

Guarded by God

by Jim Cymbala

God's promise is to guard us from sin, Satan, and demonic strategies through faith in His power.

Duration: 25:33

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Protection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on a passage from 1 Peter, emphasizing the importance of the gospel. He highlights that through God's great mercy, believers are given new birth and a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The speaker also addresses the disciples' request for increased faith and explains that believers are shielded and protected by God's power. He emphasizes the eternal nature of the inheritance that believers have in heaven and the importance of faith in experiencing God's protection and salvation.

Transcript

The passage that I want us to look at is from 1 Peter, the first chapter, and we're gonna read what Peter said. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you. Now there is the gospel right there.

There's the gospel. That's not join the church, that is the gospel. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his great mercy, God's great mercy, he has given us new birth, born again, into a living hope, hope speaks of the future, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that when we die, we will be raised even as Jesus was, and we're gonna then enter into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, any bank, any stock market, any hiding place in the house, you're gonna lose it one day, but this inheritance is kept in heaven for you. And then verse five, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. Let me read it again.

Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. Okay, so now let's just look at that verse, and I wanna just point out a couple things. In I think the King James, the authorized version, the word is kept, are kept by God's power.

The NIV has improved upon it. There might be a better word than that, which is guarded because it's a military term. Who through faith are shielded or guarded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Let's look at the last part of the sentence. Until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. The Bible teaches salvation as past, sometimes present, and then sometimes future.

Everybody who's a Christian had a moment when they got saved and received salvation. How many can remember the day when you received Christ and you became a Christian? That happened in the past. Then at other times, it speaks about salvation happening now.

You're being saved day by day. That's how the Bible also talks about it. Past, present, and then the Bible also talks about salvation as a future event.

Look, until the coming of the salvation, well, wait a minute, I thought I'm saved. You are, you were, you are, but you really will be when Christ returns. The coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time, which tells us that our salvation now is in a sense in part.

We're still battling with things. We have imperfections, but when Christ returns and we receive, shall we say, full salvation, then there'll be no more devil to tempt us. No more promises that we make will break.

No more dealing with the flesh. How many are looking forward to that? Say amen. There'll be no more crying, no more tears, no more sorrow.

That is the full salvation. So we're saved, we're fully saved, but we don't experience full salvation yet until the coming of Christ. Then we're gonna have a different body.

We're not gonna deal with these physical bodies. Which are the means of a lot of temptation and the seat of certain temptations. Just our physical bodies.

So Peter is now talking about salvation past, present, and future. But what he's talking about here is a marvelous promise that we don't think enough about. And some of us need to be reminded of this for two reasons.

Number one, because we try to do things ourselves. We try to keep ourselves. And then number two, we don't pray enough for faith.

It's very rare that you hear a person ask for more faith. We ask for more love, we ask for more power. But it all hinges, if Caleb doesn't get more faith, he's gonna not experience certain things.

As we're gonna learn now. In fact, the disciples one time said to Jesus, Master, increase our faith. Obviously they couldn't manufacture it.

He didn't say increase it yourself. He listened to that, they wanted more faith. How many want more faith in your life? Right? That verse says though, that believers who are Christians, us, God has a promise for us.

That we are shielded, guarded, and the picture is of a military outpost or a bunch of soldiers out in the desert somewhere, but who are surrounded by a fort so that they are not able to be attacked and killed because the fort protects them. Or as the Psalm says, our God is a fortress, a strong tower, right? God has promised to protect us who are kept, protected, shielded by the power of God. So let's analyze that.

From now until we see Jesus, there's a promise that God would shield us from sin, from Satan, from strategies of demons. God doesn't ask you to do that. It's all done by God.

He just doesn't save, he keeps. This is the mistake that a lot of us make, am I not right? We know that God has to save us, but when it comes to keeping on the right path and living the Christian life, then we're gonna do our utmost and we're gonna try real hard. But Peter says, no, you are kept by the power of God.

