To God's elect", v2 "chosen with the foreknowledge of God." He does this to exclude the idea that we could merit our Salvation in any way! Equally important, may I suggest, is that we all know and understand, that The Father the Son and the Holy Spirit are One! One before the universe began. One at Creation. One at the conception of God becoming man. And One at Jesus' Baptism. They are eternally one! INDIVISIBLE, one of the ancient Creeds tells us.

We pray to God through Jesus. Job 16:19-21 "Even now my witness is in heaven, my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend. As my eyes pour out tears to God, on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend." And Romans 8:26-27 "in the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with moans and groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Yes "God knows the mind of the Spirit"!

And of His relationship to God Jesus said "I and the Father are one." All working as one in harmony and unity and yet different in regard to their roles! Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created". John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word", was Jesus. Genesis 1:2 "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." Genesis 1-3 "And God said "Let there be light." At Jesus' Baptism, Matthew 3:16-17 "as soon as Jesus was baptised he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Beloved Son, with him I am well pleased."

Friends, why are my labouring this point this morning? Well again, the doctrine of the Trinity is not optional. Exodus 3:14 "I AM WHO I AM". I am God and there is no other. I am in need of no one and no thing. I am self-sufficient and self-sustaining. I had no beginning and will have no end. Yes I AM GOD!

In John 8:58 Jesus takes these same attributes upon Himself. John 8:58 "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was I AM". Father, Son and Holy Spirit working together as one! INDIVISIBLE. One God, for the choosing, the separating, the purifying and cleansing of His People! Praise God! Yes, "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Yes, "in his great mercy" Listen to how the word "mercy" is defined. 'Clemency. Leniency to one who is guilty of a crime. Compassion.' Listen to how God describes Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6 "And he passed in front of Moses proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God. Slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness." Yes our God shows "compassion" and clemency. He is ready to forgive when we come to Him in repentance. He is lenient to those who are guilty of the crime of sin. Treating us, not as our sins deserve! "In his great mercy."

Brothers and sisters, God is infinitely merciful toward His People. He bears with our shortcomings. Yes He is ever ready to forgive our sin when we come to him in repentance. He is lenient toward us for our crimes of sin and rebellion against Him; so much so that He gave His only Son that we might live. Hallelujah Saviour! “In his great mercy has given us new birth.”

Brethren, such is the vast breadth and depth of God's mercifully forgiving all that his past, that when His mercy does come upon us through Jesus' Blood, that we are considered by God to be as new creations. New people. There is the real sense to which the moment that Jesus' Blood is applied to our lives and the Holy Spirit is poured into our souls, at that very moment, the first day of our lives for eternity begins! Jesus said in John 3 “I tell you the truth, unless you be born again you will not see the Kingdom of heaven.” Yes in the sight of God, because of Jesus, we are as newborn children. But for one crucial difference. We carry not the weight, nor the consequences of Adam's Sin! 8:36 Jesus said and if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed.” So we have “new birth.” Our lives have begun again. Our past is not only forgiven, it is wiped away. In effect forgotten by God. Yes New birth!

And notice what he says next. “He has given us new birth into a living hope.” You know if there is one thing that in many ways so describes this age in which we live, then surely it is at its core: false hope, or indeed hopelessness! Modern society, through science and technology, makes promises which it cannot keep! If you work hard, do the right thing, abide by the laws of the land, things will go well. You'll have enough money in your bank account and your superannuation, and then you can retire and live out your Golden years. Well that's what we are all made to believe. But it's all a mirage. Those things don't exist for most people. And even if they did, we don't own them, because the future is not in our hands. Yes those things are a house of straw which is slowly but surely pulled apart piece by piece! A global pandemic sent by God comes, and your solid secure job no longer exists. A national financial crisis arises through whatever means and your super which you have placed your trust and hope in, is no longer so super! And even if the bank balance is full and healthy when retirement comes, you may well find out that you or your spouse has cancer, and there is nothing that the doctors can do.

