

Theme: Resurrection Reaction - Peter

Text: 1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

If you witnessed something absolutely incredible—especially if it's something really good—what words would you use to describe your reaction to it? Shock? Disbelief? Awe? Joy?

When we look at the disciples' reactions to Jesus' resurrection don't we see these types of reactions? Think of our Gospel reading for today. When Jesus appeared to His disciples on Easter Sunday evening and showed them His hands and side we're told that **"the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20)**. Think of the gamut of emotions we saw in the reaction of Thomas. There was at first doubt and disbelief when the disciples claimed to have seen Jesus alive again: **"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe" (John 20:25)**. But after seeing the risen Christ with his own eyes Thomas reacts with awe-filled worship: **"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)**.

Today we're going to consider another one of the disciples' **Resurrection Reactions: Peter's**. Think of how Peter must have felt between Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday. Think of what he went through—and what he put himself through! Peter was there to witness the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was in the courtyard of the high priest while Jesus was on trial and while he was there he denied he even knew Jesus—even swearing with an oath that he did not know the man! Now his friend and Savior, the one he believed to be the Messiah, was crucified, and lying dead in a tomb. What words do you think you'd use to describe how Peter felt that weekend? Ashamed, despairing, hopeless?

How about after Jesus' resurrection from the dead? How do you think Peter felt then? Well, let's let him tell us with his own words. Listen again to how Peter, who saw Jesus alive with His own eyes on that resurrection Sunday, joyfully speaks about this in the first verse of our text: **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (v. 3)**. Later on in our text he speaks of rejoicing with a **"joy that is inexpressible" (v. 8)**.

Do you think Peter was happy to see Jesus alive again? Because of Jesus' resurrection Peter was not only hopeful and joyful, he describes it as a **"living hope" (v. 3)** and a **"joy that is inexpressible" (v. 8)**! Is it any wonder that he overflows with praise in our text and "piles on" the descriptions of all the blessings that are ours through the resurrection of our Savior from the dead? The really good news for us is that these blessings are ours as well through Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

The applications for us in our faith life are exactly what Peter wrote about in our text. We have been **"born again"** and given **"a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (v. 3)**. Jesus' resurrection has also given us **"an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled,**

and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (v. 4). We are kept in this **“living hope” “by God's power”** and **“are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (v. 5).**

Even the trials and difficulties of this life, Peter tells us, are reasons to rejoice when looked at in light of Jesus' resurrection. **“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (v. 6-7).**

Peter, of course, was an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection. He got to see the risen Jesus for himself with his very own eyes on that very first Easter Sunday! He got to see Him in all His resurrected glory for 40 days after that! So, you might think, “Of course the joy of knowing that Jesus was alive kept him joyful and persevering through the trials of his life!” But how about me? How about us? We don't have that benefit. We're almost 2000 years removed from this greatest event in the history of the world.

Well, remember the people to whom Peter originally wrote this letter. It was written a little more than 30 years after Jesus had risen and ascended back into heaven. So Peter's original readers hadn't seen Jesus raised from the dead with their own eyes either! And yet, what does Peter say in the last verses of our text? **“Though you have not seen him [Jesus], you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (v. 8-9).**

“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him” (v. 8). That is one of the greatest miracles of Easter! You and I, by God's grace through His Holy and powerful Word love Jesus, even though we have not seen Him! We *believe* in Jesus even though we do not see Him now! On top of that we **“rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory”** because we are **“obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (v. 9).** Think of how many people must have seen Jesus after He rose from the dead. A good number of those people may have even passed by Him and seen Him while He hung there dead on the cross on Good Friday. Think of how many did not believe even though they had seen Jesus alive again!

The faith that you and I have been given—unasked, unforced, unearned—is simply a miracle from God that should make us fall to our knees in thanks and praise **“to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” daily!** For it took a “resurrection” for that to happen inside of us as well. The Bible tells us plainly that by nature, from birth, we are **“dead in our trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:5a).** But God **“made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:5b)!** That sounds like a resurrection to me! And because Jesus rose from the dead we are assured—we are guaranteed—that we too will rise, body and soul, from our graves on the Last Day to **“an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (v. 4).**

What is our reaction to Jesus' resurrection? By God's grace may it be the same as Peter's! Let it be the thought that cheers your hearts and souls even when things seem hopeless. You have a **“living hope”** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ! You have **“an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you!”** Let this thought cheer you as you go through the “fiery trials” of life. Remember also that Peter tells us in our text that God is using them to **“refine”** your faith like gold, to keep it **“genuine”** and strong until the Last Day when it will **“result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 7).** Let that be the thought that gives you comfort as the days go by and you see your own last day approaching. Let that thought be your joy today and always, and you will truly have a **“living hope!”** **“Though you have not seen him [Jesus], you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8-9).** Amen.