You're shielded, you're guarded as a military fortification around you in the spiritual realm, like a wall of fire around you, protecting you, who are shielded and guarded by the power of God, i.e. the Holy Spirit. Imagine how the devil can't get through the power of God around us. And if you just understand that, then it'll do away with some of the thinking that certain Christians have, is that, I just got another letter from someone who said, I'm in a lot of trouble because wherever they were in this country, this was a Muslim situation, but I heard about it recently for some people who were living in an apartment building where there's some Haitians there, and the person said, I'm in trouble now because I'm a Christian, but they're doing voodoo on me and they're doing all of that.

Listen, you're shielded by the power of God. Can somebody say amen? What's the sense of being a Christian if somebody can put a spell on me? What kind of salvation is that? Ah, but listen, let's analyze this whole thing though. Who are shielded and guarded, don't you want that experience? Don't you every day, tomorrow when you get up, don't you want to be guarded by the power of God? Not by a preacher, not by your self-effort, not by making promises that you're gonna live for God? Who are shielded and guarded by the power of God? God says, I've begun a good work in you, now I'm gonna complete it.

I not only save, I keep. But somebody just said something over here which we can easily slip into and which is not quite biblical as we learned from this verse, and now we're gonna get a little more spiritually confrontational because the word of God is confrontational with us here. Who are guarded by the power of God through faith or as the NIV has it, who by faith are guarded by the power of God until the day when they'll inherit the whole salvation, their full salvation.

Who are guarded not automatically by faith. Faith is what brings the power of God to guard me. That's why Christians, you know, God is good all the time.

Somebody said, all the time he guards me. No, he doesn't. He guards us when we trust him.

Otherwise, no Christian would ever backslide. No minister would ever make a wreck of his life. We wouldn't know about all these things.

Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. See, here's the tension in this. Who by faith are guarded by the power of God, shielded, wall of fire.

Nothing can get through by faith. Just like Christ died and offered salvation, but not everybody gets saved. Who gets saved? The one who puts faith in Christ.

God says, I'll guard you and I'll keep you if you have faith. That's why Satan is always after breaking our faith. That's why he distracts us and that's why he'll act like the Holy Spirit and try to get you to try harder and make a promise.

Anything except having trust in Jesus Christ. As long as he has you and me making vows that we're gonna try harder and read the Bible more and all of that other stuff, then he has us, we're just chopped meat for

him because how could we stand against him? But I'm a Christian. You can't stand against him unless you're trusting in God because the Bible clearly says, who are kept by the power of God through faith.

I'll use the authorized version sequence. Who are kept by the power of God through faith until the inheritance is fully received when we seek Christ or die. Through faith.

Brothers and sisters, have we not all experienced that? Haven't we gotten nervous and stopped believing and stopped trusting and then we found ourselves very weak in the face of temptation? Am I saying something that's not true here? How many since you received Jesus Christ, you've messed up once or twice or 2,000 times? Come on, like me. Lift your hand. Well, wait a minute, I thought we're kept by the power of God.

Through faith. Through faith. This explains a lot of things.

That's why when people, some people have simplistic thinking and they meet a Christian who failed, they bring someone in and fail. I don't think they're a Christian because they messed up. How could they be a Christian if they messed up? Why, you never messed up? We haven't messed up? Well, why does Satan have access then and not gonna win the war, but why does he win battles? Because we're kept by God's power through faith.

Everything hinges on faith. For without faith, it's impossible to please God. It's not in trying, Lornell Harris used to sing, but it's in trusting.

It's not in running, but it's in resting that you find the strength of the Lord. So what's that word faith mean? It means trust. Like you trust a doctor, you trust a banker, you trust a lawyer, you trust a used, oh no, don't have anti-lawyer laughing because I got friends who are lawyers.

Like you trust a used car dealer, maybe that would be better. Salvation has to do with two things. That word salvation means deliverance from danger and from disease.

