

Real Hope for Real Life

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: 03 May 2026

Preacher: Tyler Bittner

[0:00] The Bible is 1 Peter chapter number 1. You can remain standing and we'll read the word of God together. It's a beautiful day today, isn't it? Beautiful sunshine. I'm thankful for that.

Thankful to be back in the Lord's house tonight. I enjoyed the services this morning. I was going to do this this morning, but I chickened out, so I'm going to go ahead and do it tonight. When you see Miss Bobbie on the way out, she's 19 today.

19 years young. I could have reversed the numbers there, but we're just going to go with 19. 19, and I'm so thankful for Miss Bobbie. I know she doesn't like me doing that, but I'm thankful for her faithfulness.

And when she's not in her spot right here, I'm like, where's Miss Bobbie? Because as long as I've been here for almost nine years, she's been right there faithfully supporting the work here at Central Baptist. So make sure you tell her happy birthday. Please don't kill me later, Miss Bobbie. I love you.

Her daughter tried to get me to do it this morning. I'm like, I didn't feel the spirit. I was actually just scared of Miss Bobbie, so I still am, but we love her anyways, and I'm thankful for that. But if you found your place there in 1 Peter 1, we're going to be looking at verses 6-9, but we're just going to go ahead and read the prior verses as well, because it's kind of all going together, but just to give us some context, and then we'll jump right in.

[1:10] Our series we've entitled Living Hope. That's really what this whole book is about, that Peter is trying to relay that we have hope in a broken world. He's writing to a people that are struggling, and life is difficult, and the government's against them, and Christianity has a target on their back, and Peter reminds them, listen, trials in your life are real, but the hope that you have is even more real than that, and it's something that's going to sustain you, not just here, but in the future to come as well.

So that's kind of the thought behind this little letter that Peter wrote. You found your place there in verse 1. We begin reading where the Bible says, We talked about that verse last week, that there's coming a day that we're going to see Christ face to face, and we experience a lot of blessings here, but what a day that will be when we see Him.

We see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him. And Peter says, because of all of this, because of the fact that Christ is alive, and we have this inheritance that the world can't touch, that is reserved for us in heaven, we are kept by the power of God, wherein ye greatly rejoice.

Then he introduces this, Though now for a season, if need be, you 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 the honor and the glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love, and whom though ye now see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Really tonight, we want to look at this thought, that there is real hope for real life. That trials, he's kind of introduced some really encouraging things, and tonight we're going to look at the idea of trials.

[3:45] But Peter's saying, listen, don't let that get you down, because even in that, even when you walk through the fire, there's hope to be found. So let's ask the Lord to bless our time together before we get going.

Father, thank you for this time, thank you for the songs, and the truth that we've already sung, both this morning and here this evening. Lord, I thank you for this great group of people that have come out tonight as we open up your word, and I pray that it would be profitable for us, that we would take

something, we would be encouraged, we would have a truth that we can apply to our life, in our home, and at our workplace, and in our schools tomorrow.

Lord, help us to live it out, what you have, and we're thankful for the hope that you give us in Christ, and we ask it in his name. Amen. Thank you for standing. May you be seated. Basically, when I was in middle school, I lived at the vending machine.

Yeah, I mean, I had a very healthy diet. But my favorite thing was Miss Baird's, I bet they still have them, I've tried to stay away from them, but Miss Baird's had like this long rectangular cinnamon roll thing.

You know what I'm talking about? Oh, man. And it was awesome. And like on the sides of it, it had like this little paper thing, but you knew you got a good cinnamon roll when you open it up, and the paper was just covered in icing.

[4:59] I mean, that was like you knew you were having a good day at school. You know, a cinnamon roll and a surge. I mean, just what every middle schooler needs there. And, you know, I remember a few times going up there to get my well-balanced lunch, and I walk up there, my money's ready, I can taste the cinnamon roll already, and I get up there, and there's a sign that says, Out of order.

Don't you hate that? Maybe you've had to be like, you're visiting in a hospital, you're there for a long time, you're like, man, I just need something to tide me over. You go down there, it's out of order. Every time I want to go somewhere, you try to go to McDonald's, they're like, we're sorry, the ice cream machine's broken.

It's just what it is. There's just certain places, that's just how it goes. And you're kind of frustrated by it. But isn't that how life feels sometimes? I think as we can be honest here tonight, and that's what Peter's going to kind of remind us, that, you know, many times we're here on a Sunday night.

I mean, we're trying to do our best, we're trying to live for the Lord, we're trying to apply the truths that we find in the Word of God, we're trying to be good Christian people, we maybe had some difficulty throughout the week, but, you know, we're hanging on, and we're trying to trust God, and then all of a sudden that sickness hits.

That relationship that we've been praying about, it just seems to be deteriorating around us. The job that we were so excited about, it seems so promising, now it's just a drudge, and it seems like it's just a complete dead end, and that burden shows up that you never saw coming.

