

# An Imperishable Inheritance

March 25th, 2007

1 Peter 1:3-5

- **Read 1 Peter 1:3-5 (Inheritance)**
- **DISAPPOINTMENT:**
  - "I can - all too easily - be disappointed ..."
    - *wrong lane* at intersection or grocery store
    - If people don't accept my *suggestion*
    - contentment can vanish in an instant
  - Some disappointment is legitimate
    - You *don't succeed* at something - like a test in school (*USMC test*)
    - You *don't get selected* for something you really wanted
  - But disappointment calls for self-examination & reflection...
    - We must work through our feelings in order to *regain contentment*
    - So this message is partly about reflection on disappointment
    - pause...
- **ENVY**
  - TV commercial --- vanity > lust > jealousy > envy...
  - What I like about this commercial
    - Along with its twin I can now remember the 7 deadly sins
    - sloth - gluttony - wrath - envy
    - It illustrates how easily our minds can lapse into sin
    - One sin tends to lead directly to another sin - effortlessly
  - This commercial reveals the power of temptation
    - "be serious and watchful in your prayers" 1 Pet 4:7
    - "let us watch and be sober" 1 The 5:6
    - To gain skill in fighting against it - we must examine ourselves
- **Transition:** "Let me share a personal experience..."

# Ralph and Monte

- **STORIES of 2 Co-Workers:**
  - **Ralph Barletta** - Worked together at LMSC AI Center - 86-88
    - Our first children came within a couple of months of one another
    - I liked to trick him - Dr. Chandrasakeran (Ohio State)
    - Another involved a salesman from Texas Instruments
    - He had a Masters from Rutgers and was a darling of our manager
    - I left LMSC - 4 years at Nasa - 1 year at Inference - then UP
    - About 2 years ago I looked him up the Internet
    - He was the CEO of Inference Corp - owns a vacation home in Tahoe
  - **Monte Zweben** - Worked for him at Nasa briefly
    - Last summer saw he'd authored a business article
    - He'd founded a company in 1995 - Red Pepper Software
    - Sold it to Peoplesoft in 1996
    - Founded Blue Martini Software Company
    - Now worth hundreds of millions of dollars
- **When I learned Ralph was CEO of Inference**
  - It affected me... I was somewhat depressed by it...
  - My will (guardian of emotions) was overcome - "*shock and awe*"
  - But I analyzed my response - worked through the disappointment
  - I mined this experience for flaws in my character
  - I think this prepared me for hearing of Monte...
- **Story: Nerds Rule**
  - *Opportunities abound* for envy and dissatisfaction with our lot
  - My buying a Pepsi at work is like Bill Gates buying a \$500k home.
- **Transition:** "But what do envy and disappointment have to do with inheritance?"

# Earthly Inheritance

- **We'll get to that in a bit... First let's talk about inheritance**
- **Overview of Biblical inheritance**
  - The Bible has a lot to say - 213 times (273 inherit)
    - the word save, and variations of it, appears less often
    - ~ 90% are in the Old Testament (over half first 6 books)
    - Many about the Promised Land - division of it / passing it on
    - Some about Levites not having any - God is their inheritance
  - “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”
    - Jesus responds with parable about covetousness - build barns...
  - Prodigal Son - squanders inheritance delivered early
  - Many parables involved money / inheritance ...
- **Recent experience with inheritance**
  - Many of us have lost parents in recent years
  - My father died in 2000 and my mother in 2004
- **Inheritance can be complicated for executor/trix**
  - You must find a lawyer and file papers
  - You must find and pay off creditors fairly
  - You must handle funds properly
  - Even now - 3 years after paying out mother's estate I get letters
- **Then there are the family issues involved...**
  - Some of you I know are going through these difficulties
  - Read from story referenced earlier - **Luke 12:13-20**
- **Transition:** "Now - let's dig into our text a bit..."

# Phrases from 1 Peter 1:3-5

- **v3 “begotten us again”**
  - He did it once and He's now done it again....
- **v3 "living hope"**
  - *What does Peter mean when he says that this hope is living?*
  - The answer appears just after - resurrection from the dead
  - heaven is real - heaven has come down to you
- **v4 "incorruptible and undefiled inheritance"**
  - *To whom was Peter writing? To whom was he an apostle? Jews*
  - Who have likely been cast out of their inheritance...
  - The book - the "Long Obedience" - Eugene Peterson - *Ascent*
  - These believing Jews abandoned their entire culture...
  - I read of Muslims being rejected by their families... RC's...
  - Judaism was like today's Roman Catholicism on steroids
  - Their cultural inheritance had been corrupted and defiled...
- **v4 "does not fade away"**
  - But this one will not fade away like the last...
- **v4 "reserved in heaven for you - kept by power of God"**
  - It now awaits you - It is reserved for you...
- **v5 "ready to be revealed"**
  - It is ready to be revealed - it is now ready...
- **Transition:** "We have a heavenly inheritance awaiting us..."

