

A Powerful Promise That is Protected I Peter 1:5

Last week I began by sharing with you what I consider to be some rather unusual inheritances. There was the Portuguese aristocrat who randomly selected 70 people from the Lisbon phone book.

How about the lady who signed over her multi-billion dollar estate to the Feng shui master for the guarantee of eternal life.

Or the homeless guy in Bolivia who had inherited \$6 million dollars but ran from the police because he thought they were out to arrest him. Instead the inheritance went to his ex-wife.

And then there was the lawyer who gave his inheritance to the woman who gave birth to the most babies in a 10 year period after his death.

I completely passed over telling you about New York hotelier and real estate billionaire Leona Helmsley (called the Queen of Mean) who left \$12m to her pet dog, Trouble. The pampered pooch received the largest inheritance from Helmsley's will while some human family members fared far less, with two of her four grandchildren cut out of the will entirely. The money for Trouble's upkeep was left in the hands of her brother, who inherited \$10m himself.

We learned last week that we have an inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven. This inheritance will never perish, spoil, or fade.

It won't be stolen.

It won't depreciate.

It won't deteriorate.

It won't disappear.

It won't be misplaced, mishandled, or misdirected.

That inheritance has been reserved for you if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

God Himself is overseeing it. Heaven has been described as the most secure place in the universe.

We know where our inheritance is but how do we know we'll get it? Our passage today helps us understand that. Turn to I Peter 1:5.

We have an inheritance protected by God.

We have an inheritance promised by God.

When we consider verses 2-4, we come to the conclusion that we have an inheritance that has been provided for by God. He made it possible

We were elected according to the foreknowledge of God, sanctified through the work of the Holy Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ made possible by the sprinkling of His blood.

Our salvation and our inheritance have been made possible through the Godhead working together to bring it about. As John Phillips writes: "God the Father thought it, God the Son bought it, and God the Spirit wrought it.

When I trusted Christ as my Savior at 8 years old a great work began in me that day at that moment when the Holy Spirit made me a new creation in Christ. God continues to do a work in me according to Philippians 1:6 which reads "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." What He started, He will finish. It will not be left half done.

Described in this passage is a threefold aspect of salvation which is a past action with present results that will be completed in the future. Until we get to heaven we are assured that our inheritance is protected by God because our salvation is secure.

I. AN INHERITANCE PROTECTED BY GOD

First of all let me make it abundantly clear that your inheritance won't get lost or cancelled or changed. Both you and your inheritance are kept by the

power of God. The word “kept” is not the same word in the Greek used in verse 4. It is a military term used to refer to a garrison that protects a city. The same root word is used in Philippians 4:7 of the “peace of God that keeps our heart and mind” from otherwise being anxious or troubled. The word “kept” is also in the present tense meaning that it is a continuous action.

Jude 24-25 “To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

Jude is writing here that God is able to keep you from apostasy and present you as perfect. There is great confidence in the power of God to keep you.

We get an understanding of the military intent of the word in II Corinthians 11:32 where Paul speaks of the time King Aretas wanted to arrest him so he had the city kept or guarded by a garrison of soldiers, but Paul was able to slip away by being lowered in a basket over the city wall. (See also Acts 9:24-25)

I suppose he is the second person in Scripture to be considered a basket case, the first being Moses.

What Peter wants to convey to his audience is the fact that this inheritance and our salvation will always be kept secure by the power of God. Think about His power for just one moment and then ask yourself if there is any question in your mind whether or not God can keep you.

When my brother entered the army he did his basic training at Fort Knox. We know it also as the place where they keep lots of gold. I was curious to know whether or not there has ever been a robbery or attempted robbery of the Fort Knox bullion reserve and I’m not talking about beef or chicken bouillon.

My internet search only told me of one attempt and that was by Goldfinger in the James Bond movie.

Fort Knox is considered to be the most impenetrable bank in the world. A robber would have to break through a solid granite wall, after passing squadrons of machinegun wielding guards on a military base with lots of tanks. Then he would have to contend with a 22-ton blast door held by a lock so intricate that it requires a 10 person team to unlock. And I have a hard time remembering my 4 digit pin to my voicemail. Fort Knox has never had a published robbery attempt.

Then there is the New York Federal Reserve that holds the world’s biggest gold depository. Security is so tight, that no one is allowed to enter the vault. Pallets are moved by robots.

The vault walls of the Bank of London are bombproof.

It’s amazing to consider the destructive force of an atomic blast. Yet two vaults in Hiroshima, Japan were undamaged by the atomic bomb dropped in WWII.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland has a door that weighs 91 tons alone, which is equivalent to the weight of 2 humpback whales.