Danger is the judgment of God and we've been delivered by faith in Jesus Christ from the danger because he fulfilled the law for us and he washed away our sins. How many know now you're saved, you're accepted by God, right? Not because of yourself, because of Christ. But it also has the connotation of disease and that speaks of the disease of selfishness, self-seeking, sin.

All sin is rooted in pleasing self rather than thinking of the other person or more importantly, God. And God says, through my son, Jesus Christ, I will not only forgive you of your sins and deliver you from judgment but I will heal that disease inside of you. I will keep you from giving in to the old ways.

Listen to me, from the old anger and the temper tantrums and from the lies and from the filthy speech, now that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, lives inside of you, probably it's not good that we would use filthy language, right? How do you think we pastors feel when we counsel people and we find out when they have fights, they curse each other out and then they lift their hands in church. How do you think we feel? I feel like a failure. I feel like you deserve a better pastor.

I must not communicate well. But why that happens is we get our eyes off of Christ, we stop trusting, we stop clinging. See, as long as I'm clinging and I know that I'm hopeless without him, he will keep me by the power of his word.

He will keep me by the power of God. That's why Satan will fight tooth and nail to get my hands off of Christ. Faith is a clinging.

It's not this faith, it's this faith. It's the faith of your heart and your will that says I can't make it without him. How many have learned you cannot make it without him? I mean an hour, a day.

Have we not learned that? I have learned that. And that's why we don't judge anyone or look down at anyone, but therefore the grace of God goes you or me. And that simple act of clinging and trusting releases the power of God.

See, it's only by revelation we can understand that. It's not in trying, it's in I cannot do this. I will not let you go.

I will keep my eyes on you. I need you every hour. And I trust you.

And then it says who are kept by the power of God. No demon can get through that. No temptation can overcome us.

He is able to keep us from falling. But remember, this is why the Bible says the just shall live by what? Faith. Not just get saved by faith, the just shall live by faith.

Every day, every hour, every moment. And I need that. Because I've had great faith at times and then my faith has like disappeared off the map.

Have anybody ever had that happen to you? You know, I'm a giant in faith sometimes and then I can't get two cents of faith in there. I can't get a mustard seed. So if you're here tonight and you're not being kept by God's power and you see your life like a yo-yo going up and down and your besetting sin comes back and bites you all the time and you're ready to give up because you've tried everything, the point is what you've never tried is to stop trying and to just say, I'm trusting you.

Teach me how to walk holding on to you. Trusting you in every situation, every hour of every day. Because the Bible says he keeps by his own power, he guards our minds and our hearts.

It's the same word that's used in Philippians 4.6 and the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds. Same word, who are guarded by the power of God through faith, through faith. So if you're here tonight and you're struggling, because once you become a Christian, you really take serious when you mess up.

If you're here tonight and it doesn't bother you when you sin and talk wrong or lie or whatever, if that doesn't bother you, then most likely you're not born again. But a born again Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside of them and they feel so horrible after they mess up. How many have gone through that? You just feel terrible after you mess up.

You say, no, God, I love you. You see, if Christ wasn't in you, you wouldn't even care. You say, I'd do it again.

No, no, you can't. That's how you know a real believer. They can't stand sin.

We indulge it, we get pulled away. But the way to stay strong in God is to walk trusting Him, clinging to Him. Now, last word, brothers and sisters, the only way you cling is if you think you're drowning.

The first work of the Holy Spirit is to show you your weakness. I was swimming in Reese Park one time as a little kid. I just learned to swim, but that undertow in Reese Park can be nasty and it pulled me out.

And I was yelling, but nobody heard me. And I'm learning, you know, I'm swimming a little bit now and I'm out there, but I'm not feeling good about my position at all. Suddenly, out of nowhere underneath me, my father, my late dad, he was a strong swimmer.

He comes up underneath me and he grabs me and I can remember the suntan lotion on his shoulders. And oh my goodness, did I cling to him. I put my little hands around his neck and I was like this.

You couldn't break that, why? Because it was either cling to him or I'm going down. That's what faith is. Faith is you wrap your hands around Jesus because you know without you, I can't make it.

