

Pastor Grady Covin
The Mission
September 30, 2026

1 Peter 1:1-9

**1 Peter 1:1, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia,
Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the
foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit,
for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:**

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a
living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that
does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept
by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be
revealed in the last time.**

**6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if
need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the
genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold
that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise,
honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom
having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet**

**believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.**

Now, last week we talked in great depth about the doctrine of election and how that we as followers of Christ were chosen before the foundation of the world. And how, though God knew ahead of time, who would receive and or reject the free gift of salvation, His choice was not based solely on that foreknowledge.

If God's choice had been based on that foreknowledge alone, then that would not be a decision based on **God's** sovereignty, but rather on **man's** sovereignty.

But remember what Jesus told His disciples?

He told them in

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Secondly, if God **doesn't** sovereignly choose those who will be saved, and that responsibility does lie with man, then man shares in the credit for his own salvation. But if that's true then what do we do with

Ephesians 2:8-9, 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

It's very plain from this scripture that man has no part whatsoever in the choice to be saved. It says plainly, "not of yourselves" and also "not of works"!

And then thirdly, if man does the choosing, then we have to assume that man even has the ability to choose God, and to choose God's plan of salvation.

But scripture again plainly teaches that that's not the case.

Romans 3:11 says, There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

The Bible teaches here and in many places elsewhere that men cannot and will not seek after God, much less seek to be saved; at least not in their own power.

Now, somebody mentioned this last week after the service something I hadn't mentioned earlier in my teaching, and they talked about how the Bible also teaches that we are literally dead men, with respect to our spirits. Our spirits are totally dead until God chooses to make them alive.

And that's Ephesians 2:1-5, 1 And you He made alive, who were (what?) dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (that's Satan) the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

1 John 4:10 is another one, **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (Which means Jesus died in our place).**

Now, there's obviously a lot more we could say about this, but hopefully you can see that it's all God's doing when it comes to our salvation.

Now, that ought to cause you to fall down on your knees and give God thanks. That ought to be a very humbling thought to know that God, who knows you better than anyone else knows you, who knows all your thoughts, and all the evil deeds you've committed in the dark and in secret; and yet He still loves you, and loved you enough to give His life to pay for your sins! And not only for the sins you've committed in the past, but for every sin you'll ever commit in the future as well.

That's a very humbling thought, at least it is for me.

But now, that's just the first step of an even more amazing plan that God has for our lives. God didn't stop with just loving us more than we could ever imagine and choosing us to be saved. He has also made a plan to use us for His glory.

You see whether you realize it or not, you and I have been strategically placed here on this earth for a very special purpose.

Now, previously we talked about how these believers to whom Peter was writing had been scattered about to all these different cities.

He wrote in **verse 1, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.**

And so they had been scattered like seed to all these different cities. And God was going to use that scattering of His seed to bring glory to Himself by further spreading the good news of Jesus Christ!

It was no accident that this persecution had come upon these particular Christians to cause them to move from place to place. No, this was all part of God's plan to spread the Gospel.

Now, let me ask you a question. Did God cause certain people to persecute other people or did He just allow it?

Well, that's an age old question that we ask every time a tornado or hurricane or car accident or whatever occurs.

But again, if we believe that God is sovereign over all things, and that all things are within His control, then we have to accept that God is in control of the good things as well as the bad. And regardless of what we believe about that, the Bible clearly teaches that in the end, all men and women will be held accountable for their actions.

Now, I'm not going to stand up here tonight and tell you I understand **how** all this works together, but I know and I believe what God's word says.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

All things! The things that God cause to happen and the things that God allows to happen! The good things and the bad things and everything in between. God knows about them all, He's in control of them all, and they're all somehow part of His perfect Master plan! And in the end, they all work together to bring about God's perfect plan for those who love Him.

And so God used this scattering of these Christians to spread the gospel to other people and to grow the church.

