

## "Praises To Our Merciful God"

1 Peter 1:3-5

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When one of the players on my team struggles with overcoming discouragement, I try to help them use some simple tools to move through that time quickly and maturely. One of the tools I talk to them about is that when they are discouraged/frustrated, they should look to encourage someone else on the team. This helps them stop thinking of their own situation as well as helps to build up the team. Peter was aware of the difficult, depressing, and frustrating situations of these brothers and sisters, and in our passage today, he wanted them to be encouraged by looking at some of the incredible ways God had shown them mercy.

Not only was Peter setting out to teach and remind these “chosen foreigners” that they were indeed the children of God, but he wanted them to rightly understand their new birth into God’s family and some of the incredible truths that were part and parcel of being born again. Then, as they would rightly understand these truths, they would be inspired to praise their merciful God and Father.

### **Worship God for His mercy, and Our New Birth (1:3a)**

He began this section by praising and worshiping God for his great mercy. This served to set the tone for the following verses, and also to remind those persecuted and ostracized believers that regardless of one's circumstances, God is worthy of praise and worship. There are countless reasons to praise and worship God at any point, but Peter directs the believers to think specifically of the great mercy of God toward them. Not just mercy as an abstract component of God’s character, but rather mercy as seen through what God had, was, and was going to do for them. Peter described God’s action as having “caused us to be born again”. We will remember the words of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3:3, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Being “born again” is the mysterious yet precise verb used for those who are within the family of God.

Because of the great mercy of God, all who place their faith in Jesus are “born again” into a new life. Our lives are completely changed and will never be the same. At the point of faith there are a number of incredible things that take place and Peter is going to highlight two of them as we read on. The chosen people of God have been born again into: 1. A living hope 2. An Eternal Inheritance.

### **Born into a living hope (1:3b)**

First, we are born again into a “living hope”. This living hope is only available because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The fact that He lives, allows for our hope to be a living one. This living hope obviously stands in contrast to a dead hope. There are countless things that people place their hope in; financial security, physical appearance, mental acuity, personality, other people etc. But all of these things are dead hopes, because they all can and will pass away. Riches can be stolen, wasted and lost. Mental brilliance can quickly fade into any of a number of mental diseases. These things simply cannot provide true lasting and living hope, for in the end, a person's

death will separate them from all the things they found security in in this life. For a believer, our hope isn't built on any of these worldly passing things. It is set fully on the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in His resurrection. Because he is alive, so is our hope. Our living hope in Jesus Christ is made available to us because of the great mercy of God our loving Father, and so is the promise of an eternal inheritance.

#### **Born into an eternal inheritance (1:4)**

When a child is born into a family, they immediately become an heir of their parents estate, whether great or small. Once a person is born again into God's family, they also immediately become an heir as well. However, earthly inheritance and eternal inheritance have very little else in common. An earthly inheritance typically comprises different forms of wealth. Money, investments, land, real estate etc. These are all things that are frail and temporary in comparison to how Peter describes our eternal inheritance. The inheritance that awaits the chosen people of God is "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading". For these believers, who have been cast out from their home land (including the loss of their earthly inheritances) this description would have been almost too good to be true. It also reminds us of Jesus' timeless words in Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*

#### **Born into God's protection (1:5)**

Not only does the God of Mercy promise an eternal inheritance to His people, but He Himself mercifully guards and protects His people until their full and final salvation. These scattered believers must not take their persecution as a sign that God has abandoned or forgotten them. Quite the contrary, God is the military who guards them and secures their entrance into His kingdom and guarantees their inheritance. The believer is not a passive observer however. Though God is mighty to guard and guarantee, He is not going to override the human choice to trust in Him. The only action we can do to restore the relationship with God is to place our faith in Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

*Grace News and Needs*

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- **Womens Ministry: Annual Tea Party June 15th. Sign up on the patio**
  - **Men's Ministry: Mens Breakfast, June 8th @ 7:30 am. Sign up on the patio**
  - **VOM Needs for May: Medical Tape**

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