



# **Message Transcript**

## **Praise God**

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As we continue our heart of worship, let's go before the Lord and pray that God would speak directly to us. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we give you all the praise, glory, and honor for who you are, and Lord, we gather here today on two campuses, just to hear your living and active work. Lord, we believe that when your word is opened and faithfully proclaimed, that you speak directly to us. Our prayer Lord right now in this moment is speak, Lord for we are ready to hear. Lord, we want you to change us, we want you to challenge us, encourage us.

Lord, you know exactly what we need when we don't even know what we need, and so Lord, we're inviting you to do work that only you can do. Now, all God's people who are ready to receive His word, to believe it, to own it, and to put into practice what He shows you, agree with me by very loudly saying the word amen.

Amen.

Amen. As I was preparing this message, I was reminded of when I was training to be a youth director in a church, and I spent seven weeks up in Minnesota training. At the break during training sessions, when we would come back into the room, there would be numbers on the board, like song number 14, 31, 25, and then we'd sing these songs. I call them campfire classics like Lord, I Lift Your Name On High, or Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord, or these kind of things. I don't know about you, but at that point in my life, that was the least thing I enjoyed doing.

I would always pretend I needed an extra drink of water or I had to go to the bathroom or something, because I didn't want to gather with 27 people just to be in a

room and sing kumbaya songs. It really wasn't thrilling to my heart, and this actually continued for some time. As a matter of fact, even in being a youth director and even beyond that, worshiping for me was something that just felt a little bit unnatural. I know for many of you that come in here, perhaps you come because you like the preaching of the word or you know that going to church is good.

But when you hear music being played and people begin to sing or clap or raise their hands, you begin to think, "Okay, I can endure this just a little bit longer so we can get to the preaching." If that's you, I got a word for you today, because the Lord wants nothing more from our lives than for us to praise Him. In this section of Scripture in First Peter today, we're going to take a look at four reasons that the Lord wants us to praise Him. These four reasons will compel you to want to praise our God. If you have your Bible with you, I encourage you to open up to the Book of First Peter chapter one.

We're going to begin in verse three this morning, and look at verses three, four and five. But as we do that, I'd like to just read the first five verses because it's so short and will give us a context for what we're going to be discussing today. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood, may grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."

Verse three, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through

the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance, which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, preserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." As we look at verses three, four, and five today, we're going to look at four reasons that we are called to praise God. Why are we going to praise God? Is He really worthy of being praised?

As we spent last week talking about, we talked about the fact that we spent time in space here as aliens or temporary residents here on the earth reminded of the fact that we've been chosen before the foundation of the world, that if we've really responded to the gospel, we spent the entire last week on the fact that once we become believers, and yes, there's 100% responsibility on our part to respond to the gospel, to choose Christ. When we do, what we realize is it was God's work all along behind the scenes, choosing us before the foundation of the world so that we would obey Jesus, so that we would be holy, so that we would be secure, and we could grow an increasing measure of this grace that God has given us.

When we understand that, the natural response is praise. Praise God that He chose us. Peter gives us four reasons to praise God this morning, and the first is this, praise God for His laudable Lordship that is worthy of being revered. Praise God for His laudable Lordship that is worthy of being revered. Laudable means deserving praise. That God's Lordship deserves praise. Notice how Peter, when he gets the understanding of his salvation, that it had nothing to do with him, that it was all by grace that God did all the work, he didn't choose God, but God chose him, he

bursts into praise and says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

Blessed be God. Bless the Lord. Sometimes it seems unnatural for us to say bless God. Bless Him. Isn't His job to bless us? But no, we're to bless God. Psalm 103 says, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name." It means to give honor because His name is so worthy to be revered. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In God and Father, we see that Jesus Christ had a humanity and that Jesus Christ had deity. Jesus, all but one time in the Scriptures, referred to God as His Father.

"I and the Father are one." If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. He always talked about His Father, His dad. It was relational. It showed His deity and His connection to His Father. The only time we see Him refer to God as God is when He is on the cross, as God the Father has put all the sin of humanity on Him and He's dying a death separated from His Father by our sin, and He cries out what? "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Blessed be who He is. His name is worthy of praise, right?

Amen.

In that, we hear to the Lord, Jesus Christ. Can we just talk about Lord, Jesus Christ? What that means? It means this, first and foremost, He's the Lord. It means He's the authority. It means He's the ruler. We could sit here on a Sunday morning and be like, "Praise God, Jeff. Praise God. He is." Here's the question, is He the Lord of

your life? Is He truly the authority in your life? Is He truly the ruler in your life? If you peel back the layers of your heart, who is the one that is leading and guiding your life? Only you know. Only God knows. I don't know. Nobody else around you knows.

