

Clean & Dirty Bottles

1 Peter 1:17-21

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, July 2, 2017

If you would, turn with me in your Bibles to the book of 1 Peter. And as you're doing that ... Horatio G. Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman who had seen his share of sorrow. Growing up in the 1800s, shortly after getting married, he lost his firstborn son to pneumonia. And later that same year he lost most of his business to the Chicago Fire of 1871. We don't have any comments from him about that period in his life, but we do have some comments about another time. A few years later, on November 21st, 1873, the French ocean liner Ville du Havre was crossing the Atlantic Ocean bound for Europe, when it struck a larger ship and began to sink. The tragic thing about that event was that Spafford's wife and four daughters were on board. Within minutes the entire ship was capsized and underwater, and 226 passengers died, including all four of his girls. His wife alone survived by clinging to a piece of driftwood after being thrown overboard. And when he heard about the tragedy, Horatio boarded the first ship he could find to see his wife. And when he crossed the point in the Atlantic where the tragedy happened, the ship's captain very graciously pointed it out to him and said, "This is the spot where your family died." While he was on that spot with his daughters' remains in the sunken ship beneath him in the water, he wrote these words, "When peace, like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well, with my soul." Let me ask you something this morning. What would make a man say that? What would cause a man to lose four of his children and return to the spot where they died and say, "It is well with my soul"? What would make a man lose all he had in a senseless, pointless accident and say, "I'm okay with it, God. Whatever my lot, I'm okay with that. I'm fine"?

I would argue that it is the mercy of God. I would argue that it's the fact that Horatio Spafford knew he had been rescued from something much worse than that tragedy. He had been rescued from hell. If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we're in a series called The Suffering Church where we're talking about how the church should handle pain and suffering. And let me just say on the front end, that the church handles pain and suffering when it realizes that it deserves something so much worse than what this life has to offer. We all deserve hell. When we're slandered at work, we deserve something so much worse than slander. We deserve to go to hell. When we're sick, when we're in a car accident, when we lose children at sea, we deserve something so much worse than all of that. We deserve to spend eternity in hell for our sins. We've offended a holy God. We have broken His law, we have trampled His commandments. We have lied and lusted and stolen, we have cheated and hated and had vain, proud thoughts. And now God has forgiven us. He has shown us mercy through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has pardoned it all. We deserve so much worse than what we are getting. Friends, you don't want what you deserve. Horatio Spafford understood that as he was sitting on the Atlantic Ocean, thinking about his daughters' death. He would later go on and say, "My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul." The church gets through suffering when it remembers that ... when it remembers that sin has been nailed to the cross, "and I bear it no more". Let me say this another way: (and I'm asking this because I know we all say this) do

you ever say, "I don't deserve that"? "My boss was a real jerk today. He lashed out at me in front of my friends. He put me down. I don't deserve that." No, you don't. You deserve to go to a lake of fire eternally for your sins. That's what you deserve, see? I remember when I was in a singles ministry in Los Angeles. I remember, we would talk with people that were older and single and they would say, "Why am I not married yet? I don't deserve this." And we would very graciously and gently remind them, "No, you don't deserve that. You deserve to be condemned eternally." It's the grace of God that allows you to be single and still alive. Do you ever say, "I don't deserve the wife I have, I don't deserve the husband I have. I don't deserve to be sick like this." You see, that kind of thinking is totally against the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A man once fell into a pit in a hole in the ground and a psychologist came along and said, "How do you feel in that pit? As long as you feel good that's all that matters." And the man said, "Well, that doesn't help me, I'm still in the pit. Can you get me out?" And the psychologist couldn't so he went away. Later that same day a philosopher came along and said, "Well, what is a pit, really? What is a hole in the ground?" The man said, "That doesn't help me, either. Look at me! What do you think it is? I'm stuck here, get me out." And the philosopher couldn't so he went away. A mystic came along and said, "You only think you're in the pit, but you're not really in there." A faith healer came along and said, "As long as you believe you're out of the pit, you'll get out of it." A legalist came by and said, "Only bad people fall into a pit, you need to climb and work your way out." A universalist came by and said, "There are no pits. God would never send anyone to a pit." And the man was about to give up hope when Jesus came along and pulled him out of the pit. My friends, that's what Jesus Christ has done for you. He has pulled you out of the pit where all these other things of this world couldn't do it, God came along, the Son of God came along, and rescued you from hell. He pardoned your sins, He forgave your transgressions, He was crushed for your iniquities, and by His wounds, you were healed, so who cares if this life is hard? It's so much more than you deserve. God is so, so gracious to us, that's how we get through suffering; That's how we get through pain, and that all brings us to the book of 1 Peter.

