

Hope for the Journey

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 January 2026

Preacher: Tyler Bittner

[0 : 00] You found your place there in 1 Peter chapter number 1. The Bible says this, And that's kind of the title of our series, A Living Hope.

That Peter's reminding them their hope is not buried somewhere, it's not in circumstances, it's not in all these things. There is a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found in the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom having not seen ye love, and whom though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

[1 : 30] Receive the end of your faith, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. So we kind of start off this series, and look at just these verses right here.

We get the idea that Peter is reminding them, and we'll dig into a little bit more of it, but yes, they were going through a lot of things, and there was a lot of difficulty in their life, but he's reminding of how blessed they truly are.

And I know we throw that word around, and it became kind of a hashtag for a while. Everybody's hashtag blessed, and you put it on every post, you know, whether it's talking about your lunch, or your family, or whatever it is, or you're blessed with everything.

And we sing that old hymn, count your blessings, name them one by one. And I know sometimes we sing that song, oh, I know this, but when we really start thinking about it, and I think that's a great thing when I thoroughly enjoy our pie and praise service, because it gives us an opportunity to step back and to look at our life, kind of reflect over the past year as we did this Thanksgiving, and just remember how blessed we are.

And it was a longer service, but it was still short, because we didn't even touch the hem of the garment of how blessed we are. And then when you think about your life, and you think about all the things that you have in Christ, my prayer is tonight that everybody knows Jesus as your personal Savior, but just think about salvation.

[2 : 51] Think about how much it changed your life. It's not just a home in heaven one day. No, it affects the here and the now. It affects the joy and the peace that we have because it's real.

We look around, and I'm thankful for a church family. I'm thankful for my own family, and how God has blessed us. I'm thankful for health, and maybe your health is not exactly where you want it to be, but you're here tonight.

Right? And you're breathing, and God's giving you another day to serve Him, and the sun is shining, and we're thankful for that. I'm thankful for this church. I'm thankful for the blessings that God has given Central Baptist Church over the years.

I'm thankful for what He's doing right now, and I'm just as excited and thankful for what He's going to do in the future. We have a place that we can come, and in the middle of a busy week, and at the start of a new week, we can gather with those that we love, and we can lift our voices together, and we have freedom to worship.

There's many of our missionaries we read on Wednesday nights in our prayer letters that don't have the same freedoms that we have. The countries they're serving in are coming up with stricter and stricter conversion laws.

[3 : 54] They can't even speak their faith to their friends, and to their coworkers, and to their neighbors, and yet we have that opportunity to do it every day. We have that opportunity to come in here, really, and not worry about anything.

When you come here, you expect the doors to be open. Some places, they have to figure out where the church is meeting that day because it's always on the run. It's underground. It's in secret. I'm thankful for the Word of God that we have in our hands, and not only do we have it in our hands, you probably have it in your pocket.

You have it on your computer. You have it on your email. I mean, everywhere we go, we're saturated with the Word of God, and sometimes we allow that to kind of just, eh, well, that's just normal. No, it's a blessing from God that we have those things, and I love that song we sing, that doxology, praise God from whom all blessings flow, and as we kind of open up this letter that's Peter's writing, he's reminding his hearers, he's reminding the readers what a blessing it is to be a Christian, and for us today, we think, yeah, that's true, but when we really dive into the difficulty it was in the first century to be a Christian, that's really saying something, because in this time period to identify with Christ, to publicly profess Him, to live a life obedient to His Word would have put a target on your back.

It would have brought persecution to that, and Peter's saying, listen, I know it's hard, but God is good, and that's really the idea behind this letter, and he wanted them to understand, and through the Holy Spirit, it reminds us today that if we know Christ as our Savior, because we have a relationship with Him, there's a word that is no longer to be used in our vocabulary, hopeless. That doesn't find place in our life that as a born-again believer, we don't know what true hopelessness is anymore, because Jesus is our hope.

[5 : 50] Jesus is alive, that our hope isn't based on some wishy-washy thing, no, that it's settled, and it's firm, and we can anchor our soul to it. The Apostle Paul spoke of this idea throughout his letters as well.

If you remember there in Ephesians chapter 2, verse number 12, he reminded us that before salvation, we were without God, and we were without hope in this world. I think we look at the world around us, at least I do, and I think to myself, how do they continue to move forward?

Because it doesn't mean that as Christians, we don't walk through difficult times, but I cannot imagine walking through some things that I've walked through and walking alongside of others that are walking through difficult times and doing that without God.