You can fool a lot of people, but when we're giving praise, we're giving praise to the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one who has authority. Before Jesus commissioned His disciples and ascended back into heaven and gave the great commission, what does He say? "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go." In other words, Jesus claimed all authority. He was given the name that is above every name. He has all authority. We can say it on the authority of God's word that He has all authority, but here's the question. Is He authoritative in your life?

Do you bow your knee to Him in all areas of your life? Where you're going to live, what you're going to purchase, how you're going to steward your money, who your relationships are going to be? Is Jesus Christ truly Lord? We're called to worship Him as Lord. Lord. I noticed this, the Lord, Jesus Christ. What's the importance of the name Jesus? It's interesting because when the angel of the Lord showed up to Mary and then subsequently to Joseph to tell him to take Mary to be his wife, he tells Joseph, "Your wife is going to conceive and bear a son."

In Matthew 1:21, he says, "And you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." When we're worshiping the Lord, we're worshiping His authority. Yes, He's God, He's king, He's ruler overall, but what else is He? He is the one, and the only one that can expunge, forgive, wipe out all of our sins. There is no other way to have sins forgiven than through the person in work of Jesus Christ.

Amen? Is that worthy of praise this morning? Because what it means is before we're Christians, we have to recognize we're in a sinful state, that we're dead in our transgressions and sins.

We're dead, we're apart from Christ, and Jesus through His death on the cross, His burial and His resurrection from the dead, is the one and only one who has the power to forgive sins. Remember when He healed the paralytic in Mark chapter two?

Amen. Yep.

And they were given all sorts of problems to him? Because before He healed him, what did He say? "Son, your sins are forgiven." The religious leaders of the day are like, "Who are you to forgive? Only God can forgive sins." "Okay, so that you know that I have the authority to do that, pick up your mat and walk. I can do whatever I want because I'm God." He's the only one that has the power to forgive sins. When we're talking about worshiping, we're talking about worshiping the king, that's the king of our heart. We're talking about the one who has forgiven all of our sins and, He's the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Christ means Messiah. It means anointed one. It means God's selected one to do His work. There is one and only one Messiah, the Lord, Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:36, Peter says, "This Jesus whom you've crucified has now become both Lord and Christ." He's the Christ. Jesus Christ. The one who forgives sins. God's anointed one. It means there's no other one, but Him. It means His name is worthy of worship. It means when we gather, keep in mind, worship is not a style, worship is a statement. Okay?

If worship is a style, it means there's only one real way to worship. But when you realize worship is a statement, there can be all sorts of varieties of style. It's not a temperament. It's not whether you have an organ or a band or a guitarist or acapella or singing, worship is an act of adoration because the Lord, Jesus Christ is king of my heart, who's forgiven my sins, who's God's one and only chosen one, and He's worthy of all my praise and adoration. He is so worthy of my praise, and that's what Peter says.

If we truly understand our salvation, we're going to give allegiance to Him. When we come into a church service and we gather it's not, "Do I really feel like it today? I hope this song stirs me well. I really like the riff of that guitar." That's just all okay, but it really doesn't matter. What matters is that God, you are worthy of all my praise because of what you've done in my heart, so I'm going to bow my knee and I'm going to give allegiance to you because you are so worthy and so mighty. Here's the truth. We're all designed to worship.

We were created to worship. Everyone was created to worship. If you don't center your worship on the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ, you will find some empty way to give your allegiance to. You'll find someone or something to give your allegiance to. You ever seen little kids after a sporting event with their little tablet so they can get autographs or their cameras so they can take pictures? Because why? Because they want to say, "Look who I got to meet. Look who I get to know." It's not just little kids either. It's their dads that are right there with them. Isn't it?



We have this thing in our heart that says, "I want you to know who I met and I want you to know who I know and I want you to know how valuable and important I am." Because if you don't center your allegiance on Jesus Christ, you will always be searching for things that are worthy of your worship and nothing thing, but nothing, is worthy of your worship except the Lord, Jesus Christ. You were created to worship Him. You weren't created to be worshiped either. Right? You weren't created to be worshiped.

We're always looking for something to worship. We're always looking for that thing or that person to complete us, and we think that if we get that thing or that person to complete us, it's going to be, "Whoa, got it. I've arrived." Right? You can be up in the mountains watching a sunset over Pikes Peak, and you can watch the sunset and be like, "Whoa, that was glorious," and you can say, "My God did that." Or you can be on the beach at Hawaii and watch the sun dip over the horizon as it goes down and be like, "Whoa, that was awesome."

You can even see gifted, talented people that perform in a certain way, either athletically or musically or in drama or something and be like, "Whoa, that was good." But there's nothing but nothing as good as Jesus.

Amen.

There's just nothing.

Amen.