Can we say amen to that? Come on, we say amen. That's why I wanna encourage you today. I wanna encourage you.

If you love the Lord and you messed up, I wanna pray with you and we're gonna wait on the Lord. And what we're gonna pray tonight is different. We're gonna pray, Lord, increase our faith.

Teach us how to just hold on to you 24 seven. Not once on Sunday or on Tuesday night prayer meeting. To get up in the morning tomorrow and to have a spirit of faith in our lives.

Jesus, I need you. But it all starts, you don't cling until you feel desperate. Christians who are strong in the Lord are feeling that desperation.

It seems like every moment because they know, man, if I'm left to my own devices, I am gonna self-destruct. I'm messed up. Have we learned that about ourselves? So that's why they said increase our faith.

Close your eyes. I really wanna help someone who's discouraged. You know the biggest discouragements I've ever had in my life? I've had people let me down, people act mean.

You've had the same thing. But my biggest discouragement has been me. You ever have that? You just get discouraged.

You're like, oh God, why don't I grow more? Why am I more like Jesus Christ? Man, I preach all these sermons and then look at me sometimes, Lord. Ah, but how good to know. Jesus, I belong to you.

Increase my faith. Teach me how to trust you. Because as I trust you, I will be kept by the power of God.

That's a promise. Who by faith are kept by the power of God. As we wait for the salvation that will be fully revealed soon.

Now we have a battle, but God's gonna keep us. By faith. By faith.

This is why we gotta pray for each other all the time. God, keep him strong in his faith. Lord, keep her faith.

Keep her eyes on you. Keep her hanging with her hands on you, Lord. That's how we need to pray for each other.

God is pleased with that. Anybody here tonight just, we're all gonna just sit or kneel or stand in God's presence for a while. Lord, I believe.

Lord, I believe. All things are possible. Lord, I believe.

If you're here tonight and say, Pastor, that was for me. I just, I need God to increase my faith. I wanna wrap my arms around him like you did your dad.

I wanna wrap my arms around him like you did your dad that day because he's the only one that can hold me. Just get out of your seat and come up here. Then we'll pray.

We'll wait on the Lord. Don't you think the Lord is gonna hear us if we come to him and say, increase our faith? I wanna be guarded by the power of God moment by moment, hour by hour. Come on, stand right in front.

I don't care if you're a deacon, deaconess, pastor, visiting minister, visiting young person. This is real talk. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Can't just yell quotations out who are kept by the power of God, guarded by the power of God through faith. Through faith. Lord, increase our faith.

That besetting sin is just kind of eating your lunch. Just come up and say, Pastor, I wanna stand a while with you. Come on, it's so early.

We can have time. No rush. Increase our faith.

Increase our faith. Let the power of your spirit guard us, shield us. Keep us holy and pure tonight.

If we wake up tomorrow, keep us holy and pure as we trust, as we cling. Amen. Lord, in case this is appropriate for some people here, we ask you to forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

And we tell you today, we want to be like Jesus Christ. In thought, in word, in action. And sometimes we thought that one meeting or being prayed for by someone would do it.

But now we see that we are kept, guarded, shielded by the power of God through faith. As we cling, as we trust, you protect. And we know it's true, Lord.

Not just because it's in your word that settles it, but we have lived this thing, Lord, where we have trusted in our own self, we've forgotten you, we've let our hands go, and we have sunk so quickly. So we come to you with our weakness, our imperfections, and we thank you that you're full of mercy and love. Oh, how I praise you for that, Lord.

That you haven't thrown us away and said, I can't take that stuff anymore. But you are so long-suffering, Lord. Great is thy faithfulness.

Can we praise God for his faithfulness tonight, Lord? Thank you, Lord. Lord, don't let my words bring condemnation to anyone. I did not read these verses, Lord.

We did not study tonight to put anyone on a guilt trip. The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. And we stand on your promise that you will shield us by the power of almighty God through faith as

we walk with you.

We trust you.

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