I can't fathom how they do that, and really, I don't think they do it very well. And maybe you can go back in your life before you knew Christ and your life was pointless, and there was no hope, but hope has a name, and that's what Peter's going to remind us over and over and over again.

Paul also told us that unbelievers, they grieve as those who have no hope. He was writing there in 1 Thessalonians 4, and reminding, because there was this teaching going around that their loved ones had passed on, that they missed it, and they're not going to go and see Christ, that they're dead, and he reminds them, hey, that's not how this works, that those that are dead in Christ, they're going to rise first, and we'll meet them in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[7 : 24] And Paul told them, we don't grieve as those that have no hope. Part of my job, so to speak, is I officiate quite a few funerals, but there is a noticeable difference when we gather around a loved one that knows Christ, and at a funeral where there is no knowledge of Christ, the despair that is there, it's palpable, you can feel it in the air, but we've laid here, and some dear saints of this church, some dear family members of yours, we have cried, but we haven't cried as those with no hope.

Really, our grief is for ourselves. We're happy that they're finally walking the streets of gold, and they're seeing their Savior face to face. Our grief is because we miss them, but we know this, there is coming a day when we shall see him, but we shall see those that have gone on before us.

So hopelessness is something that is no longer in the life of a believer. I mean, just the word hopeless is an awful word. When you really think about it, people can endure incredible hardship if there's hope.

You can look throughout history, and we see even Christians as they, or Peter's writing to, and you go to the dark ages, and you go through different times where they're literally being hunted and slaughtered.

How do they continue to move forward? Hope. That Christ is still for them, that he still loves them, but when hope is removed from any situation, despair takes its place.

[8 : 58] And that's why Peter wrote this letter. Many of the letters in the New Testament, Paul and John and others would write, and they were kind of having to combat some bad theology that had crept in the church.

Some false teachers that had come in, and yes, Peter deals with some of that. We'll see as we walk through, but really, this letter was written to give hope. Peter wrote this in around A.D. 67.

Most Bible scholars would say that he probably wrote this from Rome to the believers that were scattered really across Asia Minor. So we see there in the first verse that to the strangers scattered throughout these areas.

these Christians were under pressure just in their daily life. They were misunderstood by many people because we have to understand that Christianity at this time is still relatively new.

They don't really understand who are these people? What is this about? It wasn't like they could get on Wikipedia and see what's Christianity about. They didn't have that ability like we do to kind of Google things and to figure it out.

[10 : 07] They were, there was kind of all this hearsay and misunderstanding. And inevitably it just led to some heavy persecution. But instead of praying that the persecution would leave them, we see there in verse number two at the end of the verse that here's what Peter wanted them to understand.

He was praying that grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Not that trouble would disappear. I think so often when we find hard times in our life, we find difficulties, when we seem like a situation's hopeless, we say, Lord, get rid of this so I can move forward.

But sometimes it's in these difficult times that God really refines us. They were tried by fire, so to speak, and God brings us forth as gold as the Bible tells us in the book of Job.

Because when you study Christianity, especially in the first century and around the times of these writings, they are trying to stamp it out. They are trying to rid the Roman Empire of Christianity in general and yet it continues to move forward.

It continues to go. You study the book of Acts and you see the gospel spreading like a flame and Peter's reminding him it's not time to give up. No, we have something worth fighting for. We have somebody who's fighting for us and yes, it might seem at times that we're not winning, but let me remind you we have an inheritance that's incorruptible and undefiled and fadeth not away and is reserved in heaven.

[11 : 30] You know what Peter's saying? This world is not our home. We're just a passing through. He's writing to strangers. He's writing to pilgrims because as a Christian we do look different and we should.

In fact, he's going to tell us that we're a royal priesthood. We're a peculiar people. Now, listen, that doesn't mean to be weird on purpose. Some of y'all got that nailed down, but listen, we should live differently.

And Peter's reminding them, he's saying, listen, don't be a chameleon into society that you should stick out, that you should live different. Why? Because we are different. That's what holy means.

You know what holy really means? Here's the definition. Other. Different. Set apart. We're going to get to the text in Peter where he tells us, be ye holy for I am holy, saith the Lord.

So that's really the idea behind this. That in the following weeks, we're going to walk verse by verse through 1 Peter. But before we do that, I really just kind of want to give us an overview of what he's talking about in these themes and what the hope Peter is mentioning, what it is.