1 Peter was written to some Christians in a pit, or Christians who had been rescued from a pit. It was written to people who bore their sins no more. Verse 1 starts off and it says, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia," I keep by repeating that verse to you when we start off in 1 Peter because there's so much in here. Peter says this was written to aliens. It was written to people who don't belong here. They belong somewhere else. The verse says, "they were scattered," that word "scattered" is *diaspora* in Greek or "dispersion." It referred to the time when the Babylonians and Persians took over the ancient world and dispersed the people, they scattered them. They took over Egypt and scattered the Egyptians to Rome, they took over Rome and scattered the Romans to Egypt. They scattered the people everywhere, and these people were a part of that. It's interesting that we don't know their names. A couple of these locations, like Galatia, we have a letter to the church at Galatia, so that was talking about these people. Other than that, most of these other ones are anonymous Christians. They were scattered from their homes, they were suffering, they were in pain and Peter says, "That's okay, because you have been chosen."

Verse 1 says they "have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ." "Chosen" is a salvific term, here. "Chosen

for salvation" is the idea. God chose to rescue them from the pit; God chose to take them out of hell. The world had nothing to do with them. The world rejected them. God chose them, Peter says. So who cares if you're scattered; who cares if you're suffering. This is all that matters.

Peter says that this choosing leads to a "new birth" in verse 3 and "an inheritance" in verse 4. If you follow along in the chapter it leads to protection of God in verse 6, and salvation in verse 9. We've covered all this in previous weeks. It leads to a prepared mind and a sober spirit in verse 13. It should lead to obedience and holiness in verse 14 as well, and that brings us to what we're going to talk about this morning.

Starting in verse 14, Peter says that if you are chosen, if you are saved, you will be holy, you will live a holy life. If Jesus brought you out of the pit, you're going to live like it. You're not going to live like you're still in it. You're not going to live with the stench of hell. To say this with an illustration I used last week, your bottle will look very different from the world's. If you remember last week, I had a bottle with me up here on stage and I said, "What's in the bottle comes out of it in a trial." Do you guys remember that? I came up here and made a mess. If I were to shake this bottle, water would come out of it. Don't get it on the guitar. Why does water come out of it? Well, because water's in it. I could shake this bottle from now until eternity, milk will never come out of this bottle. In the same way, what's inside of you comes out of you in a trial. What's down in your heart comes out of you when you're suffering, and Peter says here that if you put good things in the bottle, good things will come out. What do they say, "Garbage in, garbage out"? Well, good things in, good things out. If you put a new birth and an inheritance and obedience and salvation in the bottle, then all of that will come out of it when you're shaken up. Your bottle will look different from the world's.

That's what the word "holiness" means, by the way. It means "different," or "set apart". When God brought Israel out of the wilderness, He said, "I want you to be a holy nation." By that He meant, "I want you to be a different nation. I want you to be set apart from the nations around you." When the Jews were building a temple, He said, "I want the items in the temple to be holy." By that, He meant, "I don't want them to be used for anything else, only the temple." The lampstand, showbread, all that stuff, only for the temple. You don't take the lampstand home and put it in your house. It's only for this.

In the same way, Christians are to be holy. We're to be different. When we lose our daughters in a shipwreck, we should be different from the world around us. We shouldn't respond in the same way the world does. We don't grieve as those who have no hope. We don't weep as those who have no future. When our boss is a jerk to us at work, same thing. We should be different. When our marriage is messy and one day you find out you didn't marry Prince Charming and Mrs. Right, we should be different.

And in verses 17-21, Peter tells us why. If you're taking notes, in 1 Peter 1:17-21, Peter gives us some reasons why we should be holy. Here are some reasons why we should be different. And the first one is this: We should be holy, we should be different, because we have a Father. Our motivation for holiness starts with this. We have a Father. We have a Dad who cares about us. Some people don't have that. I've talked with a lot of people who just weep. They're in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s, and they still grieve because they didn't have an earthly father. I want to tell

you something, if that's you this morning, you have a Heavenly Father. You have a perfect Father. And therefore, you should be holy as He is holy. If you read, starting in verse 14, it says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' If you address as Father ... " And we'll just stop there.

