

Advent 2022: Hope - 1 Peter 1:3-9

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It is great to be with you brothers and sisters and to be able to preach God's word. Our main text today will be 1st Peter 3 verses 1st Peter 1 verses 3 through 9.

But before we go to 1st Peter 1, we're going to be in Philippians 1. So if you will take your Bible and turn to Philippians 1 with me. During this time, we're going to consider the nature of hope through various scriptures, and then we'll spend the majority of our time in 1st Peter 1.

Great. So today I have the privilege to talk on the Advent theme of hope.

The letter of 1st Peter is considered a letter of hope to a suffering people. In this letter, Peter has been called the apostle of hope. In chapter 1, hope is mentioned multiple times.

And in 1st Peter 1, he's writing to the elect exiles who are part of the dispersion. So these are people who were living in their home and then has been dispersed.

[1 : 07] They have been sent to a different area, removed from their home, and forced to live somewhere else. These believers were called exiles because of that reason. So that's why Peter introduces the letter like that.

They are living as sojourners in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The believers of 1st Peter are acquainted with suffering and have experienced the effects of sin against them.

Peter seeks to encourage them that their hope and their value and their satisfaction are not in this world, but it is in a person, and his name is Jesus Christ.

So as they have been displaced and as they are suffering, Peter is writing this letter to them to let them know that where they're at, all their hope is not in their home. It is not in their comfortable place.

It's not in wishful thinking, but it is in Jesus in the life to come. So with that said, like the elect exiles of 1st Peter, we are in a world where we are weary pilgrims.

[2 : 10] We are people who have experienced the ups and downs of life. We understand that suffering is a reality and that life can be very hard.

We go through seasons of difficulty. Some seasons where our children are not easy to parent. Some seasons where our marriage is really hard. In some seasons where we lose someone that we dearly care about.

We experience life where sometimes tragic events happen. Things that should have never happened, happen to us. And in these moments, we experience, it sometimes leads us to despair.

Sometimes leads us to feeling hopeless. Brothers and sisters, have you been there? Have you experienced the griefs of this world? Have you experienced the dark nights of the soul?

Are you familiar with despair? I've been there myself. I've been up through all hours of the night worrying about immediate family.

[3 : 16] Hoping that they're okay. I have cried till there's no strength left. Casting all my anxieties, all my sorrows, all my griefs to the Lord who cares for me.

To our Father. I've stayed up next to a loved one as I've watched them pass away. In these moments of great sorrow, in these moments of great despair, we often feel helpless.

And we often feel hopeless. In these moments, we feel as if we're in a cold, dark dungeon and we can't get out. We feel as if we are in a deep and narrow pit, languishing.

It is as if we are spiritually cold and numb and in despair. But in these darkest moments and in these greatest despair, there is hope.

This hope is not wishful desires. This hope is not lasting relief from our sorrows. This hope is not in a quick fix solution. This hope is in the person of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 24] In his life, in his death, and in his resurrection. He is the bright and burning sun. He is the radiance of God's glory. In him, our sins are buried and our glory is found.

He is the hope of glory. And by the spirit of living God, he has instilled hope in our hearts. Scripture communicates this to us. Psalm 40, 1-3 I have waited patiently for the Lord.

He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. Colossians 1, 13-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

And in Psalm 42, 1-5 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for you, for the living God.

[5 : 38] When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God? These things I remember as I pour out my soul.

How I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God. With glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you downcast, O my soul?

And why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation and my God. With that said, truly, there is hope in God for our weary hearts.

But what does it mean to hope? What is this concept we talk about as hope? We know it's not wishful. We know it is not just feelings, but it is much more. Hope is the inspiring confidence and expectation in the Son of God and the glorious inheritance we receive in him.

It is not wishful. It is not just a movement of feelings and desires. It is full of faith. It is full-hearted reliance on Jesus and all that he has promised to us.

[6 : 49] It is a grasping and taking hold of Christ and all of his wonderful benefits that we receive in him and in the heavenly places. Hope is confidence in our promised future, but it also provides us with great confidence.

Paul had this attitude in Philippians 1, 19-21, if you'll read with me. Philippians 1, 19. For I expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor or magnify Christ, whether I live or die. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

This hope inspires us to rejoice. It inspires us to love. It inspires us to live in such a way that every thought, every emotion, and every action would make Christ look lovely, make him look beautiful, make him look glorious.