That's why when people tell you you did a good job at something, the humble

way and the right way is to just say thank you. It's okay. I've taught you this before. People come up to me sometimes and say, "Pastor Jeff, that sermon really gripped me. That was good," and I'll say, "Well, thank you. I'm glad that the Lord used that in your life." The reason I say thank you is I had a part in the thing too. I spent the whole week studying this text. I spent the whole week spending time with the Lord. I asked Him to search me. I did part of it too.

That's why it's false to say stuff like this, "Oh, it was just the Lord. It was just the Lord." I heard a pastor talking the other day, who had a really good friend that was a top recording Christian artist that they used to travel a lot together, and the Christian artist used to always respond when people said, "Oh, that was so great. That was so good." He would always respond saying, "Oh, it's just the Lord. It's the Lord." One day they were both coming off the platform and this person ran up to this singer and said ... He's like, "Wow, that was so incredible. Unbelievable," and the man said, "It was the Lord," and the guy said, "Nah, I didn't say it was that good."

Get it? If it was the Lord doing it, it'd be a little better. If I said, "Jeff, it was good sermon." "It was the Lord," you would say, "No, I've read His work. It's good. You're okay, but it ..." Do you see what I'm saying? If we're not careful, we're looking for something to make us feel good or to attach to somebody so that we feel good, right? There's no perfect out there other than the Lord, Jesus Christ. I'm just going to let you know a little secret this morning. There is no such thing as a perfect marriage.

There's no such thing as a perfect husband. There is no such thing as a perfect

wife. If you're searching for that, you will never find it. Right? There is no perfect teacher. Kids, there are no perfect parents, and parents, I want to remind you this morning, there are no perfect kids and there are no perfect coaches, unless you have me coaching your kids flag football. There are nobody out there, right? That does this stuff. We're always looking for someone that does it right so we can feel like we're attached to greatness.

Jesus says, "I am great and I am perfect and I am right. Will you give me your allegiance and let me be the anchor in your life? Because if I'm the anchor in your life, anything else can happen and you're still rooted to me and there's great fulfillment in giving me your best worship." Amen?

[crosstalk 00:16:06] Yes. [inaudible 00:16:07] to God.

Now, this is for the men here. The non hand raiser, non-clapper, I'm not going to sing very well, that's not who I am. Explain to me then why you go to sporting events and other events and you have no problem jumping out of your seat, raising your hand and cheering loudly?

Ouch. Ouch.

Why? I look forward someday when I see you Christians in heaven that don't worship here on earth, because we're going to have fun. I think God's going to put a dance spotlight on you and say, "Look at him now." Right? Because He's worthy of our praise. I'm not telling you you have to dance and I'm not telling you you have to clap your hands and I'm not mandating that you raise ... I'm not saying that. I'm just saying if

Jesus really has all of your life, why wouldn't you give Him the full expression of  
[crosstalk 00:16:47] your praise? That's all I'm saying.

[inaudible 00:16:49].

Peter says, "Because of who God is, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ." Amen and amen. He is worthy of being revered. Amen? Peter gives us a second reason this morning. Not just so we should praise God because He's the Lord and He is worthy, but praise God for His marvelous mercy, His marvelous mercy that was released to us. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Notice what he says. He says according to. He doesn't say out of, he doesn't say out of His mercy as if God has a limit of His mercy and He takes out of His mercy and gives to you. He gives according to His mercy. He has limitless mercy, and He always gives lavishly His mercy. Now, why is His mercy so marvelous? Mercy deals with this. It deals with our pitiful condition. It deals with our hopeless state. It deals with the fact that we can't do anything for ourselves. Ephesians two says that we're dead in our transgressions and sins. We're dead.

We can't do anything. Dead people can't help themselves, and yet what does God give? He gives mercy. It means I'm going to help you with what you can't help yourself with. It means I'm not going to give you what you deserve, I'm not giving you according to what you deserve. How many think that's good news and worthy of praise

this morning?

Yes.

How many would say, even after becoming a believer in Christ, that you have some things in your life that you would've said, "I should have done different. I would've done different. Had I known now, there's no way I would've ever sinned like that?" How many have a couple things like that in your life that you just feel like thank God for His mercy today? Right? Every one of us has that. Yet what happens is, as we mature as Christians, we forget God's mercy and we think it's about performance. It's never about performance. The only performance worthy of being celebrated in the entire Bible is Jesus Christ on the cross and Him crucified. That's worthy of praise. But there's no time in my life I get to a place where I start saying, "God, give me justice."

No.

I don't ever pray for justice. You shouldn't pray for it either, and you shouldn't pray for it for another people.

That's right.

You shouldn't be praying, "God, give them what they deserve." You should be saying, "God, have mercy on them for not seeing what you want," because God is a God of mercy who desires mercy, not sacrifice. Right? It's all throughout the Scriptures. Probably the most famous story in the entire Bible comes out of Luke 10. We call it the good Samaritan, and all of us are familiar with the lawyer coming up to Jesus and asking Him, "Well, who's my neighbor?" Who do I have to be good to is

really his question.

