

1 Peter 1:3-5

End Times: The Believer's Hope

November 23 & 24, 2014

³ 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, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, ⁵ 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.

The very first car that I owned was a 1973 Pontiac Catalina. It was a boat. It had a V8, 350 horsepower engine. It had more leg room than some couches today. However, it only got about 8-10 mpg. But at that time, it didn't matter much because it was my FIRST car. I took care of that car. The rust didn't matter. Even when I replaced the door with a different color door, which I tried to repaint, it was still MY car. But eventually the day came when I sold it. It had served its purpose. I would imagine by now that car is long gone.

Think of how many things in our lives are like that car. Our garages and basements are full of all kinds of things that once were new and brought some kind of pleasure to our lives. But now they really just need to be thrown out because they may not be good for much anymore. That is the way it is with things that we own. They age, they wear out, they break down, they rust and they are thrown away.

The same is true for our bodies. As we get older, things new to be repaired. They need new joints. They need more attention from doctors, surgeons and chiropractors. We may begin to forget more and more things in our lives. We can't see as well as we once did. Eventually, we will all return back to dust.

There isn't anything in this world that will continue to last forever, except what the Apostle Peter speaks about in our text this morning. In a world that is full of things that perish, spoil and fade, the HOPE that we have in Jesus will continue to live forever. It is that HOPE that gives us the strength in this world to face everything that may happen to us. It is not the expectation that something may or may not happen, like 60 degrees temperatures this week. The Christian's HOPE is solid and sure. Therefore, as we both finish another Church Year this week and our series on The End Times, let us take a look at the Christian's Hope by looking at the words of our text.

I want you to pretend for a moment that you are in the end zone in Lambeau Field. The stadium is full of cheering fans. You are there because you have been given the chance to win ten million dollars if you can throw a football to the other side of the field, a 100 yards away, into the top of a container that is a foot in diameter. You hope you can make it. But is that even a realistic hope. But it still is hope. So, you wind up with all your strength, and you throw the ball. You can't believe how long your throw is. It gets closer and closer to the target on the other side. Everyone in the bleachers are holding their breath. Is it going to happen? It looks too good to be true. It hits the top of the container, and it bounces on to the field below. Oh, so close. It doesn't matter, all hope now quickly fades away.

The hope of this world will often disappoint. The hope that the Apostle Peter speaks today will not disappoint. It is **"living hope ... that can never perish, spoil or fade."** It is going to be there. There is not even a question about it. It is a HOPE that is backed up by the promises of the Almighty God. This HOPE is not just a dream or a little flicker of light at the end of the tunnel. It is a huge bright light at the end of the tunnel that will NEVER go out.

We have **"an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."** The funny things about inheritances in this world is that they can change. You don't get the benefit of it until a death happens. But before that death happens, there are all kinds of different things in this world that can cause that inheritance to fade. It might be sickness. It might mean nursing care. It might just mean the long life that we were living. There is a fading nature to inheritances in this world.

Peter says that the inheritance that we have in Christ is different. It is alive. It can't be touched by unseen circumstances. It can't be corrupted. It can't even be touched by death. Even evil cannot hurt it or take it away. Not even the devil can, even though he may try. The devil can rant and rave like a criminal that is locked in the back seat of a police car. He can kick and scream all he wants, but he isn't getting out. The officers in that vehicle are protected. They are safe, and we

are safe as well. This inheritance is **kept in heaven for you**. Not only is that inheritance kept for you, it is protected and **“shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”** Now that is some kind of guarantee!

In your bulletin, there are a list of people from our congregation who are experiencing that inheritance that was kept in heaven for then and shielded by God's power. This weekend, we once again close another Church Year. Next week, we once again begin with the season of Advent. I don't know what the year ahead holds for you or for me. Perhaps, before the next year is over, some of us will be enjoying that inheritance that has been kept in heaven and shielded by God's power. Regardless of what lies ahead, we know that we have a HOPE that will never perish, spoil or fade.

It is that HOPE that shows in our lives. Let's go back once again to Lambeau Field and your 100 yard throw. Let's say you hit the opening of the container perfect. You make the shot that you had very little hope in making. The stands go crazy. You become the next viral TV clip all over the internet and TV. Would your life change? I think it would. I think it would have to change. Whether it would change to good or bad would be up to you for the most part.

Christ has given us a treasure much greater than 10 million dollars. He given us an inheritance that will **“never, perish, spoil or fade.”** Let that inheritance shine through in your life in EVERYTHING you say, do or think. Don't let Satan take that away from you. Don't throw it away as we might haul off an old car or throw away junk from our basement or garage. As we close another church year and finish our series on End Times, let us give thanks for the **“living hope”** that we have in Christ and the **“inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you.”** Amen.