It is because of our expectant confidence in Jesus Christ that our living is for Christ, and our dying is gain. And not just gain, but our dying is great gain.

[8 : 08] Paul says it is far better than living. Our death and fulfillment of our hope is much more greater, and it is much more wonderful and much more glorious than anything we have in this world.

Paul comes to this conclusion also in Philippians 3. If you'll turn over a page with me and read. Beginning in verse 7, he says, But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness of God that depends on faith. That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, our hope is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the glorious inheritance we receive there. So turn with me to 1 Peter. 1 Peter. We'll be reading verse 3 through 9.

[9 : 45] Blessed be 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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you've been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is

tested by fire, may be found to result in the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though you have not seen him now, you love him. And though you do not see him, you believe in him, and rejoice with the joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

So in 1 Peter 1, beginning of verse 3, there is one Greek sentence all the way to verse 12. And in this Greek sentence, the purpose is that we would understand that salvation is from God and should instill hope in us.

We were once dead and we've been born again to a living hope. This hope that we're born again to cannot be destroyed. It will not falter during trials and it is not cold. And it is in this, when we get to verse 13 of 1 Peter, after this one sentence that we read, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[11:23] So after this beautiful exposition of our salvation and how the prophets and the angels long to see Jesus and see all the promises that were fulfilled in him, then Peter says, now, in light of this, prepare for action and set your hope fully on this grace you will receive at Jesus Christ.

And this should move us to think that hope is so important because Peter urges the saints to live in such a way that their hope is set on Jesus and his grace in the future, not in this moment, not in the things we have or the things we do.

So today, as we spend our time together, my aim is that you'd see that hope is an inspiring confidence and expectation in the Son of God and the glorious inheritance we share with him. We'll see this in three points. Our hope is living, our hope is secure, and our hope is full of joy. So let's read verses 3 and 4 again.

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 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us.

[12:41] Prior to being a Christian, we were enemies of God, according to Romans 5.10. We were dead in our sins and trespasses, according to Ephesians 2.1. We love the world, according to 1 John 2, and we practice lawlessness, according to 1 John 3.

The 1689 London Baptist Confession says that we are before Christ, utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil.

With that said, apart from Jesus Christ, we are hopeless. But in this passage, it says that according to his great mercy, he has worked in our lives. He took our dead, lifeless soul, and gave us new life. The verse says, he has caused us to be born again. We were hopeless, but now we're born into a new life with a new hope. This hope is a living hope.

Before Christ, the things that we hoped in were vain, they were dead, and they were perishing. This hope was temporary. But our hope now in Christ, being born again, is not dead, temporary, and vain, but it is steadfast, it is immovable, and it is sure.

[13:55] It is strong, and it is because Jesus Christ is alive, and he's raised from the dead, that we have hope. The foundation of the hope we have, according to 1 Peter 1, is that he has rose from the dead, and he is now with God.

We see in verse 3, he said that we've been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our hope is grounded and found in Jesus Christ and his resurrection. We see this also in 1 Corinthians, when Paul was talking about the resurrection. He says in 1 Corinthians 15, 17 through 19, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins, then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

And if in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. According to Paul, if our hope is only in this life, we are most to be pitied, because it means there's nothing after this life that comes.

There is no future to look forward to. But the beautiful thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ is that when he lived and he died for our sins, he also rose. And we are a part of that, rising again.

[15:06] According to Ephesians 2, we will rise with him. So, with that said, if Jesus Christ did not come and he did not die and he did not rise again, we would be left hopeless.

We would have been left in our sins and we would have been condemned as guilty. But, our God did come. He did die and he did rise again. Therefore, our hope is alive.

It is living. According to verse 4, this hope that we have is inheritance also. It's in Jesus and we receive an inheritance with him. It says in verse 4 that this inheritance is imperishable, it's undefiled, and it is unfading.

Therefore, this inheritance we receive in Jesus, this life to come that we will receive, is everlasting. It is pure and it is precious. It will not be destroyed, it cannot be defiled, and it will not fade.

According to verse 4, it states that this inheritance is of heavenly substance. It says that it is kept in heaven for us. Therefore, our hope should stir us to desire to live a heavenly-minded lifestyle, a mind that is based in life to come.