[12 : 40] And why it's so desperately needed. So if hope is that essential to our lives as believers, I think the first question we answer is this.

What is biblical hope? What does biblical hope look like? You know, we say things all the time. Like I hope the wind doesn't blow so hard tomorrow.

I hope it doesn't rain. I hope the Cowboys win. We know none of those things are going to change anything. You know, I'm so happy for Cowboy fans right now. You don't have to lose because you didn't make the playoffs.

But it hurts me too because I do want to cheer for my hometown team. But I think sometimes we think of hope and we see it in the Bible and we talk about a hope that fadeth not away and we have a anchor, a hope that we anchor our soul to and we kind of equate it how we relate to hope.

Our hope many times is wishful thinking. You know, we're going to cross our fingers and hope it works out. We're going to wing it and play it by ear. Sometimes our hope is blind optimism.

[13 : 42] You know, if we just speak it into existence, maybe it will happen. That's not what biblical hope is. I think a good definition of biblical hope is a sure and confident expectation of receiving what God has promised us in the future.

That we're anchored to something. God said it. It might not be taking place right now, but we know this. If God said it, that settles it. And that's what Peter's reminding them because they are literally going through the fire.

They are going through extreme persecution. But he's saying, listen, there's a hope that is anchored because God said so and he always comes through. He always keeps his promises.

How do we know that? How do we know that God will keep his promises? Because he has proven himself time and time and time and time again. And he wanted these readers to go back in their mind and to remember that, yes, it's hard, but listen, I should have been done there.

And that could have been the end there. And this situation could have really set us back. But guess who showed up there and there and there? God. And I remind you this evening that life might be difficult and you might walk through some hard valleys.

[14 : 55] Maybe you're in one right now and sometimes it feels like it's pretty dark and I'm not sure I'm coming out on the other side, but here's the truth that we have a shepherd that even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he's with us.

We don't have to fear what's going to happen. Why can we say that? How could David pin that? Because they knew this, God always shows up and that's what we hold on to.

And Peter calls it not just a good hope, not a solid hope. You know, I like good things. I like things that are solid, things that I can count on. Here's what he calls it in verse number three, unto a lively hope.

A hope that's living, a hope that is active, a hope that is present, a hope that is powerful, that when you wake up in the morning, it's there. When you go to sleep at night, it's there, that it's God that's holding you together, that it's God that is sustaining you and that hope, it works in us and that hope, it steadies us and that hope sustains us.

Why? Because it's alive. It's not a word in a dictionary. It's a person and he's on the throne in heaven and he's hopefully on the throne in our own life. And we hear this and I read these verses and when I read a few of these verses here, when I read verse number four about the inheritance coming my way and we can rejoice in the Lord and we have joy unspeakable and full of glory, I'm thankful for that.

[16 : 23] But here's the reality. Something's probably going to come my way this week where I'm going to think, Lord, where are you? Lord, this doesn't look good. This situation, you know, like I know I preach the message but this looks kind of hopeless.

When that anxiety rises, when that fear tries to displace that hope, sometimes we ask, why do I feel this way? Instead of that, maybe this week when a difficulty comes in your life, ask this, what has God promised?

Listen, if you anchor yourself to your feelings, you're going to be a miserable person. Because that's what your feelings are like, a roller coaster. Sometimes they're really good. Sometimes they're scary. Sometimes you're pretty sure you're going to die.

Sometimes you're just passed out. You don't know what's going on. You know, I don't want my life to be a roller coaster. But if I'm anchoring my hope to my feelings, that's what it's going to feel like. There's going to be great days. Then there's going to be days that feel like there is no hope. But if we ask ourselves that question, what has God said about this? What has God promised?

[17 : 33] We sing the whole song too, standing on the promises. Find a promise. When you're dealing with something in your life, guess what? The Bible has something to say about it. Go to the Word of God, find it, and claim it.

Trust God that what He says, that He holds His promises, that all His promises are yes and amen. That they are intended for us to hang on to. That we can anchor ourselves to that.

And so once we kind of understand what biblical hope is, the next question that kind of flows out of that is where does it come from? We talk about it all the time. It's all over the pages of Scripture, but where does it come from?

Verse 3, there again at the end of the verse. Again, unto a lively hope, here's where it comes from, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It's as simple as that.