Those are just some of the 15 most secure banks in the world.

So what good is an inheritance or our salvation if it’s not protected? Where do you have your treasure? We could choose to put our treasures here on earth where there is an uncertainty about their security or we can place our treasures in heaven where nothing can touch them.

Matthew 6:19-21

Our passage tells us we are “kept”, guarded, protected by the power of God.

Let me ask you a rhetorical question. If the omnipotent God of the universe is keeping you and your inheritance can anything break in and take it away?

Think of some events in Scripture where God's power is displayed.

In the beginning through the power of God He created the heavens and earth from nothing.

Through His power He parted the Red Sea and the Jordan River.

Through His power He brought the walls of Jericho, a fortified city to ruin. It wasn't from shoddy craftsmanship or inferior materials.

Through His power He caused the sun to stand still and on another occasion the shadow to retreat.

Through His power He toppled kingdoms and made a king go insane and live like an animal.

Through His power He spared Daniel from ravenous lions and then kept Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego from being consumed by fire.

His power rose Christ from the dead.

His power saves you through the gospel.

(Romans 1:16)

The power of God is unlimited. It is that power which He uses to keep you and your inheritance.

There are two Greek words used most often to speak of power.

One word is found John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name." It's the word ἐξουσία (exousia) and speaks of the power to become the children of God. In this case it means right or authority.

For example, the three branches of Government each have rights or certain authority granted to them by the Constitution.

As a citizen of this country we have certain rights given to us that are not afforded to a non-citizen.

A minister may say at the end of a wedding

ceremony by the power invested in me by the state I now pronounce you husband and wife.

These instances all refer to the right or authority granted to someone by someone else.

When we receive Christ as Savior we have been given the right to become God's children.

But that's not the idea in this passage from the word Peter used to describe God's power that keeps. The second word in the Greek that we find in our text is δύναμις (dunamos) from which we get our English word for dynamite. With a word like dynamite you get the sense of power or force.

Psalm 18:1-2 "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom will I trust; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

Here is how that passage reads in the Message.

"I love you, GOD – You make me strong. GOD is bedrock under my feet, the castle in which I live, my rescuing knight. My God – the high crag where I run for dear life, hiding behind the boulders, safe in the granite hideout."

I love the imagery in that verse from the KJV. God is our defensive tower, our protection, stability and security. The rock, fortress, and tower each speak of a high place of refuge and defense where we can run to for refuge. It's a place of security and protection. When our unseen enemy attacks, God is a strong tower where we are protected. In the Old Testament a horn was often a symbol of an animal's strength. Here God is the strength of our salvation.

Proverbs 18:10

Psalm 61:1-4

Psalm 144:2

Psalm 71:3

Psalm 89:13

Psalm 27:5

These passages give us a clear picture of the power of God to keep us.

John 10:27-29

Romans 8:31-38

Paul reminds us through a quote from the Old Testament (Psalm 44:22) that suffering has always been the experience of God's people, but don't despair. Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. Nothing can separate us from God's love because of His power to keep us.

When we feel discouraged

When shadows come

When our heart is lonely

When we long for heaven and home

When our heart is troubled

When we doubt and fear

Remember that if His eye is on the sparrow, His eye is also on you.

Charles Spurgeon once remarked "It is not our eye on Him in which is our great protection, but His eye on us."

Remember that we are kept, shielded, guarded, protected by the power of God. Peter describes how this is possible. It is by our faith. Do we trust God to keep us or not? When we face trials and persecution down here do we still believe God is protecting our salvation and the inheritance reserved for us in heaven?

Hebrews 11:1-2, 36-12:3

Does it help you to remember those who have gone before you or those who are going through these things right now? Do they help you to stand firm in your faith and remembering that the One who made these promises is faithful to keep His word?

They knew they had a greater reward that awaited them because of what had been promised by God whose power keeps secure for them those things He promised. Do we find hope through our faith?

But even our lack of faith in no way negates the power of God to keep our salvation or inheritance. Yet according to Hebrews 11:6 it is our faith that pleases God. A lack of faith really says we don't fully trust the One of whom it is said in Scripture is faithful to keep His word. Lamentations 3:23 tells us that His faithfulness is great. God is faithful to keep for you what He promised to the very end. If we could say it another way God is faithful to see it through to completion. That's what we read from Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

"Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." The Message

We have an inheritance that is protected by God. There is no person or no thing that can change that. In their Bible commentary Walvoord and Zuck write "What greater hope could be given to those undergoing persecution than the knowledge that God's power guards them from within, to preserve them for an inheritance that will be completely revealed to them in God's presence. Believers possess salvation now but will sense its full significance at the return of Christ in the last times."