We're familiar with the story, but we forget the whole introduction to the story. In Luke 10 in chapter 30, when the lawyer wanted to justify himself and ask who my neighbor is, here's what Jesus replied and said. He said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers and they stripped him and beat him and went away, leaving him half dead." Now, how many have heard that before? Now, we don't talk about that verse in the story. We're like, "Yeah, that's just society. Now, let's get to the real thing."

The priest came by, the Levi came by, and finally the good Samaritan came by, and that's the whole story. That verse I just read is the whole story. A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was robbed, stripped, beaten and left half dead. Here's what you should think. If you were in the first century, you would know. Nobody's supposed to travel down that road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It's the worst part of town. Everybody that goes down that way gets beat up, stripped and left half dead.

Here's the point of the story. This man got exactly what he deserved. He should have known better. He should have got stripped, beaten and Rob. What a moron for going that way. Right? It's when we have that thing in our heart. Of course they're homeless, they're lazy. Of course, they have a bad marriage. Look at how she is. Of course, they have a bad marriage. Look at how he is. We start judging others. That's the whole point of the story. Because the guy's saying, "Who should I be neighborly to?" He goes, "How about the one who got what they deserved?" Right? What happens?

Religious people start coming by. Religious people. The people that are supposed to be the people that are going to help, and they do what? Absolutely nothing. The priest avoids him. The Levi comes up to him and doesn't recognize him and leaves. Who comes by? The good what? Samaritan. Everybody knew in the first century, no such thing as a good Samaritan. They're prejudiced against Samaritans. It'd be like Sean Hannity calling him the good Democrat. Or Rachel Maddow saying the good Republican.

Yeah, right.

Do you see what I'm saying?

Yes, sir.

Or a KKK leader saying the good African-American. That's what's going on here. Who's the good Samaritan in the story? It's Jesus. He's the one that comes and says, "Yeah, you should have known better. You should have done ..." What's he do? He doesn't come and give a speech or a lecture. He comes and gives what? Mercy. He sees the helpless state and says, "I'll help. I'll bandage the wounds. I'll pour oil on them. I'll put you on my donkey. I'll take you to an inn. I'll pay for you. That's what I do. I'm merciful." Isn't it great to praise God for His mercy?

[crosstalk 00:22:37].

Isn't it?

Yes.

How many of you know this week, it's great that you didn't come to church to get God's justice? Right? I love that we don't have to come to church to get God's justice. We get to come to church to be lavished again by His marvelous mercy where we should have known better, could have done different, screwed it up again the same way we always screw it up, and instead of getting a lecture, what do we receive? Mercy and mercy and mercy and mercy. Why? Because that's who our God is. It's His mercy.

That's why you see in the New Testament, you'll see the word mercy or pity or compassion. They're all the same words. It means when you see one in need, you take action. You don't just look and say, "Somebody needs to help that guy." You don't look and say, "She got what she deserved." You see a need, it doesn't matter what the reason is, and you find a way to fill it. That's mercy. That's who our God is. Notice what Peter says, "It's this mercy. It was according to His great mercy He has caused us to be born again to a living hope."

Who caused us to be born again? It's Jesus. Right? How many have little kids where you're trying to decipher sometime and play attorney to see who was at fault for doing something? Right? You're asking the question. "Yeah, I know her head is hurt, but how did it run into the coffee table? How come there's a hand print on her back? Did you push her? Did you cause it?" Here's the thing, Jesus Christ caused us to be born again. It was His mercy that compelled us, that caused us and pushed us to be born again. It means we were dead, but Jesus Christ is the one who made us alive in Him.



It is by grace we have been saved through faith, not your own doing. Gift of God so that no one should boast. It's His mercy. I'm telling you, Christian, we need to receive His mercy more and more. The reason we don't think enough about His mercy is we think about ourselves better than we ought. We think, "Yeah, I used to need mercy before I got saved. But now I'm a Christian. Now I'm in Christ, so I don't need mercy anymore." You need as much mercy today as you did the first day you got saved.

That's right.

Right? To say you don't need mercy anymore is saying, "I don't sin anymore." Nobody would say that. "I don't struggle anymore." Nobody would say that. Here's what we should be saying as a church, "The more mature you are, the more you recognize how much mercy you've needed and how much more you still need," and you know what that crushes? Pride. If you're ever around Christians and they see their own sinful state and they know they're not all that in a bag of chips and they realize apart from the grace of God, they're nothing, those are very attractive, mature Christians.

It's when you get around those who have received mercy and then forget and think by some reason they're super gifted and that's why God chose them, and "Oh, I used to be like you too. One day, you'll mature like me," those people wreak of pride. Don't be like that. You say, "Well, how can I remain in God's mercy?" Here's how. Pray that God would always show you a sense of your sin. Pray God would always show you the glory of His cross and what He redeemed in you. Because the greater

you grow in Christ, the more you're going to realize I need His mercy here.