Everything we have in this life, everything we're hoping for, everything we're anchored to, is based on the fact that the tomb is empty. That Jesus Christ did exactly what He said He was going to do. [18:39] I don't know about you, but I am thankful that our hope, that my hope, is not based on my faithfulness. I think you should be as well. Because there are some days and there are some weeks that I'm killing it.

I'm like, man, I'm good at this. And there are some days as the preacher, I think, I don't want to go to church. I'm tired of serving. I'm tired. Am I the only one?

Okay, I know it's Sunday night, just making sure, just making sure that this thing's on. Listen, I'm thankful that it's not based on that. I'm thankful that the hope that Peter speaks of in this book that we're going to see is not based on circumstances.

Because sometimes when circumstances are good, you're thinking, hey, this is going to be a good day. You wake up, you say, oh, it's going to be a great day. We know this, circumstances in life just change like this. I mean, we see it here in the weather.

I mean, it's a beautiful day, it's 80, and then you look at the news and you're like, guess what, it's going to drop 57 degrees overnight. Well, I'm glad my hope is not based on the weather. But we're not basing it on circumstances.

[19:46] Because they're constantly changing. Our joy's not found in that, it's found in Christ. Listen, our hope is not on the ability, our own ability to hang on.

Because sometimes we're not even hanging by a thread, we're just done. That's not what it's based on. Our hope is solely based on the fact that there was a Savior who lived and died and was buried and rose again.

That's what we're anchored to. That's what Peter's reminding him. That's why we have an inheritance incorruptible. If it was based on us, it would be moth and rust and it does corrupt. But it's not.

We're laying up treasures in heaven based on Christ and that's where he's taking us and everything God promises. Salvation and forgiveness and eternal life. It stands on the authority of the empty tomb.

That's what we can live and base our life on. Listen, if Christ was still in the grave, hope would be nothing more than just religious optimism.

[20:48] Sometimes when you try to share your faith, people say, well that's just a crutch for the weak. Well it would be if Jesus was still in the grave. That's exactly what it would be. But he's not.

He is alive. And because he lives and because the grave is empty, hope is alive. And it's available right now. And we need to be reminded of this because maybe you think, well life's pretty good right now.

But let me remind you that in this life you will have tribulation. And you're going to walk through a moment in life where the doctor says, I don't know how else to say this, but you have cancer. I don't know how else to say this.

I don't know how to say this. And you think, how am I going to move forward? Here's how you're going to move forward. Jesus Christ. That he knows the way you take. That he knows where your life is. And some practical things just to think about is when something doesn't go your way.

When hope seems like it's slipping out of your hands. We can just remind ourselves of this great truth. That the same power that raised Christ from the dead is still alive and well.

[21:51] And it's available to you. And he knows where you are. He knows what you're walking through. And when you understand that and when you see your hope is rooted in the resurrection, the contrast between the believer's hope and the world's hope becomes very clear.

It becomes very obvious. Because the world's hope, here's the truth, it always fails. It always fails. When Jesus gets, he's wrapping up his Sermon on the Mount there in Matthew chapter number 7, he gives an illustration.

He gives an illustration about two men that built a house. Same materials, same general location is what we see, but they built on two very different foundations.

He said the man that built his house on the rock, when the winds came and the rains came and the floods rose, here's what happened to the house. It stood. But those, the other man that built on the sand when the winds came and the waters came and all that, guess what?

The house was gone. And we look at the world and we think, why does it seem, when I put my trust and maybe my own ingenuity and my own thinking, why does it fade away? Because it's sinking

sand.

[22 : 59] The world doesn't build on a solid foundation. And even as Christians, we know we're to build on the Word of God, the solid rock, but we live in the world and you know what we think?

Let me just Google this. Let me see a way out of this. Let me find a quick fix. You know in America, you know what we love more than anything? A quick fix. You look at every almost commercial and every ad, you know what they're trying to do?

Quick, fix your life real quick. They're going to fix this health and fix this and you just take this one thing, you don't have to change anything else, just take this magic pill and everything will be better. Sometimes life doesn't work that way. And we have to go through the storm, we have to deal with the difficulties.

The world is always promising a better. If we just trust their ways, it's going to work out. I know some of you, history bores you to death, so fall asleep real quick, I'll wake you up in a second. You know anything about Russian history? 1918, really the Russian Revolution, taken over and the people were promised hope.

[24 : 02] They were promised equality and prosperity and a better future. They called it communism. And they tried that experiment for about 70 years.