And friend, you and I have been chosen and saved and gifted and placed strategically in this local church to do the same thing these first Christians did. God knew the gifts that would be needed here at The

Mission to accomplish His purpose, and He has placed those certain people here with those gifts; and He has equipped us each to serve Him; and to serve each other; and together to serve those in our community and even abroad.

And so these early Christians were scattered as strangers. They were scattered as seed, and they were scattered as saints.

And then according to verse two, they were also sanctified. That word sanctified means to be set apart. And so they were set apart for the work of the Lord. And that applies to all Christians.

Even though we were physically born into the world, we're not to be a part of it any longer. We're to live as foreigners would live in a land that's not their native land. And though we have to be among those in the world, we're not to march to the same drum beat. We're to march to the beat of a different Drummer with a capital "D".

Listen, we're not citizens of this earth trying to get to heaven! We're citizens of heaven living temporarily here on this earth. And, you'll always be frustrated, if you're a Christian and you try to make this your home.

Let me show you something. Turn over to First Peter Chapter two and verse eleven.

Peter says, **"11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which (what?) war against the soul,**

In First Peter chapter one, he calls them "pilgrims." In 1 Peter chapter two and verse eleven, he calls them "sojourners or strangers, and pilgrims." And then he calls them to, **"... abstain from fleshly lusts that war against your soul!**

Listen as Christians, we're born twice. We're born first in the flesh, and then we're born again by the Spirit. And if we revert back and try and live in

the flesh, we're going to be frustrated. That's why the word says, "**abstain from or (stay away) from the fleshly lusts that war against the soul**".

The Greek word for our English word soul is "psyche", it's talking about a war in your soul, which is your mind, body and Spirit. It's a war within you. It's yourself warring with yourself. It's your old nature against your new nature. That's why the Bible says that a double minded man is unstable in all of his ways.

That's why so many people in our society are sick mentally. Every time you turn on the television they have another pill to deal with a person's anxiety or depression. And it's not just people in the world that suffer with mental issues, many in the church do as well.

And listen, I'm not saying there aren't times when there are physical factors involved that cause a person to need this medicine or that, but many times these mental problems stem from spiritual problems. Many times they come about because people are trying to deal with their problems in a worldly manner and not a spiritual manner. They're looking to some man or to some pill to remedy their anxiety or depression rather than to God.

And so so they become psychologically sick from all the battles that are going on inside their mind, between their flesh and their Spirit. And again that's why the Bible says that a double minded man is unstable in all of his ways.

That's **James 1:8** by the way.

And so as Christians we have been chosen by God; we have been and still are especially loved by God; we have been set apart by God, and we have been strategically located to carry out God's perfect plan in our life.

God has put us here on this earth as strangers and pilgrims, to be scattered like seed, to a lost and dying world, so that we can be a witness to others and tell others about Jesus.

So question is; are you being a witness to the world, or are you frustrated because you're trying to fit in and live like the rest of the world?

Well, there's another truth we see here. We're not only strategically located, we're also eternally secure. Even though we're strangers here on earth and even though we live in a very hostile world, we have a promise from God that we are eternally secure.

Look at verse three, **“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

Now, how do we get eternal security out of this verse?

Well, because our eternal security is based on the nature of our salvation. And here we see that our salvation is according to, or rooted in, the abundant mercy of God.

Do you know why you were saved?

Because of God's mercy, because of God's **abundant** mercy.

We weren't saved because we deserved to be saved. None of us deserved to be saved. No, we are saved by God's abundant mercy.

And this mercy is a gift!

And more importantly, it's a gift that can never be withdrawn! In other words, there's nothing you did to earn it or deserve it, and there's nothing you have to do to keep it, and there's nothing you could ever do to lose it.

God's mercy is a gift that can never be withdrawn from the lack of merit.

So how do you keep your salvation?

You keep your salvation exactly the same way you got it.

And how did you get it?

By the mercy of God!

And how do you keep it?

Look again in verse three: **“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again”**

Now, what does it mean to be begotten again?