[16:23] We are sojourners bound for the promised land. We have a glorious and precious estate that is awaiting us, that is prepared by our Father for us. When we are received and we receive Jesus and all of his benefits for us, we will receive our hope.

When our hope is fulfilled and our Savior comes, all our tears will be wiped away, all our grieves will be relieved, and our aching sadness will be changed into an ever-springing gladness.

All the dark shadows and the gloomy clouds of this life will be gone forevermore in Christ and the life to come. This is the hope we are made alive to.

This is the hope that is living. This is the hope we receive in Jesus. And this is the hope we have to live for. This hope is also secure. Point number two, our hope is secure.

Read verse 5 with me. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed. In verse 4, we are promised as saints that our inheritance is through Jesus and it is of heavenly substance that will not be destroyed.

[17:34] It will not fade away. In verse 5, Peter goes on to encourage us as weary pilgrims that this inheritance will last forever and is secure. And it is because of God that it is secure.

But there are various viewpoints in our culture we hear about that teach in a different man. They teach something that is contrary to being able to be secure.

There are viewpoints that teach that we can lose our salvation, that we are not secure in Christ. In Roman Catholicism, believers receive this infusion of grace and then are called to do sacramental acts to achieve God's favor, to remain in this grace.

In Arminianism, it is said that we are saved upon a profession of faith, but we can fall away and be an unbeliever if we fall into sin too long. In both these views, there is no full assurance that we are saved.

In this view, our salvation is conditioned on one's action and it does not provide us great rest. But, brothers and sisters, the good news here is, according to 1 Peter, our hope is not conditioned on our actions.

[18:42] There is nothing within us that earns this hope. Our hope is in Jesus Christ and our hope resides with him. In Christ, there is rest and our hope is sure.

Read verse 5 again with me. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed. Our salvation is based on God's power. The word guard here refers to God keeping watch over our salvation.

From our perspective, we wake up and we read and we pray and we are working, we believe, we rejoice, we rest. But in reality, all these good things come from God and his almighty power.

By the spirit of the living God, we are enabled and empowered to pursue holiness and God is watching over us and sharing his goodness with us. He is truly the found from whom all good comes and he holds us by his power.

He guards us. Philippians 1.6 says that he who began a good work in us will bring it to the day of completion. When I think of this hope that is living, when I think of this hope that is secure, it makes me think of this wonderful hymn that we sing often called, He Will Hold Me Fast.

[19:58] The words of the song say, When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast. When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.

I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path. For my love is often cold. He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast.

He'll hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast. So truly, God is keeping watch over our soul and He will hold us fast.

By God's power and His tender care, our hope is secure. Because our hope is living and secure, it is also full of joy. Point number three, our hope is full of joy.

Read verses six through nine with me. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you've been grieved by various trials, so that the testing genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though is tested by fire, may be found to result in the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 08] Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

So in verse six, Peter goes from explaining the grounds and security of our hope to providing us with how it relates to our trials and the fulfillment of our hope.

Because our hope is in Jesus Christ and because our hope is secure, we have grounds to rejoice. So the exilic saints in first Peter, they endured great persecution as we talked about.

They were dispersed from their home. In the letter, it says they had been reviled. They had been treated unjustly and they had been dealt evil for their faith in Jesus Christ.

These trials have led the saints to be grieved. According to this word, the meaning of it is that there is a severe mental and emotional distress or a persisting sadness.

[22 : 09] Their experiences in the dispersion have brought them to anguish and to grief. But according to Peter, this is only for a season. He says that though now for a little while, it is for a season that they have been grieved.

And in this season, according to first Peter, that they're being refined and their lives being more and more like Christ. He says that the tested genuineness of their faith, more precious than gold that perishes those tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

this word tested genuineness talks about the authenticity that their faith is genuine. So as these trials come and as these hard things come in the lives of the saints in first Peter, these hard things are pushing them to Christ and push that faith in Jesus and have hope in Jesus.

And in doing so, their faith is being beautified and fortified. It is being crafted through these trials so that when Jesus appears and when their hope is fulfilled, that their lives may be found to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ.

So with that said, we also, in our lives, have been grieved. We go through things that are hard, things that bring us mental distress and anguish. Some of us have families that are really difficult.