And guess what? They were miserable. And they were hopeless. And that experiment, it collapsed because it was built on human thinking and godless power.

I know that's an extreme thing, but sometimes in our own life, we think, hey, I know what's best for me. Listen, if I could just get this lined up and I can kind of move some things around here and do this, then I'll have a little bit of hope that I can hang on to.

Well, guess what? It's going to collapse just like this experiment did in Russia. Because it's not based on the word of God. It's based on our own thinking and our own mentality. And the same is still true today.

You know, every time, it seems like every time I turn around, it's an election season. I'm just tired of it. I'm tired of commercials. I'm tired of signs about it. I'm tired of this. But if you think about it, every election promises hope.

[25 : 04] Some recent campaigns have even run on that word. It's a hope and change and everybody's going to fix the economy and heal the society and build a better future.

But here's the problem. It's built on the same old foundation. It's just man's wisdom recycled a failed system. And yes, we should vote and we should try to do our part as citizens as believers and we should vote by what the word of God says.

But we understand this. It's not going to change the world. You know what's going to change the world? Christians living like Christians. Because that's what happened here in Peter's time.

I mean, when you go from the book of Acts after the resurrection of Christ, Christianity should have been gone a long time ago. But Christians living for Christ in a Christ-like manner changed the world.

Acts 17, I think they said it like this. They turned the world upside down. But really, here's what they did. They just turned it right side up. Really, the whole Bible's about this. Turning everything the way it should be.

[26 : 13] That Christ has a way that we should live our life and Scripture reminds us that hope deferred, it maketh the heart sick and we can't be looking for hope in all these different ways. No, we don't have to wait for hope.

We're not hoping it comes. No, it's here. And we have Him in our lives if we know Him as our Savior. And I'm sure your life, I'm sure recent years, has taught us, if it's taught us anything, it's this, that God has to be our hope.

I mean, I go back to 2020, I mean, it just kind of seemed like, wow, that was wild, wasn't it? Everything we thought we could kind of anchor a little bit to, even if we knew we shouldn't, we think, well, at least we have this, at least we have that.

I mean, within a week, this world was turned upside down. I don't know if you're like me, but sometimes you would read it and how it says when the Antichrist comes in the last days, everybody's going to be deceived.

You're like, how's that even possible? I mean, the whole world, really? Well, it took like six days. It was almost like a trial run. And you're thinking, whoa. Well, we realized this, and I think it woke a lot of Christians up, like, maybe we were trusting a lot of other things instead of really placing our trust

in God.

[27 : 22] And Peter kind of wants them to understand this. And as Christians, he's reminding them that we have a lively hope, a hope that doesn't collapse when circumstances change, because they're going to change.

Things that were true last week probably aren't going to be true this week. Don't you love watching the news? They'll come on one week and they'll say, chocolate is the worst thing you could eat in your life. And then the next week, it's obviously slow news week, they got some guy on there that's like 175, like, what's the secret to being in and living so long?

And he's like, I eat chocolate for three meals a day. And so everybody starts eating chocolate.

Listen, the world's truth changes all the time and the hope, well, I'm going to try this, I'm going to hope this. Listen, I want to hope that's steady.

I want to hope that's constant. And that is found in Christ because he is the same yesterday and today and forever. It's not based on circumstances. And Peter wanted them to be able to hold on to that.

So if our hope is real and living and secure, why do we need it so badly? We already have it. We already have Christ. Well, Peter answers that as we're going to walk through this book.

[28 : 31] We're not going to look at every situation tonight because we're going to do that over the next few weeks. But here's the reason Peter wants us to understand what this hope is because we need it for the journey.

Because yes, there is coming a day we will see him. We've already said that. But until then, he has a job for us to do here. He has a life for us to live here. He's placed you at your work.

He's given you a family to raise. He's given you an opportunity to serve in a local church. And we see that and Jesus prayed in John chapter 17 that we would be in the world but not of it.

That we can't as Christians, we can't remove ourselves and say we're just going to hang on until Jesus comes. No, in fact, Jesus says this, Occupy till I come. Get to work.

Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel. And Peter tells these believers, if you have your Bible still open in chapter 2, verse number 11, he says this, Dearly beloved, I beseech you, he's begging you, he's reminding you as strangers and pilgrims.

[29 : 37] We already referenced it and we already sang it. But Peter reminded them just as much as he reminds us today through the Holy Spirit that this world is not our home. That we're just on a journey.