Yes friends, where do all our firm dreams and plans end up then? Like the man Jesus speaks of in the parable who built his bigger barns (having torn down the smaller ones), to store up all his great wealth, I will sit back and live off my labours. I will eat drink and be merry. But then God comes to him and says, “You fool, this very night your life will be demanded from you.” Beloved when God demands our life from us, it is not a request as though we can refuse. The scriptures say that “Man is but a mist that appears and is gone.” Yes we appear for a brief time, and soon even those who remember us are gone! The oldest man in the Bible, Methuselah, lived until he was 969 years old. But do you know what was said of him after such a great age? Well the same thing that will be said of you and I. “And then he died.”

Dear friends, trying to cling to this life and hold on to it is like trying to catch straw in the wind. You might catch one or two, or even 100, but you will miss thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands. And your efforts will add up to nothing. Because those things that you have put your trust and hopes in, will soon be gone. Even life itself! Beloved, all of our strivings and plans ultimately add up to reality. And that reality is the grave! All that world and this age promises, is in reality, just a house of straw that will soon blow away!

But for the Christian, it is not so. Because our “hope” is not in the things of this world, and this life. There is another Kingdom and there is another country and another King, to which we belong. No our hope for the future is not in the here and now. Jesus said John 14:1-3 “Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father's house and many rooms, if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” If the life of the

Christian is anything, it is a life of "hope." And our "hope" is not dead, it is "living." Our "hope" is alive, because Jesus lives! Yes He is risen! "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 resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

So what is Peter saying? It is that our "hope," not only for this life, but also for the next is so certain and so secure, that it has been inscribed in God's Own Eternity. Yes friends, "the hope" that the believer clings to for this life and the next is founded upon one Eternal Truth. That not only did Jesus die for His People, but that the grave could not hold the Lord of all glory because Jesus lives! No death could not hold the Son of God. "Through whom all things were made." He burst forth from the grave, and He lives again forever. Yes Jesus lives! Yes our "hope is living" and not dead because Jesus lives! That wonderful hymn that we sing: 'And then one day, I'll cross the river, and fight life's final war with pain. And then as death gives way to victory, I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives. Because He lives I can face tomorrow. Because He lives all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives. And life is worth the living just because He lives!'

Yes Beloved, we have a "living hope" because Jesus is living. We don't worship dead stones and statues. Our God is living. And so too we have a "living hope." "The stone was rolled away." "The strips of linen were lying there." "The grave clothes of Jesus' head were folded." And "the tomb was empty." O praise God, we serve a risen Saviour. Because if Jesus were still in that tomb, then so too would our hopes for a future glory with Him and a resurrection be. But they do not. Because Jesus lives! "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Hallelujah. What a Saviour!

And Peter continues in v4 "and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you." You know brethren, perhaps one of the ugliest things which exists today (and most likely has always existed I guess), is when someone dies, and the recipients of the inheritance gather together like vultures around the carcass of a dead animal. It really is ugly. People eyeing off what they want and perhaps, what they believe they've earned or deserve. While the body is even still warm. Well so it seems! Everyone wanting to grab and carry off everything and anything they can. It is ugly. When such things occur, we really can see the ugliness of fallen man. There is no thought of an afterlife. No thought of God. There seems to be no consideration or honouring of the person who has died. There are only thoughts of what I can get for myself here and now!

Well Jesus said, Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." Yes, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Friends, our hope is living because Jesus is living, and "our inheritance can never perish, spoil or fade" Because "it is kept by him" by Jesus. It is eternally kept by Jesus for us. Those rooms "have been prepared by Him." Your room, my room. They can't be taken away from us. John 10:27-30 "My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish no one can snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and the father are one."

Beloved, just as surely as we cannot be snatched out of the hands of the Son or the Father, not only is our Salvation assured, but so too is our inheritance Eternally assured. Because it is "kept", guarded (another translation says), in heaven for us by Christ. Having been bought and paid for by very own blood of Jesus himself.

Amen.