Peter starts out with the phrase, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours." Children want to be like their parents, don't they? You might know what I'm talking about. Children want to be like their fathers. I can't think of too many days when I don't go into my bedroom and one of my kids doesn't have my belt on or my hat on. They're eating my food. I start eating bacon, first thing, all the eyes turn toward me. I have to eat it in hiding. (You dads know what I'm talking about. You have a stash in the garage. That's where you eat most of your meals.) Children want to be like their Dads. Well, friends, we are holy because we want to be like Daddy. We do not conform to the former lusts, because we want to be like our Father, our Heavenly Father.

This is also an interesting phrase, because to the Jews, it was unusual to refer to God as "my Father" or to make it personal. They called God "Father", but not "my Father". It was not a personal thing. It was national. It was for the nation, but not the individual. There was no intimacy involved in it. When Peter talks about "Father" here, he means an intimate relationship with your Father.

In fact, the only time the Jews could come into the presence of God was once a year on the Day of Atonement, and on that day, only the High Priest could do it under pain of death. In fact, legend says that they would tie a rope around the High Priest's foot so that when he went behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, they could pull him out if he died. They wouldn't have to go in there after him. He wore bells on his robe so they could hear him. And the thought was, "Well, if we don't hear the bells anymore, we'll just pull him out with a rope and we don't have to go in there because he got struck dead by God." So that was how Israel looked at God. He was distant, far away. You couldn't just walk into the Holy of Holies. You couldn't just come into His presence. He was distant.

But the New Testament changed that. When Jesus died, He tore the veil that separated the holy place from us. When Jesus came, He entered the holy place and sprinkled it with His blood, so we can enter it too. And that should motivate us, Peter says, to be holy. You can approach God now. You don't have to stand at a distance, you Gentiles. Peter is talking to people that were nobodies in the ancient world.

He goes on to say, in verse 17, he says, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." That's a little difficult to track with him, but he says you have a Father, but he also says you have a judge. Yes, you draw near to God through Christ, but you conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on Earth.

In other words, after talking about the closeness and nearness of God, Peter goes into this issue of judgment and fear to say, "You should respect God." You come boldly, but you don't come brazenly to the throne of God. You come confidently, but you don't come cocky into the presence. On the one hand, you don't fear Him, because your sins have been paid for. On the other hand, you do fear Him because He will judge you for your sins. Not judgment in hell, that's not what this is referring to. This is referring to the time when you will stand before God and give an account of your life.

Here are a couple of passages on that: Matthew 12:36 says, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment." That means every careless word for Christians, too. You and I will give an account for every careless word. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." "All" means "all" there. All of us appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Revelation 22:12 says, "Behold, I am coming quickly ... to render to every man according to what he has done." That's all wrapped up in what Peter is saying here. Every man will answer to God. I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone say, "I can do whatever I want to now because I'm a Christian." Has anybody ever heard that before? Is that a plague in Canada as well as it is in the States? "I'm saved now, so I can act however I want. I'm a Christian, which means Jesus is my fire insurance, so I can drink and cuss and smoke. I can lie and cheat and steal. No one can touch me. When my boss chews me out, I can chew him out back. When my wife disrespects me, I can disrespect her, because my sin has been pardoned." Peter says, "No, you can't." Because you will have to answer to God for that, and God will hold you accountable.

To say it with our bottle illustration, God sees right through your bottle. He sees everything inside. He knows what's in your heart. He knows what you fantasize about. He knows what you think about. He knows everything, so you need to live accordingly. You need to walk softly in the presence of your God. You need to tread carefully. You don't have to tie a rope around your foot, but maybe that image might help. You're approaching a holy God. You need to be holy.

A Supreme Court judge in the States once had to let a prisoner go on a technicality, but right before he did, he said, "I know you're guilty, and I want you to remember that one day you will stand before a better and wiser Judge, and then you will be dealt with according to His law." Peter says this here. I think we've all gotten in trouble and had to go stand before our fathers. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? I'm the only one? I remember when I got thrown out of a baseball game for arguing with the umpire about a call. It was not a strike. I don't even remember. And the worst part about getting thrown out of the baseball game was not getting thrown out of the game. The worst part was having to go home and face my father. That was the embarrassing part. Peter says the same thing here. We will all stand before our fathers and give an account for our life. Therefore, we should be holy, and at least for the next reason we should be holy.