That this is not our final destination. This is not live and let live because eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we die. No, the Bible's clear that there's coming a day where we're all going to stand before Christ.

And that we're going to see him. And Peter wanted them to understand and we can take this truth to our own life. We're not meant to settle here. You know, it's not he who dies with the most toys wins. We're not living for the here and now. We're not meant to plant roots here. We're meant to store up treasure in heaven. Oh, I love this thought that we're here to make heaven crowded.

That the only thing that we can take is people. That we share the gospel with. That it may be sometimes in the throes of parenting and you're thinking, is this worth it? No, it is worth it. And here's your number one job to show them who God is.

[30 : 44] And to train them up in the love and the nurture and the admonition of the Lord and to shape their hearts for eternity. At your school, it's important that you live a life that is pleasing to God that others see it and say, you know what?

What do you have? Because even at your school, guess what a lot of people don't have? Hope. You know what some of your coworkers are searching for? Hope. Just something they can hang on.

Something that they can just think, well, if I can just, if I have a little something, even if it's not real, maybe I can make it to tomorrow and next week and next year. Listen, you have a great opportunity to share the truth with them.

But sometimes when we forget we're on a journey, we have a job that we're called to do and we start thinking and start looking for this heaven-level satisfaction from an earth-level world, it's going to lead to frustration and spiritual weariness.

We're going to get frustrated, we're going to think, well, this is just not worth it, I'm just going to do nothing. We may not say that out loud, but sometimes our life lives that way. And I think when we

begin to feel that way, we need to ask ourselves and we can really ask ourselves this every day, am I living for comfort here or for glory later?

[31 : 58] Because sometimes if we really step back and we really take inventory of our life, the reason we're frustrated, the reason our hope doesn't feel real is because we're living more for the here and now than what Christ has called us to. We're more in on this world than we are on the journey God has called us on, on the mission that He has placed us in.

And once you realize that you're a pilgrim and not a settler, it helps you understand why this is absolutely necessary. And Peter's going to show us as we walk through here, we need it because hope is the only thing that will sustain us on the journey.

It's not going to be your job. It's not going to be this, it's not going to be that. It's going to be the fact that Jesus Christ loves you, that He died for you, that He rose again for you, and that hope is going to change how you look at that situation, and that health diagnosis, and that financial hardship, and raising a family, and your marriage, it's going to change everything.

Because that's what Jesus does. Is Jesus changes all of that. Kids these days, I love to say that, you know, they have all these crazy weird games they play, and Fortnite, and all these weird ones, and I'm like, what is even going on?

They don't know that the greatest game you could ever play in elementary school was called the Oregon Trail. I used to, yeah, some of you know, this is going to speak to your heart. I used to rush through my work so I could play the Oregon Trail.

[33 : 26] And I'd get on there, and the Oregon Trail, you type your name in, and you get your family there, and you're super excited. It's this little green, little wagon that's going across the thing. Man, y'all don't even know, this is awesome.

And here's the idea, you're hoping you make it to Oregon. You never do. Typhoid gets you every time. And then you have to start over, and then you're on your way again, and then you, every time you go past the grave markers, it's like, Tyler died of typhoid.

So I just started naming all my enemies, like my sister, and my sister, and all those people. But when you're playing that game, all the hope you had fades when your wagon breaks, and the food runs out, and the journey really becomes hard.

But this is going to shock y'all even more. There was a real Oregon Trail. Come to find that out. And you think, when you really think about that, like, it's hard enough on a game.

I can't imagine telling your family here, I know we live in Tennessee, but I've heard about this place called Oregon. We're going to get in a wagon. You know why they got in a wagon and tried to cross the entire country, tried to go through the Rocky Mountains, tried to go through all of this, and travel wasn't easy, and the reason it wasn't is because it was a difficult time, but they did it for this reason, hope of a better life.

[34 : 45] You know, we celebrate Thanksgiving, and we go, maybe your kids, when they were younger in school, they did a little play about the pilgrims. You know why the pilgrims came here? For hope of a better life.

A chance to worship the Lord freely. Hope is going to do that, and it just reminds us of this great truth, that those people on that Oregon Trail and those pilgrims crossing the ocean in difficult travel conditions, they did it because they had a hope, and hope does not remove the journey, but it sustained them on it.

They were looking forward to something greater and something better, and we might be on the journey, and life might get hard, and sometimes it feels like your wagon's breaking down, and your food's running out, but here's the beautiful thing, that we're not settling here, we're pressing on.