The less you do, the more God will take you through circumstances to realize, "Nope, I need more here. I need more in my marriage. I need more with my kids. I need more in my job. I need more in my finances. I need more with my health. I need mercy. God, I need mercy. I need your help, God. I'm dependent upon you, God." That's why broken people are always the most active in the kingdom of God. Amen?

Amen.

Praise God for that. If you're broken, you get more mercy. That's why we worship the Lord. What have we gotten? He caused us to be born again into what? Into a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. When Jesus Christ arose from the dead, that is what validated that He was indeed the Son of God, Jesus Christ is alive, folks. He's as alive as he's ever been, and we are born again into a living hope with a relationship with the living hope. Now what's the difference between a living hope and a worldly hope?

All the worldly hopes here are just dead hopes. It's just going from one dead hope to another dead hope to another dead hope to another dead hope. It's why we keep hoping that the dead hopes we're putting our hope in are actually going to change. Right? Some people put their entire hope in sports teams. I like what watching the NCAA tournament, it's okay, but I'm not going to lose any sleep regardless of who wins or loses. Some people won't be able to sleep for months if their team doesn't advance, because their whole hope is in a team doing well. Stupid. Some people's

hope are in people. Some people's hopes, believe it or not, are in politics. Believing falsely if we get the right people elected, the world will be different. Hello?

No way.

Unless they can eradicate sin, it ain't going to make a difference.

Amen.

Now I'm all for voting, I'm all for being involved in the political process, but that's not my hope. My hope is in Jesus Christ, the righteous one, who has a kingdom that is coming and in Him and Him alone, do we have hope. Where's your hope? "But Jeff, you don't understand. My relationships are down or my health." If your hope is in Jesus, I can't guarantee your circumstances will be good. As a matter of fact, I can probably promise you you're going to go through trials.

I can promise you you're going to have hardships on this side of heaven, but I can also promise you if Christ is your firm foundation and your rock and your hope, you can navigate through any circumstance that the Lord might bring with exceedingly great joy on the inside. Why? Because your hope is built on Jesus. On nothing less than Jesus Christ's blood and His righteousness. Amen?

Amen.

This is what Jesus wants us to know, because so many people put their hope in these false dead things, like ... How about this? Put their hope in food. They put their hope in a lack of food, sports. They put their hope in money, where they live, what kind of community they look like, who their friends are, sex, prestige, power, all these

different things that mean absolutely nothing in terms of your sincerity and hope that you can have in the Lord, Jesus Christ. They're all fleeting things. They don't make a difference.

Peter says he's praising God because He's worthy of being praised because He's the Lord of all, and He's worthy of being praised for the incredible mercy that He's received. Now, is there anybody that may be able to speak more authoritatively on God's mercy than Peter? If you talk about the all-time bonehead list of disciples, he would be near the top, right? Here's the disciple that was always telling Jesus what to do. The God of the universe is here and He's telling Peter, "Hey, go let down your nets for a catch," and Peter starts giving Jesus instructions about how to fish.

"We've been out all night. We caught nothing, like you know anything about fishing." Jesus is like, "Well, just go do it. Just put your net on that side," and they catch so many fish the boat starts to swamp, and what's Peter say? "Go away from me, Lord, for I'm a sinful man." Jesus tells Peter in the night he's betrayed, after Peter tells Him, "Lord, even if all the others betray you ... I know there's some betrayers here. Not me. Even if all others fall away, not me. As a matter of fact, I'll even die for you tonight, if I have to."

Jesus says, "Well, Satan's desire to sift you like wheat, and before the rooster crows tonight, you'll betray me three times. But don't worry, I've been praying for you and I'm praying that you'll be reestablished and encourage your brothers." Peter was always telling Jesus what to do. Jesus told Peter that He was going to go to the cross and die, and Peter told Him, "No, never. Don't want that." Peter, the all-time bonehead,

Jesus told him what he was going to do, Peter said no. Did God use Peter? Yeah.

Yes.

Why? Because he's so gifted, right? Because he'd make a great shrine in a church, right? No, because he had incredible mercy. Peter's writing and saying, here's what he's saying, "If God could use someone like me that's a loud mouth, blue collar fishermen, He can use anybody. Because God had mercy on my life, He'll have mercy on yours and He'll continue to lavish you with mercy if you see your position in light of the glory of Christ." Isn't that good news this morning? We don't just praise God because we like the style of singing.

We praise God because He is worthy of being praised and we praise God for the mercy He's extended us. Just think for a moment. Just think for a moment, if you could. Reflect on this, even here, but it's a great devotion to do in your spare time. "Hey, God, just show me some of the sins that you've extended mercy in my life for. How much mercy have you actually given to me, and just be whereas the Holy Spirit pours out in your life." How much? It's infinite, and He's not done and He'll continue to lavish it more and more. Isn't that great?