We should be holy because we have a Redeemer. Not only do we have a Father, but we have a Redeemer. We have someone who has bought us back from our sins, which is what the word "redemption" means. It was a slave term. It meant to walk into the slave market and buy a slave back from his slavery. God has done that for us in Christ. If you read on in verses 17 through 18,

it says, "If you address as Father the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth, knowing that you are not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your fathers." In the pagan world of the first century, the way to get into heaven was to earn your way there by buying it with silver or gold. That's why the ancient temples were so elaborate and why they were covered from head to foot with gold. When invading armies would come into a city, oftentimes the first thing they would invade would be the temple because it was just loaded with money. It's also why rich people were held in high esteem in the ancient world, because they were the only ones who could buy their way into heaven. They were the only ones who could afford to go there. But that's futile, Peter says, because what good is gold in heaven?

Have you ever heard the story of the rich man who was dying, so he asked God if he could take his possessions with him? And the Lord said, "Sure, you can. But you need to melt them into bars of gold first." Has anybody ever heard this? And so he did that. And when the rich man got to heaven, the Lord said to him, "Why did you bring all that stuff to make roads with?" You see, you use gold for roads in heaven. It's worthless. You walk on it there, and it's futile to try to be saved with it.

You've got to be saved with something greater than money and that's what verse 19 goes on and says. It says that you are not redeemed with gold, but with "precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." There's a lot of imagery in here. But in Bible times, like it is today, gold and silver were expensive, because they were precious. Only so much gold and silver existed, and therefore, it was very expensive. We have things like that today. You men may remember when you found your sweetheart, you bought her an engagement ring that was very expensive. Why was it so expensive? Well, because she was worth it, amen? You better say that. Go home and say, "She was worth it." You paid that price because that ring was precious. It was one of a kind. There was only one diamond in the world like that diamond. There was only one ring in the world like that ring, and that's why it cost so much. Well, Peter says here, "You have been bought with something more precious than a diamond engagement ring. You've been bought with the precious blood of Christ."

Jesus was sinless. He never broke the law. Where you and I lied and lusted and stole, He never did. Where you and I cheated and hated and lashed out at our boss at work, He never did that. Which made him extremely rare. He was one of a kind. He was the only Man who deserved to go to heaven when He died. He was the only Man who could walk into the presence of God. In love for us, that perfect Man traded places with us at the cross.

You could look at it this way: I brought another bottle with me this morning. I brought a dirty one. My son and I had fun with that in the back yard yesterday. It's full of dirt. I think that we would all agree that if God looked into our bottle, that's what he would see. Would we all agree with that? If the Lord of heaven and earth looked into our hearts, He would not see this clean bottle but He would see this dirty bottle. We're not clean in His eyes. We're not without sin, and Peter says here in this verse, "Jesus came to drink this to the bottom for us on the cross." He came to be the spotless and unblemished lamb of God for you. The lambs in the Old Testament, in order to sacrifice, they had to be without any kind of blemish or spot.

They could not be lame; they could not be blind; they could not have disease. Jesus was the perfect example of an unblemished lamb. I told you before about the time Abraham Lincoln's train was carrying his body after he was shot. And as it passed through a certain town, a slave woman came up to it, holding her baby, and she said, "Take a long look, honey, that man died for you." Friends, Peter is saying, "Take a long look, honey. This Man died for you." He went to the cross for you. He poured out His precious blood, which is just another synonym for the word "life". You could put the word "life" in here. He poured out His life for you. So the least you could do, he's saying, is live a holy life. The least you could do is live like this, or strive to live like this. I mean, no one's perfect, that's not the idea. But this is what you're aiming for. The way some people live, this is what they're aiming for. Not Christians.

I think there's a great misunderstanding today as to why Christians live holy lives. Some think we do it to earn our way to God. We do it to clean up our bottles and pull ourselves out of the pit. But Job 14:4 says, "Who can make the clean out of the unclean?" No one. Proverbs 20:9 says, "Who can say, 'I have cleansed my heart. And I am pure from sin?'" No one. Jeremiah 13:23 says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good, who are accustomed to doing evil." Friends, you can't clean your bottle. You can't wash it off. There's not a scrub brush deep enough to get down to your problem, your sin problem. So you need someone else to do it for you and that's what Jesus Christ did. He traded places with you and that's why you are different. You're different out of gratitude, not out of merit. You're not trying to earn it. You're different as a way of saying, "thank you," not as a way of saying "Gimme gimme."