[23 : 34] Some of us have went through situations that are really challenging. But in these situations, there is a hope that is so beautiful and so wonderful, something that we can cast our lives to and be found in.

And this hope is in Jesus Christ in the life to come, that when he comes, our hope, our faith, everything we believe in will come and be fulfilled. So with that said, in these trials, we have great reason to rejoice.

This joy, according to Peter, is inexpressible and filled with glory. the word inexpressible means exactly what it sounds like, that we cannot describe it, that we cannot express how wonderful this hope is.

Jonathan Edwards, in trying to describe it, says, the love and joy of the saints on earth is the beginning and dawning of light, life, and blessedness of heaven.

And it's like their love and joy there, or rather, of the same nature, but not the same degree and circumstance. So this inexpressible joy that we have now because our hope in Jesus Christ and the life to come is an abounding sweetness for our soul.

[24 : 49] It is an enraptured heart to the heavenly goodness. It is an affectionate delight. It is warm. It is resounding with praise for our treasured Jesus. It is the kind of joy that we have when we consider everything is rubbish in compared to knowing Jesus Christ.

So even in our greatest affliction, in our hardest trials, we can rejoice because our hope is not based in this world. There is a much greater reality to come, one that is everlasting and will not perish, one that is sure and secure.

Edwards further describes what our hope would be like in heaven. He says, the love and joy that the saints have there in heaven is exceedingly, exceedingly great and vigorous, impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness.

So he says that this, this love and joy we have is exceedingly great and vigorous, impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness, mightily moving,

animating, and engaging them, making them like a flame of fire.

So when, when things get hard and they're not going as we once thought they would, once we, the way that we wish they would have went and we are struggling, remember that we have a hope and that God is refining our hearts towards him and he is fortifying faith in us.

[26 : 16] He is producing a glory, a masterpiece to bring him great delight and praise. That is why he says in this passage, one that will be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, let us rejoice in our suffering because it is not eternal but temporary. Let us rejoice in our suffering because it is not meaningless but is meaningful.

Let us rejoice in our suffering because we have hope. Our hope is caused, our hope causes us great joy because it is not momentary but steadfast, immovable, and guaranteed.

In conclusion, praise God that he has caused us to be born again to a living hope that is not based in this world but based on the person of Jesus Christ in his resurrection. This hope is alive because Jesus is alive.

This hope will not fade or perish but is steadfast and precious. It is being kept by the almighty power of God to be given us when the day of Jesus Christ appears. Because this hope is living and secure, it should cause us to spring forth in great love and inexpressible joy in Jesus Christ.

[27 : 27] Because of this hope, we get to experience the abounding sweetness and lively sensation of happiness in Jesus. This hope is an inspiring confidence and expectation in Jesus Christ and his glorious inheritance we have.

Let us not despair or be in anguish but be like the psalmist in Psalm 42 in hope in God for we shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

So, four points to consider in closing application. Number one, as we go into Advent season, let us devote time individually with our families and with our church community to read scripture that are based on the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus' first coming and to read about the Christmas narratives. Let us behold Christ the newborn king in his fullness of glory and adore him. Number two, I want to remind you of verse 13. It says, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Let us work to set our hope on the grace of Jesus Christ. Let us intentionally consider the hope we have in Christ and rejoice in it. Our affection should be warmed by the flames of God's word and his promises to us.

[28 : 47] Let us sit by the fire of his word and be inflamed for him. Point number three, our journey as pilgrims to the promised land is not an individual effort, but it is a community work.

In 1 Peter, it is not the saint that is addressed, but the saints. Therefore, we should be walking this pilgrimage, this journey to the promised land together with our brothers and sisters that we're committed to in church and that we're friends with.

So I encourage you, find people to walk with, people that will hold you accountable, and find people that will invest in you, that will disciple you, that will help you build more and more and more mature so that you can do the work of ministry better.

And finally, point number four, in Jesus Christ, there is hope for this life and the life to come. We should grow in loving him, believing in him, and enjoying him.

This week, take time to bolster your love for him, increase your faith in him, and enjoy his inexpressible sweetness. Let us begin to experience the light, life, and blessedness of heaven now as we prepare to receive the gain of it in the life to come.

[30 : 03] Pray with me.