

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
January 24, 2016

Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3-5

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
1:4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,  
1:5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We began to study 1 Peter and finished 1:1-2 last week. Today, we continuously learn, focusing on 1:3. Let me talk about our God from three perspectives; that is, "Blessed God," "Father of Jesus Christ," and "Source of Hope."

**1. Blessed God**

First, Peter called God "Blessed." This word is "eulogêtos," from the verb "eulogêô" in Greek. This Greek word has the meaning of "to do something good with mercy, more than honesty and loyalty," not likely to oil someone's way only in words. God is "eulogêtos" because He first talks to us with good words and does something better. Furthermore, He already said, "I forgive your sins, and accept you. I am your salvation, and you are mine," since then we were against Him. In fact, He faced us with compassion, grace, and mercy, regardless how sinful we are; there's no one who can face holy and righteous God. We are the ones who get angry or frustrated to our close people, but God is always talking to us with good words and

does something better. We are experiencing this in our daily life, I'm sure.

God is "eulogêtos" because, in addition to the fact that He is good, God should receive our best, greatest praises. As you know, many people support us; and you would be very thankful to the ones who helped or encouraged you in hard times. It also is very natural to praise and respect someone superb. However, the ones who know God do something more. Not only they give thanks and communicate with people, but they also remember God helped them through the people, and give thanks to God, too. They communicate with God and rely on Him. They adore and praise Him, too. Our worship is to take our thankfulness of the grace in our daily life to God, who actually gave it to us, and to offer our good words.

"Blessed" means the blessings from God, and our blessings to God. I believe worship is to know how much He blesses us and that we also answer through blessing God. If you don't know who God is, or participate in the worship just as routine, you should reconsider. We have to know how good He was to us, and to be touched by the fact, and to praise the one who is "Blessed" with good words. Therefore Peter's letter begins with the blessings to our God, we should start our each week and each day with prayer to bless our God, too.

## **2. Father of Jesus Christ**

Next, God is called "Father of Jesus Christ". This words teaches us a lot of things.

First, God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We call it Holy Trinity. This Trinity is described in verse 2, where it says, "according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.” This means that our salvation is accomplished on the foreknowledge of God the Father, redemption of Jesus Christ and cleaning of the Holy Spirit.

Although there is only one God, He is also the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but He is one God. This is very difficult to comprehend with our brain. As the Bible describes Trinity in the context of our salvation, we can only understand Trinity when we believe God the Son Jesus Christ with a help of Holy Spirit and call God our Father. When we look back our own salvation, we begin to understand Trinity, which is written in the Bible.

Second, God is the loving God. God is alone but He is not lonely. If God is lonely, he cannot be a loving God. God has loved His Son through the Holy Spirit from the eternal beginning. Father, Son and the Holy Spirit make one in love. God pours the same love that he poured to his Son over us. Because God has Son, He can love us and become our Father as well.

Third, God shows himself to us through Jesus Christ. God is great, far beyond humans. However hard we work, we cannot know him completely. If we can unveil God completely, then he is not God anymore. However, if we don't know God, there is no loving relationship between God and human. That is why God sent His Son to the world of humans as a human being. And this is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became human. God revealed himself to humans in a variety of ways before He sent Jesus Christ, but as a final mean, He

revealed himself to us through the Son Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Peter encourages us in 2 Peter 3:18, “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” God is infinite and so is Jesus Christ. No one can say he or she knows God well enough. The moment we think we know God and there is nothing we can learn about Him, our faith stops growing right there. We would like to make an every effort to knowing our Lord and seek for our spiritual growth. God is the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. By believing and knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord, we get to know God as the Father of us and we will be able to live in his father-like love.

### **3. Source of Hope**

God redeemed us through Jesus Christ so that we can live in the love of God. In the second half of verse 3, we read, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This is a depiction of God’s salvation.

God gave us this salvation through “mercy.” God’s mercy does not mean that God feels sorry for human beings. It is not sentimental and fragile. There is nothing stronger than God’s mercy. It came from heaven and became a bridge between heaven and earth. The road to the salvation was opened, and it was so obvious that everyone could see it. God sent us his Son Jesus Christ as a human being and led him to the cross. The reason is that he forgives our sins through the cross of Lord Jesus Christ. We are forgiven through the cross of Lord Jesus, and it was mentioned in 1:2 “for sprinkling with his blood”, and we have already learned it.

God let Lord Jesus, who died on the cross, raised from the dead. God gives new life to us who are dead in the sin through the resurrection of Lord Jesus. “Born again” can be said “born from heaven” or “regeneration”. We are born from our parents. This is our first born. However, we need to re-born in order to become a child of God, be loved by God, and love God. Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). This is about the “born from heaven” and “regeneration”. God saved people who believe in him with the life that resurrected Jesus Christ.

Our salvation is not happening in our mind, not invisible, not formless. God carried out his salvation, and it is visible on the earth. Moreover, it clearly exists in the history of human beings. That is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our salvation is through the cross and resurrection. And, there is nothing definitive than the salvation through the cross and resurrection.

Therefore, our hope of the faith are also firm and sure. As it was written that “He has caused us to be born again to a living hope ...” in verse 3, our hope is a “living hope.” Many of the hope of this world won’t become real. It’s not a few that the hope becomes disappointment. But the hope Jesus gave us, is a “living” hope. It never dies, disappears, and loses heart. And, the life that we received when we believed Jesus Christ, and by that we live, is the eternal life. This life never ends, because it is “eternal.” Even the life on earth ends, we will live by the eternal life. We live now with God, and after leaving earth, we will live with God eternally. Heaven is the goal of our journey. The completion of our salvation waits us.

When we think of it, we can have greater hope. This hope comes from Jesus Christ. It is the faith to live by the hope. Our daily life does not going well always. Big problems or difficulties may happen and we may get lost. We go up and down even by small incidents in our daily life. When you face such situation, don't forget that we have a "living hope" that supports us. This hope comes from God who saved us through Jesus Christ. Look up God by having the hope.

**(Prayer)**

Heavenly Father, we lived without God and hope. But, you saved by the regeneration and gave us a "living hope." We thank you because of the hope. When we are burdened by afflictions, and almost lose hope, direct our eyes to the hope. Help us to walk this week's journey by a "living hope." In Jesus name, Amen.