Our God desires mercy and not sacrifice, and Peter says, "Well, that's not it. These two things are great that God's worthy of our praise because He lavishes us with mercy." But let me give you a third one. We're called to praise Him because of His incredible inheritance that is reserved for us. God has an incredible inheritance that is reserved for us. Now, notice how he said, "We've been born again into a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Why? "To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away reserved in heaven for you."

Now, what's an inheritance? An inheritance is wealth passed down. Now, when you think about inheritance, there's a lot of people that go to the reading of their will that walk away disappointed because they got written out of the will or they didn't get what they thought or the person that had a lot squandered it and there wasn't a lot left. Here's the thing. The inheritance that God has for you is according to His great riches and He hasn't run out of anything and they're reserved in heaven for you.

They're there. It's as good as done. Is that good news or what? What you have coming on your plate is like this. If Bill Gates and the top 10 wealthiest men in the world wrote you into their will today and would guarantee 100% of everything they have to you and promise to all die this week and give it all to you, that is penance in comparison to what you already have coming to you, and it's kept in heaven reserved for you. It means God's got your place at the table. He already knows the date and time that you're going to arrive.

Have you ever made reservations and showed up and they didn't have your reservation? I remember when I was a kid, one of our relatives promised us tickets to a baseball game in Kansas City. They were going to be left at will call. We went to Kansas City, and we went to the baseball game and we were at will call. I remember watch my dad go up and give him his driver's license, and they're like, "Sorry, sir. There's no tickets for you here," because our relative forgot to get us our tickets.

Right? We had to buy our tickets. Nothing like that in the kingdom of heaven, right?

There's no will call. It's paid in full reserved for you. While you don't the exact entrance date, when you're going to meet Jesus face to face, which is actually a really good thing, He knows. He knows exactly when you're coming. He knows exactly the spot at the table that He wants you to sit and it's reserved for you. This you is not just you individually. It's y'all. It means that God has lavish riches for His entire church. In heaven, as I've said before, it doesn't mean you have to compare.

There's none of this, "Well, you got more than me," or, "Your house is bigger than mine. I'm jealous of you for all eternity now," or, "Hey, look at me, look at how much better I am than you." There's none of that in heaven. If there is differences in rewards, which I believe there is, it's all going to be to God's glory, that He could have used a man or a woman like this for Him. Praise God. It's awesome that He would choose to do that. It's a lavish glory. It's who we are in Him, and sometimes we forget this. Sometimes we don't realize.

Look at this inheritance. It's inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and will not fade. Imperishable means this, it won't decay. It's death proof, right? It's not going to get older. Have you ever noticed, if you've lived longer, like me, how fashion changes over time? Do you remember the things that you wore to school when you were in grade school?

Bell bottoms, yeah.

Right? Some of you are saying bell bottoms. I made my grandma buy me a pair

of red parachute pants when I was a kid. You probably don't even know what those things are. Right? I know my sister somewhere has a picture of me in them and I'm just trying to keep it under wraps for right now because she's shown it before and we all just sit around and laugh. Style goes out of fashion. Homes go out of fashion.

Remember the home you lived in growing up.? Remember what was cool? My house, it was green shag carpet and a green refrigerator. That was like the height of fashion.

I don't see too many AAG TV shows anymore where people are asking for that. Things fade. They get different. What God has for you is as good the day you get there as it is right now. It's kept in heaven for you. It's not going to spoil. It's not going to get awful. It's death proof. Notice this, it's undefiled. Undefiled means it's in perfect condition. It's sin proof. When you get there, it's going to be more than you ever dreamed or imagined. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

If God would take you into the coming kingdom right now and show you around for five minutes, I promise you there's not one of us here that would ever want to come back here for any reason in the world. Not for any relationship or anything that God would have. It's that good. I don't know what that good is. I just know it's that good. Right? God gives us enough glimpses as to how He creates the world for us to yearn and look forward to that. But it's that good? It's in perfect condition.

There's no leftovers in the kingdom of heaven. There none of this, I get to heaven and God's like, "Well, I ran out, but you have something. Here's a little thing for you."



There's none of that. It's perfect, and it will not fade away. It will not fade away. It's time proof. A billion years from now, it'll be just as good as it is today. It doesn't wear out and it's reserved in heaven for you. Now, just think about our God. He created the heaven and the earth. He owns the cattle on 1,000 hills. Our God is the one who is able to guard it and keep it and protect it for us, and our reservation is as good as done.