Well, that’s just another way of saying you were born-again. You were born-again once and for all! That Greek word “to be begotten or to be born again” is in the aorist tense, which just means that it happened once, to never again be repeated.

And just like we can only be born once physically; we can only be born once spiritually. Nowhere in the Bible was anyone ever saved twice. If you can find a place where that happened, then show it to Johnny after the service and he’ll give you ten thousand dollars.

When we get saved, it’s a once and for all experience.

Now, does that mean we can sin all we want and still go to heaven?

Well, if we were of that mind, we could, but we’re no longer of that mind. We have a new mind, and more importantly we have a new heart, where old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new!

In other words, when we’re born again, we receive a new nature, and our new nature no longer has a desire to sin. Our new nature comes with new desires that are given to us supernaturally through the Holy Spirit. The Bible calls it the fruit of the Spirit.

That's **Galatians 5:22, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.**

This fruit is contrary to our old nature or to the works of the flesh.

Now, does that mean that our old nature goes away completely?

No!

I wish it did, but it doesn't. It's still alive as long as we're alive, but it has no power over us. The only power our old nature has over us is what we choose to give it. And that's why it's so important to maintain our fellowship with God, and with other believers, and to study and to meditate on the scriptures on a regular basis. Because whichever nature we feed the most, well, that's the one which will be in control of our lives.

And again, that's why it is so important for you to be involved in as many regular Bible studies as you possibly can. There's only one thing that feeds your new nature, and that's the word of God. Nothing else will feed it.

Not you're good intentions, not serving, not singing, not isolation, not anything, but the Word of God.

And so our salvation is secure, because it is rooted in the mercy of God. And because I have been born again I have received a new nature, and all of that is sealed. And it's guaranteed, it's been made a living hope by the resurrection of Christ.

I have all of this, because Jesus was raised from the dead!

You say, but I thought we were saved because Jesus died on the cross? Well, you can't have a resurrection from the dead if no-one dies right?

And so it goes without saying that that was part of it, but if Jesus had not been raised from the dead and defeated death; and if Jesus was still in the grave, then our salvation wouldn't be worth two cents.

But Jesus was raised, and so we do have the hope of eternal life in heaven, and that hope of heaven, just like our salvation is secure. Amen!

Leo Etteman wrote these words: He said, “What a wonderful salvation. You cannot beg, buy, borrow or steal it. You cannot earn it. You can’t learn it. You can’t merit it, and you can’t inherit it. It is internal, external, and eternal. By the work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection, it was completed, and can never be depleted nor repeated.”

What a wonderful promise the security of our salvation!

So we’ve been chosen by God, we’re especially loved, we’ve been strategically placed and we’re eternally secure.

Well, there’s another thing Peter tells us here. He reminds us that we’re also incredibly rich!

Did you know that?

You say, well you haven’t seen my bank account!

Well, you haven’t seen your bank account either!

Look in verse four. The Bible says He’s done all of this in order that we might have

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Now, what does this mean?

Well, it means that we are heirs with God, and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. You and I have an inheritance which is “reserved in heaven”.

Now, it doesn’t say, our inheritance is heaven. No, it says our inheritance is being reserved in heaven!

Now, does that mean that somewhere in heaven is a bank with a vault and safety deposit box with my name on it? And when I get to heaven and walk through the Pearly gates, Saint Peter’s going to hand me a key and

direct me to the First National Bank of Heaven where my safety deposit box is located, and I'm going to go there and retrieve whatever it is I've earned?

No, it's not that kind of an inheritance. It's something even better.

What is it?

Well, it's not an it. It's a who! It's Jesus!

Jesus Christ is our inheritance. And there's not a better inheritance because He owns everything. He created everything!

If you'll remember in the Old Testament, the Levites who were the tribe where all the priests came from, they were not given any land as a possession. And in

Ezekiel 44:28 “It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, that I am their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I am their possession.

The truth is, if we have Jesus we have everything we need and we don't need anything else! If we have Jesus we have it all!