We're aiming for Christ, and that's what Peter's telling them, that this lively hope that you have, it's going to carry you through, and so when life feels hard, don't quit.

Don't give in. Just remind yourself, like Peter's going to remind us again and again through this little study, that this is part of the journey. It's not the end of the story.

[35 : 54] No, the end of the story is when we see our Savior face to face. When we step into the city of God. But Peter doesn't just tell us to endure the journey.

What we're going to walk through and see is he's going to show us how to live faithfully while we're on it. He kind of gives some survival instructions, because sometimes life feels like that.

We're going to see Peter's going to give some practical guidance when it comes to how to be a godly citizen, because they're dealing in a situation where the government is completely against

them.

We'll talk about it here in a second, and he's saying, listen, that doesn't change your responsibility. It doesn't change the way that you should live your life. In fact, you should live your life in a manner that still points to Christ and honoring the authority God has placed in your life.

He's going to deal with unfair work conditions. You're like, I'm bringing my boss that day. Tell me what day that is. He's going to talk about how to live among unbelievers.

[37 : 01] He speaks at length about that. Because the majority of his readers would have been living amongst unbelievers, and guess what? I think we are as well. Everywhere we go, we meet people.

We work with them. We live in the neighborhood with them. They're at the store with us. How do we live a life that points to Christ? How do we live in a world but not be of the world?

He talks about honoring God in your marriage. He talks about loving fellow believers. Sometimes it's easier to get along with unbelievers than it is believers. Yeah. Peter addresses that.

Because it's a practical thing that these people needed. And the idea is this book was to give hope for the destination and wisdom while you're on the way there.

That's really what the Bible is about. But really, it's kind of encapsulated in here. Peter reminds me of the book of James. It's short and to the point because they didn't have any other option because life was coming at them fast.

[37 : 59] They're scattered abroad. Persecution's there. And even with the hope for the journey and the instruction for the daily living, there's one more reality that Peter kind of hits and we see it here in chapter number 4.

Here's what he says in chapter 4, verse number 12. He said, Beloved, talking to believers, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you.

You know why we need hope? Because life's going to throw some fiery trials your way. It's going to bring some things across your desk that you didn't plan on, that you didn't sign up for.

And many times, you did nothing to bring it on but it's just, we live in a broken world. And we mentioned at the beginning that Peter's writing from Rome in around 67 AD is what many scholars would believe.

But if you studied Roman history a few years earlier, about three years earlier, Rome burned under an emperor named Nero. You know, Nero, he was not a good guy. He was all about Nero.

[39 : 07] He was, even his own Roman citizens really didn't care for him. But when Rome started to burn literally to the ground and the fires were taking over, Nero needed somebody to shoulder the blame.

Because it definitely wasn't his fault. And even though there's conspiracies that he's the one that set the blaze to build certain things he wanted, you know, he blamed Christians. Christians. And that's where the brunt fell.

And we think to ourselves, well, how would a lot of people believe that? William Barclay, one of the commentators, he points out and reminds us that Christians were already the objects of slander and hostility.

We said earlier as well that in the mind of Romans they were confused at what Christians really were. What they thought they were was just a different sect of Judaism. And they knew this, we don't like Jews.

And so there was that natural hatred for them and so as a result they were an easy target. Nero kind of pounced on it and said, listen, they're the ones that started this. They're the ones talking about how God's going to bring judgment and they're bringing it on Rome and because of that persecution followed.

[40 : 15] And you study what they're dealing with just from history. Christians were burned alive. They were torn apart by animals. They were used as sport in the Colosseum.

They were crucified. They were tortured. And this persecution really wasn't limited to the city limits of Rome. By the time Paul is, I mean Peter is writing this letter, it spread to Asia Minor where these believers, they had fled Rome for their life and guess what?

The persecution still followed. And with that backdrop in mind, Peter's words kind of carry a little bit more weight. In fact, they sound strange.

He said, listen, don't think it's strange concerning what's happening right now. He goes on in verse number 14. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye for the spirit and glory of God rest upon you.

On their part, he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. Verse 16, he says this, yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

[41 : 25] These are strange words unless hope is alive. Unless Jesus Christ is real. Unless the tomb is empty.

See, these words only make sense if this world is not your home. Our hope is Jesus who rose from the dead and will come again.