Ephesians 1:13 and 14 tells us that we have been given the Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing inheritance in the saints. Because you have Jesus in your life, through the Holy Spirit, it's a down payment that God has already made on you, who promises to take you to heaven. Is that worthy of praise? If you knew what was coming, you would praise God all the time. You would never look around and compare to what you don't have or what you do have, and you'd be comparing to what God is about ready to burst forth and give you according to His marvelous riches in Christ, and all of us who are Christians are able to partake in that.

Here's the question. Are you a Christian? Is Jesus really the Lord of your life? Is He really worthy of your praise? Because if not, it doesn't matter how much you go to church or how long you've attended BRAVE or what you've done. It means this. Have you ever recognized that you're a sinner and need of God's grace and called out to Him and said, "Jesus, I need you to be the Lord of my life because I want the forgiveness of my sins and I need your protection and I yearn for the coming kingdom, and apart from you, I'm still dead. I'm asking you and I'm confessing you as my personal Lord and savior today?"

Because any single person here can have Him that way. I love this, because all of us have had things been stolen from us or things that don't satisfy. We've been overpromised and underdelivered. I remember as a little kid when I was four or five, my mom wouldn't let me go down to the dairy store where we could buy baseball cards. I had to give my 25 cents or 50 cents to all the older neighborhood kids who would take my money and go buy baseball cards for me. But what I learned very quickly is every time that they came back and they bought my baseball cards, my baseball cards weren't wrapped.

They were opened. The gum was always gone, and I always had all the scrub baseball players and they were always bragging about, "Look who I got? I got this all-star, that all-star." I'm like, "How come I didn't get any all-stars?" "Yeah, luck of the draw." I'm like, "No, you stole it from me." Right? Sometimes we think heaven's going to be like that. Like, "Hey, I'm going to work really hard for God, and then God's not going to have what He ..." God promises and will deliver on His word, and Peter says, "He is worthy of being praised because you get to partake in the full inheritance in the saints."

You get to have your name read in front of the King of kings and Lord of lords. You get to hear these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Not because of anything you did, but because of God's marvelous mercy and grace that was working in your life, and that's worthy of our praise this morning. Amen? Then Peter gives us a final one. He gives us a final reason to praise God. As if those first three weren't enough, he says, "Let's praise God for His protective power in our salvation that will be

revealed." Now, I love this. He's talked about this inheritance that's reserved in heaven for you, [inaudible 00:39:53] verse five, "Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in time."

In the same way that God keeps and guards our inheritance, guess what He does? He keeps and guards us. Let me tell you on the authority of God's word. If you trusted Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, if He is the Lord of your life, let me show you a promise from God's word this morning, you're going to make it. Did you hear what I said? You can't screw it up. You're going to make it. "Yeah, but Pastor Jeff, I know I'm a Christian, but I'm living in sin right ..." You're going to make it. God promises by His protective power to deliver you to the Father.

Jude 24 says that He is going to present you faultless before the Father with exceedingly great joy. Romans 8:31 says, "And if God is for you, who can be against you?" In other words, if you trip, if you fall, if you stumble, if you're in a rut, I got promise for you. He's worthy of being praised because He is going to get you home. You're going to make it. Amen?

Amen.

The devil will lie to you all the time and say, "Well, what if you screw this up? What if you sin like that? How about that sin in your life? Oh, Jesus is really going to be disappointed." He may have been disappointed, but He was so disappointed, He already died for that, forgave that, was resurrected from the dead to redeem that, and here's what He says, "I'm bringing you home. You're my girl. I'm bringing you home."

You're my boy. I promise you on the authority of God's word if you're a Christian, you're going to make it all the way into the kingdom to experience all the blessings that God has for you." Don't listen to the lie of the enemy. Praise the Lord that you're His. Amen.

Amen.

Because the enemy will constantly lie, "Well, you're not going to make it now. Oh look at this. You should have known better. Oh look, you screwed that up. Divorced people don't make it. People that have had abortions don't make it." Yes, they do. If they're Christians, they're redeemed and they make it every single time because God is always faithful to His word. Amen?

Amen.

It's good news this morning. It's good news this morning. Notice what he says, "They're protected by the power through faith." Now notice this, this is a really interesting passage, "For a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." "Well, Pastor Jeff, I thought salvation was already revealed in Christ. What's ready to be revealed in the last time? I thought I was already saved." You need to understand when you study God's word, salvation is referred to as a past tense event, a present tense event and a future tense event. Here it's being referred to in the future tense.

There is a past tense understanding of salvation. For it is by grace, we have been saved through faith. It's not our own doing. It's a gift of God. To say, as a Christian, I've already been saved or I was saved. Entirely correct. Because what

we're saying in moment is that we've been delivered from the penalty of our sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It's all washed away. It's a done deal, and we praise God for that. We've been saved, I am saved. But guess what? Presently, I am being saved right now. Right?