[6:20] And it's almost like life just kind of slapped a out of order sign on your hope, and on all the things you were kind of trusting in. But Peter comes here, and he's kind of been building up to this point, and reminding us of some great truths, but he said, listen, I want you to know this, that God's hope never is out of order.

That God's hope is never out of service. And that's why he wrote this book. Because life has a way of reminding us how badly we need hope.

You're going to need it this week, and I mean, you probably said things like, I hope this week, fill in the blank. You know, we're just dreading certain things, but it doesn't have to be that way. We don't have to walk through a trial and think, this is the worst thing that's ever happened to me.

Because Peter's going to remind us, sometimes it's the best thing that's ever happened to you. That God is going to use it in a great way. And before Peter really ever talks about these trials, and before he ever really introduced these great things about our lively hope, I want us to be reminded what he says in the very first verse.

Peter, as we kind of talked about this morning, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Sometimes we do blow through the introductions. We think, okay, there's a bunch of names, and Peter's this. But this is an important thought.

[7:35] Because this is the same Peter who was once a kind of a rough fisherman. I mean, Peter's so impetuous. Peter's the one we relate to of probably all the disciples because he opens his mouth and just inserts his foot constantly.

This wasn't maybe the one they would have said, you know who's going to be a great teacher and bring hope? Peter. Everybody's like, Peter? Like, I think Peter may be most likely to not do these things. He was impulsive in his decisions.

He was this sword-swinging follower who promised to go to the death for Christ. And yet so boldly and publicly denied ever knowing him.

And it's this man, this apostle, this chosen man by God who is writing a letter to give hope to these hurting believers.

You know what it really just reminds us? That's how grace works. That God doesn't define us by our past, by our decisions, by our failures. No, this is a man who sat there in John 21, we're going to look at it a couple times here tonight, and was dejected, and thought, God can never use me. [8:45] And yet Jesus shows up and says, Peter, I got one question for you. Do you love me? Yes, Lord, you know I love you. Now he was on a different level. Brother Garrett did a great job preaching that a few weeks back, but he was getting into this point, like, listen, Peter, there's still hope.

I'm here. I'm alive. I know you made some mistakes a few days ago, but hey, we can get past this. Hey, I got a job for you to do, because when I restore you, you're going to make a big difference. And here we are tonight, studying the book of 1 Peter, written by a man that God used, and he grew in a great way. Because Peter knew what it felt like to be a failure.

He knew what it was like to watch hope die on a cross. And everything that he had given his life for, it seemed like, well, I don't know if that was worth it. But this was also the same man, as we mentioned last week, that ran to the tomb with John, and found out that hope is alive.

And then he showed up to him in the upper room there, and over the last few weeks, Peter has been reminding us that, yes, life is hard. We're strangers in a difficult world.

[9:51] This world is not our home. But we have hope in who we are. And that's what verse number three especially tells us, that we are, I mean, excuse me, verse number two, that if we are children of God, we have been chosen by the Father.

We are being sanctified, that Christ is doing a work, a transforming work in our life, and we're covered by the blood of Christ. Last week we looked at this, not only do we have hope in who we are, we have hope in what we have.

That we have this living hope. I'm thankful the hope that God gives us is not like the weather report. It's not like the things in life where we're just kind of a wishy-washy, we're not really sure what's going to happen, I hope this and I hope that.

No, no, it's a rock-solid evidence. The tomb is still empty. That is where our hope is found. And because of that, all of the things that Jesus has promised, it's secure.

Because when Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead, every promise he said, I mean, he put a stamp that it's going to happen. And we have an inheritance that's secure. Not where moth and rust does corrupt and thieves break through and steal, as Jesus tells us.

[11:00] No, it's in heaven. Again, that we're not living for this world, we're living for that time that we are with him and we are kept by God's power. And he kind of wrapped that up in the beginning part of verse 6.

We looked a little bit last week. He said, because of all of this, rejoice. Hey, be thankful. Be excited that you have all of these things here.

That phrase, greatly rejoices, it means overflowing, expressive, outward joy. Joy. Listen, it's okay. I know we're Baptists, but it's okay to be excited about the things of God.

I mean, we get excited about football and we're yelling. You know, when my team just goes to touch it, I'm like... No, I'm sure... I mean, if you live close enough to me, you're like, what is going on in that house?

Because sometimes I'm not in the house. I'm running around the street. You know, I'm like, let's go! When's the last time you were actually just a little bit excited about the hope that you have in Christ? Because guess what?

[12:02] Your football team, just like mine, and we're not going to get into that, is going to let you down. That hope is not going to sustain you. It's going to fall flat on its face, but that's not the hope that God offers.

He offers something real and lasting and eternal that's going to carry us all the way through to the end. But then there's kind of this change in the tone in verse number six.

He says this, Though now. And I think when you read that, it kind of introduces this tension to it. Because really up to this point, you're like, man, Peter, this is what I'm talking about.

