



**Touching Lives**  
with James Merritt



**SERMON SINGLES**

# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## Our Only Hope

1 Peter 1:3-5

### INTRODUCTION

I can say without deliberation, hesitation or equivocation that there has never been a greater time to celebrate Easter, nor has there ever been a greater Easter to celebrate. Why? Because if Easter is true, if Jesus is alive, if He was raised from the dead, then not only do we have hope, not only do we have the best hope, but we have the only hope for our past, our present, and our future. Only a risen Lord can take care of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Therefore, we can have hope even in the darkest, most depressing circumstances. Those of us who believe in a risen Lord may feel helpless at times, but we are never hopeless. So with that in mind, let's take a look at three truths about the Lord from which we can derive our hope.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. God Has Given Us Spiritual Life

Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we have what Peter calls "a living hope." It is not an ordinary hope that we have like, "I hope to win the lottery" or "I hope to get a date with that cheerleader," or "I hope I aced that test even though I didn't study." That is wishful thinking.

Peter is talking about a living hope that never dies and a living hope that can never fail. We are told that this hope is true, because the greatest hope anybody could ever have is the hope that there is life after death; the hope that there is more to this life than this life. It is the hope that we all need, and it's the kind of hope that reminds us that God not only gave us this life on earth, but He gave us a spiritual life as well.

#### 2. God Is Guarding Us In Our Personal Life

The moment God gives us spiritual life, gives us that new birth and that new beginning, God takes over. This is what he does because of our faith. "... *who through faith 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...*"(1 Peter 1:5).

### NOTES

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Our Only Hope**

*1 Peter 1:3-5*

Shielded is a military term. It means to be guarded by a garrison of soldiers. The believer is guarded by God’s power. What kind of power is Peter talking about? The power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. That same power that was used to bring the body of Jesus back to life is now the same power that guards this body in this life. It is that power that keeps us safe and secure.

If you ever doubt God’s power to protect you, just think about the resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead. There is no greater power than the resurrection power. The greatest power human beings have is the power to kill, but the power to raise someone from the dead is even greater than that. Those of us who have placed our faith in the risen Lord are under heaven’s lock and key protected by the most efficient security system available in all of the universe. We live under the protection of God every day; therefore we can have hope and peace.

**3. God Will Guild Us To Eternal Life**

God takes care of our past by giving us spiritual life. God takes care of our present by guarding us in our personal life. And God even takes care of our future, because He has promised to guide us to eternal life. Because we have been born into God’s family and God is our Father, He has an inheritance for all of His children.

So, what do you have to do to receive your inheritance? Well, you have to be one of those who have received spiritual life, who have been born-again into God’s family. To get into heaven, you’ve got to have a reservation, and that reservation can only be made in the name of the risen Lord Jesus.

It amazes me how people think they can do their own thing, live their own lives, go their own way and call their own shots and then just show up at heaven’s door and say, “Ok God. I’m here. Open up.” If you think you can bypass Jesus, if you think you can live your life your way and still get into the presence of God, you are either incredibly arrogant or indisputably ignorant. Only God’s children are allowed in God’s house. There is one thing we are told. Once you have been given this spiritual life, once you become a child of God, you are guaranteed to get in, because God honors every reservation made in the name of His Son. That is a reservation that can never be cancelled, and the reservation is kept in God’s safety deposit box that no one but He can ever open.

**NOTES**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## **Our Only Hope**

*1 Peter 1:3-5*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Are you living according to the truth that God has given you a spiritual life to focus on, or are you more focused on your physical life on earth?
2. What is one time you can remember God protecting you from something that could have been harmful or hurtful? How could that situation have turned out differently had you not been under the Lord's protection?
3. Do your actions on earth point to the fact that you have a reservation in heaven, or would the way you live your life make someone surprised to see you in heaven one day?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---