In the present tense, here's what God's doing to my salvation, I've been delivered from the penalty of sin. Now God is delivering me from the power of sin. God is growing me in holiness and showing me that I no longer have to submit to sin anymore. I no longer have to do the things I used to do, that I can be set free. It means in the same way there is no more condemnation now, I can live in a way where there's no more bondage. I can actually live free. When people say, "You can't get over that sin," Jesus says, "You can't. But with my power, oh yes, you can."

In the present tenses, god is helping us to live out our salvation as He is saving us so that we're being prepared for the coming kingdom. Church, listen to me, many Christians never make it out of stage one. Many Christians, 30 years after being saved, will say, "Well, I'm saved. There's no condemnation for me," while all along still living in bondage, while all along still living in fear and guilt and condemnation and sin. I got news for you, church. You have a new identity in Christ and you no longer need to live the way that you used to live.

It means you have power over your sin through the Holy Spirit to live a holy life. Then what is there? There's a future salvation that's coming. How many are excited to about that? Amen? That's beyond just the penalty of sin. That's beyond just the power of sin. How about this one? There's coming a day where we're going to be freed from

the presence of sin. There will be no more sin. You won't even know how to sin. You won't be around people that know how to sin. All we'll know how to do is glorify God and love each other. That's all we'll ever do.

That day's coming, and Peter says that day's about ready to be revealed, and that's what he's looking forward to, and that God is preparing us and protecting us and keeping us and helping us yearn for the day, for seeing the day that we live out our living hope where there's no more sin in our life, where we're totally delivered. It's not just power over it. It's there is no more. Death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? [crosstalk 00:45:04] It's done. Amen and amen. To God be the glory.

What Peter is saying, based upon our salvation, is God worthy of being praised? Yeah. You say, "Well, how do I know God can protect me and get me there?" Just a cursory read of the Bible, you'll see God's power. God dispatched one angel in the Old Testament that slew 185,000 Assyrians in a moment. That was one of His dispatched soldiers. This is the same God that we read about a couple weeks ago that surrounded the Syrian armies when they were coming after Elisha. This is the same God that delivered Israel from Egypt and protected them and fed them and took care of them.

This is the same God that protected Joseph from condemnation. This is the same God that empowered David to defeat Goliath. Does our God have power to do what He says He can do? Absolutely. Therefore, in Christ, there is no condemnation,

there's no bondage, and guess what? There is no death. The day you close your eyes and breathe your last will be the most alive you've ever been if you're a believer in Christ. I think a lot about, when I read this passage, the Secret Service. If you've ever been on the Secret Service, when they're protecting the president or secretary of state or vice president, there's so many people dispatched to protect them and they have one job.

It's protecting that person and making sure they get where they need to go. That's their job. Their job is not to become your best friend. Their job is not to make sure you had a good experience and got your picture made. Their job is to get their person protected where they need to go. Let me tell you something. The United States may dispatch a lot of Secret Service for important people in our country. Let me tell you what God dispatches, His army, and no one but no one can touch you because you are God's son or daughter and you will make it home. Amen?

Amen.

He's worthy of being praised. He's our living hope. He's the God of all nations. When we gather together and we sing praise, that's what we do. Now, a lot of people sometimes think that praise and good worship is warm up for good preaching. According to the Bible, good preaching is the warm up for good worship. Right? We hear God's truth. We know what He's done. Peter's given us four reasons today that God is worthy for us, even if we don't know how to sing, to give Him our best worship. The way that we're going to end our services today on both campuses is to sing a couple songs to the glory of God.

Not because there's anything magical about these songs, but it's a response from our heart saying, "God, you're worthy of our worship, and God, I thank you for your mercy and I appreciate the inheritance that's coming and that you're protecting me no matter where I am, and you're going to get me to where I need to go." But I want to make sure before we close today that everybody here has had a chance to make sure Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life because it makes worship a whole lot easier when Jesus is the centerpiece.

Would you all just stand with me on both campuses, and I pray? I'm just going to invite our prayer teams on both campuses to come forward. If during the singing of either of these two songs, you want some people to pray for you, they'll be here. Feel freedom to worship, but let's pray before the Lord. Lord Jesus, Lord, we come before you now and we've heard your word. You're totally worthy of being praised and we want to praise you. If you're here today and Jesus Christ is not the Lord of your life, here's how you can pray, "Lord, I know I'm a sinner and I'm in need of your mercy, but I believe you died on the cross for me and that you rose from the dead, and right now, right where I'm at, I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit and take over my life."

Lord, for those of us who are here who have been leaves for a while now, here's what we say, "Lord, thank you for your mercy again. Thank you for the living hope of Jesus Christ. Lord, we've heard your word. We say you're worthy of our worship. Lord, you crossed a great chasm to demonstrate your love and mercy to us. Lord, we



just want to celebrate back by telling you you're so worthy of our praise, we are so undeserving of your love, and we give you all the glory in our church this morning. In Jesus name. Amen and amen. Can we give God some praise this morning?