When Donald Grey Barnhouse was starting his ministry in Philadelphia, his wife suddenly died of cancer and left him with several young children to care for. As they were leaving the funeral, a huge truck passed by and he asked the kids, "Which one would you rather be hit by, the truck or its shadow?" And the kids said, "Well, the shadow, of course." And Barnhouse said, "The truck hit Jesus, so your mother could be hit by the shadow." Friends, this is why we live holy lives, because the truck hit Jesus, so we could be hit by the shadow. He redeemed us. He bought us back with His blood, with His life. Isaiah says, "By His wounds we are healed." We could look at it this way, He swallowed this dirty bottle so you could have this clean bottle.

This leads to another reason why we should be holy, and that is we should be holy because we are foreknown. You have a Father, we are redeemed, and Peter goes on to say, "We are foreknown," which is another way of saying "chosen". If you read on in verse 20, he goes on and he says, "For Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you." At first glance, this looks like it's saying that Jesus was foreknown and it is saying that, but it says he was foreknown and has appeared for the sake of you. In other words, Jesus was foreknown from before the foundation of the world to save you. That's what this means. Redemption was not a last-minute idea in the plan of God. When Adam and Eve fell, God didn't say, "Oh no, what do I do now? I haven't thought about this." When Adam and Eve's children fell and murdered each other and plunged the world into chaos, He didn't say, "Oh no, what do I now?" He knew what he was going to do. He was going to send Jesus. That was decided from before the foundation of the world, which is another way of saying "before time began". Other passages say we were decided the same way. Ephesians 1:4 says, "He chose us in Him from before the foundation of the world." Second Timothy 1:9 says that

God has saved us and called us with the holy calling, which was granted in Christ from all eternity.

Jesus' work of redemption was granted to us from all eternity and this verse goes on to say that He has appeared in these last times for the sake of you to bring it to a fulfillment. The plan was put in place in eternity past but has been enacted in these last times for the sake of you. The phrase "last times" is a reference to the church age. After the church age, the world will end ... the world as we know it anyway. These are the last times. And Peter says that if you want to be saved from that, you need to realize Jesus died for the sake of you. You need to make salvation personal.

One of the ladies who was baptized last week said she never understood salvation until she understood it was personal. "Jesus died for me," she said. He didn't just die for the bad people out there, He died for the bad people in here. He didn't just die for the liars and the cheaters and the thieves in the world, He died for the liars and cheaters and thieves in my heart. Martin Luther said, "The heart of religion lies in its personal pronouns." The words "our" and "us" must be written in letters of gold. He who does not believe this cannot be a Christian. Christ did not love only Peter and Paul and give Himself for them. He gave himself for all those who would be saved. And you cannot be saved until you believe that. J. C. Ryle said,

I cannot see how a person can have salvation without asking for it. That a person will receive pardon for their sins who will not so much as lift up their heart inwardly and say, "Lord Jesus, I need this. Can I not have it?" Prime ministers and kings, poor men and peasants all alike attend to their bodies. No person can eat or drink or sleep for another. And no person can be saved for another. You have to ask for salvation yourself.

Can we all say "amen" to that?

I need to be blunt with you guys this morning. Holiness starts here. You have to ask for it. And some of you, I don't know who I'm talking to here, I'm just throwing this out here, but some people will not be saved because they won't ask. They're too proud. The Bible says, "He who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And maybe some of you in this room won't be saved because you won't call. Salvation is free, and you can't earn it. But some of you won't ever have it because you won't accept the free gift.

Some of you have heard the story of the man who was lost at sea so he prayed to be rescued. And a boat came by and he said, "No, thanks. I'm waiting for God. I prayed to be rescued." And then a plane came by and he said the same thing. And finally a piece of driftwood floated by and he said, "No, thanks. I'm waiting to be rescued." And then he drowned. He just got tired of swimming and he drowned. Then he stood before God and he said, "God, why didn't you help me?" And the Lord said, "I sent a boat and a plane and a piece of driftwood, what more do you want from Me?" Friends, God sent His Son, what more do you want from Him? He spilled His precious blood, what more do you want? He walked into the Holy of Holies and tore the veil so you could have a Father, so you could draw near to God, what more do you want? God will be your Father, but you have to ask him to be your Father. He will redeem you but you have to ask for redemption.

