

WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED: David R. Clark 10-962EA
 We Preach Security and a Living Hope
 1 Peter 1:3-9 April 4, 2010 Easter

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. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Fellow believers, alive because Jesus is alive!

[A pillow, a dollar bill, and a rock. Ask children which one they like the most.]

Actually each of this is a symbol of things that make people secure.

Are you secure? With what has happened with investments, the value of homes, and jobs? What about what has happened in people's personal lives, with personal safety, with marriage relationships?

No doubt some of these things are more important to us than others. As Christians, as members of this particular Lutheran Christian congregation, we are concerned about security. In the midst of this vulnerable world, when we say we preach Christ crucified and risen, we are talking about security. WE PREACH SECURITY AND A LIVING HOPE.

1

We are concerned about security for our children. My younger sisters had a little car seat which was always placed between my mother and step-father. It was not for the safety of the child; it was for the convenience of the adults. Today we put our children in car seats that look like they would keep an F-16 pilot safe.

But sometimes we can't keep them safe. Did you know that as much as 15% of all children born in the U.S. are considered to have some kind of birth defect? Huge amounts of dollars are donated each year to children's hospitals and various different agencies looking to prevent birth defects.

In fact, there is one particular defect that affects more children than any other. It is passed on by moms and dads to their children 100% of the time. The defect is called original sin. It affects every single one of us and all of our children. There is a cure. Peter says:

(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*

You and I have that by being reborn. It is the same thing Jesus told Nicodemus as he snuck in to see him under cover of darkness. It is the same Nicodemus who came and boldly asked Pontius Pilate for Jesus dead body and helped carry it, along with Joseph of Arimathea, to bury him in the sepulcher.

Jesus' resurrection gives you and me a new birth. His resurrection gives baptism its power so that the power of his resurrection can be applied even to little children. Christ's resurrection gives you and me a way to overcome the fatal birth defect of sin. What could give you more security than this? That is why we preach a living hope of forgiveness for sinners.

2

For many people security means an inheritance. I laugh every time I see that bumper sticker on the freeway that says, “we’re spending our children’s inheritance.” There are some pretty famous people who have done that and more. Mark Twain, the author of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, lost the vast majority of the \$4 million he earned in his life time. Buffalo Bill Cody, who earned \$30 million died so poor there wasn’t even enough money to pay his funeral expenses. There are so many modern athletes who have done the same. Mike Tyson, the former heavyweight champion of the world has lost \$400 million.

As much as we fuss over it, there isn’t much security money, certainly not as much as people would like to think. But there is security for you and me. (4-6) 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.* ⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.*

Christ’s resurrection from the dead does more for you and me than just take away our sin. It gives us wealth – spiritual wealth. Jesus has earned for you and me an inheritance that can never go out of style, never be overspent, never be taken away. That inheritance is in heaven. Because Jesus lives, you and I will live. The voucher that makes it possible for you and me to claim it? It’s called faith. That faith guarantees a salvation of which we can be absolutely certain. That is why we preach the security of an everlasting inheritance.

3

As wonderful as this is, there are bound to be some difficult times between our rebirth and the day we receive our inheritance. Losing loved ones, sometimes well before their time, can make anyone lose their spiritual focus. The health problems that I have seen people endure as they have gone months and years struggling painfully, fighting losing battles is not for the faint of heart. Just look at the way we treat each other and the hatred and bitterness that fills hearts. Is your job safe? Is your home safe? Are all the people you love finding that their lives go smoothly? You see, all of these can make us insecure. They can cause us to doubt each other, doubt ourselves, doubt God. So why do they happen? Erma Bombeck wrote a book with this title: *If life is a bowl of cherries, why am I in the pits?*

St. Peter understood them. (7-9) ⁷ *These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.* ⁸ *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,* ⁹ *for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

In that way, trials are like a refiner’s furnace that burns away the dirt and base metals from gold. Our faith, like gold, is in no way diminished by a refiner’s fire. Rather, the fire of affliction brings our faith to its purest and strongest form. We preach security during cross and trials.

[Pillow makes feel secure like a “security blanket.” Dollar is symbol of security people feel when have enough money to spend. Rock is most important because a symbol of the stone that was rolled away from the empty tomb of Jesus.] Amen.