# How Should We Then Live?

- **With that in mind (to steal a phrase from Francis Schaeffer)**
  - *"How should we then live?"*
  - Should we shun earthly experience and inheritance?
  - After all - we have something much better waiting for us... NO
  - I debated this back in 03 when going to Florida (Universal)
  - I learned that experiences are real and lasting...
- **There are many experiences I would like...**
  - A friend just visited New Zealand for his honeymoon
  - I'd love to see Australia - Tasmania - the Great Barrier Reef
  - Tabitha has toured China - I'd love to do that...
  - This July we'll travel to California (JO) see parks
    - Perhaps also we'll come back by the Grand Canyon - why?
    - Grand Canyon Skywalk - Grand Canyon West - Hualapai Reservation
- **So, what is my point then, if it's NOT to not do such stuff?**
  - Always maintain your heavenly perspective
  - Let me illustrate my point with a story...
- **The Story of Russell Conwell**
  - student at Yale - enlisted in Union Army in 1862 at 19
  - soldier - travel journalist - Boston lawyer - minister in Philadelphia
  - (at age 41) 1884 - agreed to teach 1 student (7 showed up)
  - Famous for a speech he delivered 6,000 times by 1925
  - Acres of Diamonds
- **Transition:** "Let me tell you 2 stories he shared..."

# Acres of Diamonds

## *Massachusetts Mineralogist*

A young man from Massachusetts went down to Yale College and studied mines and mining. They paid him fifteen dollars a week during his last year for training students who were behind in their classes in mineralogy, while pursuing his own studies. But when he graduated they raised his pay from fifteen dollars to forty-five dollars and offered him a professorship. He went straight home to his mother and said, "Mother, I won't work for forty-five dollars a week. What is forty-five dollars a week for a man with a brain like mine! Mother, let's go out to California and stake out gold claims and be immensely rich." "Now," said his mother, "it is just as well to be happy as it is to be rich."

But as he was the only son he had his way -- they always do; and they sold out in Massachusetts and went to Wisconsin, where he went into the employ of the Superior Copper Mining Company, and he was lost from sight in the employ of that company at fifteen dollars a week again. He was to have an interest in any mines that he should discover for that company. But I do not believe that he has ever discovered a mine -- I do not know anything about it, but I do not believe he has. But I know he had scarcely gone from the old homestead before the farmer who had bought the homestead went out to dig potatoes. He was bringing them in a large basket through the front gateway. The ends of the stone wall were so close together at the gate that the basket could not pass the posts. He set the basket on the ground and pulled, first on one side and then on the other.

As he was hauling it through he noticed in the upper stone next to the gate a block of native silver, eight inches square. This professor of mines and mining and mineralogy, who would not work for forty-five dollars a week, when he sold that homestead in Massachusetts, sat right on that stone to make the bargain. He was brought up there; he had gone back and forth by that piece of silver, rubbed it with his sleeve, and it seemed to say, "Come now, here is a hundred thousand dollars. Why not take me? " But he would not take it. There was no silver in Newburyport; it was all far off -- He didn't know where; but somewhere else -- and he was a professor of mineralogy.

# Acres of Diamonds

*Pennsylvania Farmer*

An old farmer, tired of farming, and wrote to his cousin about coming to work for him. He wrote to him in Canada, but his cousin replied that he could not engage him because he did not know anything about the oil business. "Well, then," said he, "I will understand it." So he set himself at the study of the whole subject. He began at the second day of the creation, he studied the subject from the primitive vegetation to the coal oil stage, until he knew all about it. Then he wrote to his cousin and said, "Now I understand the oil business." And his cousin replied to him, "All right, then, come on."

That man, by the county record, sold his farm for eight hundred and thirty-three dollars -- even money, "no cents." He had scarcely gone from that farm before the man who purchased it went out to arrange for watering the cattle and he found that the previous owner had arranged the matter very nicely. There is a stream running down the hillside there, and the previous owner had gone out and put a plank across that stream at an angle, extending across the brook and down edgewise a few inches under the surface of the water. The purpose of the plank across that brook was to throw over to the other bank a dreadful-looking scum through which the cattle would not put their noses to drink above the plank, although they would drink the water on the one side below it.

Thus that man who had gone to Canada had been himself damming back for twenty-three years a flow of coal oil which the State Geologist of Pennsylvania declared officially, as early as 1870, to be valued at a hundred million dollars. The city of Titusville now stands on that farm and those wells flow on. And that farmer who had studied all about the formation of oil since the second day of God's creation clear down to the present time, sold that farm for \$833, no cents - - again I say, "no sense."

•**Transition:** "I want to share one more thing about inheritance..."

# Closing

- **Inheritance: "Not a right..."**
  - Bumper stickers say "We are spending our children's inheritance"
  - We may think them rude
    - After all Proverbs 13:22 says
    - *"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children."*
  - But let's not go too far to the other side
    - An inheritance is not a right - it is a gift from loving parents
    - An inheritance is often undeserved and un(der)appreciated
- **Let me try and put our inheritance into perspective...**
- **Imagine you are at a special meal - once a year kind of thing**
  - A co-worker and his wife (every July 4th at casino on river)
  - Imagine an appetizer...
  - No - imagine some saltines before the meal to placate kids
  - You are about to eat a fabulous meal, yet you're snacking on saltines
  - This is a comparison of our two inheritances
    - saltines - earthly inheritance - Bill Gates' billions
    - the fabulous meal - heavenly inheritance
  - Our and Bill Gates positions are reversed
    - Now it's Bill who gets the soda (the saltines)
    - And we who get the \$500k home and the fabulous meal
  - Always maintain your heavenly perspective
- **Let's pray**
- **Benediction: 2 The 3:5**
  - Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.