So we move from considering an inheritance that is protected by God to an inheritance that is promised by God.

II. AN INHERITANCE PROMISED BY GOD

Colossians 1:10-14 (12-13)

God the Father has qualified us to receive this inheritance. That means He is the One who made it possible for us to meet the required conditions to receive this inheritance.

Here's something to bear in mind that is important.

We tend to think that this inheritance is something that we won't get until later on, but this passage gives us another picture. Paul here alludes to the Promised Land that was an inheritance to the nation of Israel. Within that land each tribe was given a portion of the land as their own inheritance.

If you have a million dollars as an inheritance that is to be divided up between your four children each beneficiary receives the portion they are entitled to based on what was in your will.

What does each of us inherit who have placed faith in Christ for salvation? Some things we receive now, other things we receive in the future.

We inherit eternal life.

Matthew 19:29

In Matthew 5:5 we are told that believers will inherit the earth, something that is yet future that will be received during the millennial kingdom.

Something else we inherit according to Hebrews 6:12 is all the promises of God. "We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

So when do we receive this inheritance? The tense of the Colossians 1 passage indicates that this inheritance is something we receive now. It happened the moment we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Yet this passage and I Peter 1:5 suggest that we will not fully realize or receive all the inheritance until sometime in the future. It will be revealed or made known to us in the end times.

For months a child looks forward to the gifts he or she will receive at Christmas knowing they will get gifts but not knowing what they will be. On Christmas day they will come to receive the gifts that had been promised and prepared for them.

Let me state again the quote from Walvoord and Zuck "Believers possess salvation now but will sense its full significance at the return of Christ in the last times."

That inheritance is ready. No more preparation needs to be made. The only thing that remains is the Father's word for Christ to return and get His followers. At that time our inheritance will be revealed. That word comes from the root word apocalypse. We tend to think in terms of that word as end times dooms day kinds of things when death and destruction and judgment occur. In reality it simply means an uncovering or unveiling.

To Tell the Truth is a game show that has aired at least one new episode in seven consecutive decades. It dates back to 1956. The show featured a panel of four celebrities whose object is to correctly identify a contestant who has an unusual occupation or has undergone an unusual experience. This contestant is accompanied by two impostors who pretend to be the real person. The celebrity panelists question the three contestants. The impostors are allowed to lie, but the central character is sworn "to tell the truth." After questioning, the panel attempts to identify which of the three challengers is telling the truth and is thus the central character. At the end of the show the identity of the real contestant is revealed.

The very first word in the Greek New Testament of the book of Revelation is this word "apocalypse". It reads apocalypse of Jesus Christ or the unveiling or revealing of Jesus Christ. The primary intent of the book of Revelation isn't with the end times events that will occur, but about the revealing of Jesus Christ. Dr. David Jeremiah writes that the book is primarily written to unveil the power and glory of Jesus Christ in the end times.

So in I Peter 1:5 the full reality of our salvation and the inheritance promised to us will be revealed or made known to us in the end times.

At David's recent overnight birthday party his friends each brought a card that was sealed or a package that was wrapped. They were gifts that at the right time were revealed when he opened them up.

So who does the revealing?

Daniel 2:24, 47

God will reveal or make known what we will inherit. It's His to give, it seems reasonable to say that it is His to reveal and He will do so in the end times. It's a reference to the final when we will receive our full inheritance. God knows who will receive this inheritance because of the seal placed on us by the indwelling Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation.

Ephesians 1:13-14 "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of His glory."

The Holy Spirit is our mark of ownership by God, which guarantees our inheritance.

We have an inheritance protected by God.

We have an inheritance promised by God.

It is an incredible sight to watch the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. There will never be a changing of the guard with God. He is guarding, protecting our salvation until the time comes for us to receive its full measure in the end times. Then on that day what Jesus said in Matthew 25:34 will come true: "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

As John Phillips writes: "Not only is our inheritance being kept for us, but we are being kept for it."

God's power keeps it and us secure.

If God can keep your salvation and your inheritance protected, do you think He can keep you during times of difficulty? I think that's the message Peter wanted to convey to these believers in Asia Minor – that no matter what persecution they may encounter, God could keep their salvation and inheritance safe until the end times. Nothing would ever keep our inheritance from us, not even death. We are encouraged to remember that we have an all-powerful God looking after us.

So when you are discouraged here, remember the inheritance that awaits you there protected in the safest place possible, by an Almighty God whose love keeps you. Look forward to the day when that will be revealed.