And also if we have Jesus we have an inheritance that can never be lost.

Look at verse four again, it says, **“To an inheritance incorruptible”**

That means that it's faultless. That means that not time, and or decay can take it away. And, then, not only is it faultless, but it's also flawless.

It's undefiled? That means that it's not tainted. That means that you can see your title clearly. It means that Jesus paid it all, and He paid in full, and there's no behind the scenes legal loop hole that can take it away from you.

It is faultless; it is flawless. And, it's also fadeless.

The Bible says that **“it does not fade away.”**

That means that your lawyer fees or legal fees or court costs or taxes or inflation or the stock market going down, none of that can cause your inheritance to fade away from you or become worth less over time.

Friend, you and I are incredibly rich. And, the Lord Jesus has reserved that inheritance for us. Look again at the last part of verse 4 and verse 5.

reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Our inheritance is reserved for us by the Lord Jesus!

But even better than that, **we're** reserved for our inheritance.

It does you no good if somebody leaves you a fortune in their will if you die before them, or at the same time as them.

And so we too are reserved. We're kept by the power of God!

We're not kept by ourselves or for ourselves. We're kept by the power of God.

Now, this word "kept" here in the Greek is a military word. It's the idea of soldiers who keep a fortress. In other words, God's power is like a garrison of soldiers all around you to protect you while you're here on this earth, in this hostile enemy territory.

Don't so don't ever get the idea that you're somehow keeping yourself saved. You're not. In fact, you can't! Not only that but you wouldn't. The only reason you and I are still saved is because we're being kept by the power of God. And you and I neither one, can't take credit for that.

It's like the father who was taking his little boy across the street in heavy traffic. He told his son, he said, "Come on son. Take my hand and hold on."

Well, when they first started across the street the little boy had his little hand wrapped around one of his daddy's big old fingers. But as they started across the street when the daddy saw all the danger of all the traffic coming, he grabbed his son's wrist with his big old hand and just sort of lifted him off the ground and drug him to then other side.

Well, when they reached the other side, the little boy looked up at his daddy and he said, "I held on daddy just like you told me!"

Well, friend that 's the way we hold on. Not with our hand around God's finger, but God's big old hand around our whole body!

Truth is, if it were left to us to hold on, we'd never make it across the street, much less to heaven. It's only by the mercy and the grace of God as He holds on to us.

So we're saved by the power of God, and we are kept by that same power.

Now, why did Peter tells us all these things?

Well, look at verses 6 & 7.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

He told us all these things to encourage us and to prepare us for what is to come. He knew what was in store for these Christians who had been scattered. Yes God knew they would be used mightily for the purpose of spreading the Gospel to others, but He also knew there would be a price to pay.

And the truth is, when God calls us to be saved, and gifts us to be used, He doesn't promise us a bed roses with no the thorns.

No, my friend, there will be times of trouble, and there will be times of testing; but it's how we respond to those times of testing that is important. And how we respond will be directly proportionate to our maturity in Christ. And our maturity in Christ, will be directly proportionate to the time we have spent in the serious study of God's word.

Again, this world is not our home. We're just passing through. We've got a home laid up somewhere beyond the blue. And, while we're down here on this earth, we're going to have troubles and trials. And really it doesn't matter whether you're saved or not, this world is just naturally full of trouble.

Job 14:1, "Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble.

But, look at what Peter said again in verse 6. here. He says, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Now, what does that mean?

It means that living for Jesus is not all honey and no bees. It means that there's going to be heartaches and pains and tears. But, it also means that though our trials are many and though sometimes they are heavy, they're all under God's control. He says, "But for a while or for a season." They won't last forever.

They're like a goldsmith, who puts his gold in a furnace. He's purifying that gold. And the goldsmith knows his gold is pure when he can see the reflection of his face in it.

And, so if you're going through some heaviness, or some heartache, don't get discouraged. That's just the Lord working on you; for your good and for His glory.

Even Job testified to that in **Job 23:10, But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.**