And that's what Peter's reminding him. It kind of echoes if it kind of sounds familiar. It sounds a lot like what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are ye when you are persecuted, when you reviled for my name's sake.

Listen, we're not looking for it, but here's the reality. Sometimes it comes. We can't think, I think especially in our culture today, we would just kind of associate, well if something bad is happening and then something wrong, you must have done something wrong.

I'm going through the book of Job right now. All of Job's friends, everybody's like, listen Job, we like you, but you're obviously a sinner. Bad things don't happen to good people. It's like, hey, as long as I come to church and I put a little bit of offering in the plate and I do this, then everything should be good in my life.

[42 : 34] That's not true. That's nowhere to be found in this Bible. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, Jesus says, for I have overcome the world.

That's exactly what Peter's saying here. We're going to see that as we move through this book. Instead of asking maybe, Lord, how can I escape this?

Lord, how can I get rid of this? Lord, how can I just move on from this awful situation? Maybe we need to say, Lord, how can I glorify you in this?

Lord, how do you want to use my family in this situation? Lord, what do you want me to do in this health crisis? What do you want me to do in this financial situation?

Maybe God has allowed some of those things. I loved when Brother Garrett preached. Was that last week, I think? Yeah. The Lord burned his battery up under warranty so he could go to AutoZone and a guy says, hey, where do you go to church?

[43 : 42] And I loved his transparency. I'd be frustrated when your battery goes out, you're like, not again. I can't afford this right now. You know, batteries and tires never go out when you actually have money.

No, it's when you spend all your money and then they're all blowing up and everything going. Like, Lord, why? But sometimes God is orchestrating weird things and allows weird things to happen in our life to put us in a position to glorify him.

And that's what Peter's saying. He's reminding us to ask ourselves that question. So I just want to ask you, believer, as we close tonight, are you living like a pilgrim on a journey?

Are you living like this world is your home? Because depending on how you're living is going to change the hope that you have. It's going to change your perspective.

If you're trying to live for the here and now, even if you know Christ, you're going to be frustrated. You're going to be tired. You're going to be just really, just downtrodden. And I understand, I've been there.

[44 : 51] Because sometimes what hardship and disappointment does, it dulls your hope. You know, every once in a while I take my glasses off and think, man, I need to clean these things. No wonder I can't see.

They're all smudged up and everything. Sometimes we just need to take some time and reset. Kind of clean off our lenses of our life, so to speak, and remember that we were begotten unto a lively hope.

Jesus Christ didn't raise from the dead so we can barely scrape by. No, Jesus Christ is alive and it made all the difference in our life and here's what he wants us to do.

Go tell somebody that. Live like it's true. Live like he's alive. Take some simple steps this week. Find a promise in the word of God and anchor your heart in it. You're going through something? Go to the concordance of your Bible. Look up that difficulty.

[45 : 50] You know what you can find? Verses that apply to that and take it, post it on your mirror, post it on your, and put it in your car and wherever you're going to see it and anchor your hope in that and remind yourself of that.

Maybe there is some difficulties. Reframe it in light of eternity. You know, Paul says this when he goes through all those difficult things.

This light affliction. Paul, how can you say that? Because Paul had a view of eternity. That he wasn't focused here.

He was pressing toward the hope that was Jesus Christ. That was his goal. That was his aim. We can lift our eyes up. We can refocus our lives because our Savior's alive.

Maybe you're here and I know the majority of us here we always say we're preaching to the choir. I don't want to ever just assume that though. Maybe you know all about Jesus.

[46 : 52] You know some of these verses in here but you don't know him personally. There's no lasting hope. There's just some temporary optimism that shows up every once in a while in your life.

I just want to remind you that Jesus Christ is alive. And he didn't rise from the grave so you could just have a you could attend church every once in a while. He didn't come so you could check off some boxes.

He came to have a real relationship with you. We talked this morning that we can cry out Abba Father. We can run to him. We can find comfort and dependence and hope for the journey.

And if you don't know Christ and you've been battling with it and you've been placing it in the fact that I'm a church member I'm a good person I'm a Christian I do Christian things your hope's not secure because it's based on you not him.

Turn to Christ. So we're going to see through this book as we see in our own lives this world may shake us.

[47 : 56] The journey it's going to wear you down. And the trials sometimes they're going to feel like they test you up to your absolute limit.

But step back and remember hope is alive because he's alive. That's our God. Would you stand with your heads bowed with your eyes closed?

next slide slide Thank you.