It's said that when a person works eight hours a week and is paid for it that's a wage. When he competes in a contest and wins a trophy, that's a prize. When he does something extraordinary and receives recognition, that's an award. But when he gets something free, that's a gift. When you can't earn it or compete for it or do anything extraordinary to get it, but you get it anyway. That's a gift. Friends, God is offering you a gift. He is offering to exchange this dirty bottle for this clean bottle. You can't earn it and you can't compete for it and you can't do anything special to get it, but you do have to ask. Won't you ask this morning?

Let's go to one more reason why we should be holy. We should be holy because we will be resurrected. We should be holy because we have a Father, we have been redeemed, we have been foreknown and one more reason why we should be holy is because we will be resurrected. One day, we're going to get a new body. Not only is Jesus going to clean our bottles off, but the Scriptures say He's going to give us a new one, a brand new one, a sinless one, one without any dirt in it. And we need to live in light of that.

If you read on in verses 20-21, it says, "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." We talked about this a little bit on Easter Sunday. But if you do a study of all the religions of the world you will see that there are a lot of different ideas out there about the afterlife; some teach reincarnation, or the idea that you get to come back again as something else. The idea is if you were really good here, you get to come back as a rich man or maybe someone in high society; if you were really bad, you get to come back as a cockroach, but that's not very encouraging because it's like saying you get to trade one dirty bottle for another. Do you get that? You just trade one life of sin for another. You don't break the cycle of sin, you just have to keep repeating it. Other religions teach annihilation, which means you don't get a bottle at all. This life is all there is, you get one chance, that's it, then you're done. Some teach, I think it's called veneration, or the idea that you come back to life in the spirit world with your ancestors. You float among white puffy clouds, strumming a harp for all eternity, or something like that. But the Bible teaches a resurrection. It teaches that you get a brand-new bottle, one without any sin in it. Peter says that your hope and confidence are in this: Jesus was raised from the dead, so you will be raised from the dead in Him. Jesus came back to life, so you will come back to life in Him. To say this another way, Jesus defeated death, so you can defeat death.

I think the scariest thing in this world is death, amen? Does anybody else go to a funeral and feel a little scared? I preach a lot of funerals, I'm nervous at every one of them because there's a dead person in the room. Peter says that Jesus came to defeat death, and if He can defeat that, He can defeat anything. Shipwrecks, bad bosses, terrible marriages, He can defeat all of that; bad health, losing your job, whatever it is. So we put our hope in Him. When Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary to China, was lying in bed, he said, "I'm so weak, I can't do anything. All I can do is lie still in the arms of God and trust." That's all we can do, is lie still in the arms of God and trust. D. L. Moody told a friend as he was dying, "Tomorrow, you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't believe it. For I will be more alive than I have ever been." We put our hope in that one day we're getting new bodies in Christ; clean ones, perfect ones. I look forward to living in a place where I don't have to blow my nose anymore. Anybody say "amen" to that?

There's no sickness in Heaven, there's no Kleenex's there, you don't need them. (That's not theological, don't go quoting that, about the Kleenex's.)

But this is why you fight sin and live a different sort of life: because you have a Heavenly Father that loves you, you have a Redeemer who died for you, you've been foreknown, and one day you will be resurrected. You do this because God has shown you mercy. He's pulled you out of the pit. You do it because He's given you way more than you could ever deserve. And because of that, when trials come, you say, "Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul." Just before he died, one of the Founding Fathers of America wrote this on his tombstone, he said, "This is the body of Benjamin Franklin. Printed like the cover of an old book. Its contents torn out, stripped of its beauty and splendor, it lies here as food for worms, but the work shall not be wholly lost, for it will, as believed, appear once more in a new and more perfect edition, corrected and amended by the author." Friends, this is why we live holy lives, because one day we're going to be corrected and amended by the Author, amen? One day we're going to get new bodies. That's where we put our hope and that's what we trust in and we want to live like it now.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we pray for Your grace and mercy in applying these words to our lives when we talk about holiness or even the motivations for it. I know I'm convicted; I'm sure many of us are. But Lord, we thank you for the Lord Jesus who died for us, so that we would not have to be holy to go into Your presence. We are holy in Him. Christ was perfectly holy for us and we live lives to reflect that. Lord, we thank you for grace, we thank you for Christ, we thank you for His precious blood. I pray for those here this morning who may have never believed, that You would draw them to the Saviour. And for those who are saved, Lord, may we rejoice in the freeness of our salvation. May we rejoice that Jesus paid it all and may we walk away and say it is well with our soul no matter what comes, because we have been given more than we deserve. Thank you for the Lord Jesus. We pray this all in His name, amen.