I'm excited and no doubt as they would have received this letter and these different areas in the churches of Galatia, they needed that encouragement. But they also need to be reminded that what they're going through is not abnormal.

That life is hard. And that's why sometimes, you know, I love to preach these kind of rah-rah, uplifting messages and really kind of just be thankful. But sometimes we just need to be reminded

that life is hard.

[13:05] And that it's going to be difficult. And maybe last week was difficult. Maybe this upcoming week, there's things that are coming. But it's going to be okay. That's kind of what Peter's saying here. And instead of weakening our hope, Peter shows us how trials actually can deepen our hope.

Because if hope is real, and I think we've tried to lay it out clearly, it is, then it must be strong enough to hold us in the middle of a difficulty.

So Peter begins reminding us of a hard truth that we all face. It's this, that trials and temptations are a fact of the Christian life. You know, when we see Peter introduce this in verse number six, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

See, Peter's not one to sugarcoat the Christian life. He's lived it. He understands it. He's lived through some difficulties. I mean, read the book of Acts. The church was growing like crazy, but life wasn't easy.

You know what they were facing? Hey, you know what we should do? Arrest Peter. You know what we should do? Cut James' head off. It wasn't like everything was going well. God was still working, but life was still hard.

[14:21] And Peter's reminding these believers of that same truth. that sometimes we can get in our mind, well, I love the Lord, so this shouldn't be happening to me. But I'm thankful, and I know that you would be as well, that you don't want a doctor who minimizes your diagnosis.

You don't want something to be terribly wrong, something that needs to be addressed, and they say, hey, you're good. See you next year. That would do nothing for you. In fact, that would be very hurtful.

It could be fatal in some cases. And God's word is the same way. It doesn't just sugarcoat it. It tells us life's hard, but great news, there's a way to get through it.

There's some patterns that we can follow. We say it often. Jesus told Peter this. Here's where he's hearing it. From the lips of Jesus himself. There in the upper room as Jesus is in the shadow of the cross, and they're all reeling.

He said, listen, guys. In this world, you're going to have tribulation. You're going to have problems. You're going to have trials. But before he died and rose again, he said this, be of good cheer.

[15:27] I have overcome the world. Because it's a settled reality, and that's what our hope is. So here in these few verses we're going to look at tonight, Peter teaches us a few things about trials.

Number one, we see this. He uses this word in verse number six. You are in heaviness through manifold temptation. What does that mean? That's not a word that we probably use all the time. In this context, in this idea, it has the thought of many colors. And so really what Peter is saying, in other words, trials don't look all the same. You're not going to face one type of trial.

I wish it was like, do one trial, and then you're done with all the trials in your life. Am I the only one that wants trials like that? You know, sometimes we get through a trial, we're like, man, thank the Lord that one's over.

And it's like, oh wow, a new one. And it looks different. And sometimes it's a health issue, it's a financial pressure, it's a family strain, it's persecution, it's disappointment, it's loss, it's frustration.

[16:26] I mean, we go on and on and on. But the idea is, we're going to face a lot of things in our life. And they're going to be here. And he goes on to say that, not only are there a lot of different kinds, but he tells us this, number two, trials bring happiness.

See, Peter doesn't deny the emotional weight that this life has on us. Christian people hurt.

Christian people weep. Christian people feel the ache of brokenness. We don't have to put a fake smile on and act like that's not true in our life.

Because sometimes it is. I just think when we're here on Wednesday nights and we're going through the prayer list, sometimes it just hurts my heart. The things that our friends and our family and coworkers and many people that we know are going through.

And it's just, it reminds us that we live in a broken world. That we live in a world that's going to bring this heaviness to us. I'm wearing this little thing because the girl that we're praying for there in Lindsay, the senior, Molly, she got cancer.

[17:33] And when I look at this, it just reminds me to pray for her. Because what if that was my daughter? What if that was your family? And some of your family is on that list and some of you are on that list and we're praying for you.

And it just reminds us that we're not here to sugarcoat life and we don't have to smile all the time and say, well, I'm a Christian so everything's perfect. That's not always the truth. That we are Christians and it's not perfect, but we have a hope.

This trial is not everlasting. See, joy, we think, well, if this trial would just leave and this issue would just leave, then I could be happy. Listen, joy does not mean the absence of heaviness.

That Jesus gives that joy no matter the circumstances. When he's talking there in the Sermon on the Mount, that blessedness is a joy when he's like, blessed are they, blessed are they. Here's what he's saying.

There is joy in spite of your circumstances. That it goes beyond the circumstances of life and it is a deep and it's abiding joy because it's found in Christ.

[18:32] That's what John 15 tells us as well. See, what it does is, yes, they're manifold and they're heavy on our life, but hope still exists beneath the weight of all of it.

We've already seen right here that we can still have joy unspeakable and full of glory. Because I've seen people walk through some really heavy trials with a smile on their face.

How's that possible? Here's how it's possible. Jesus is alive. There's a hope that is real. Now, here's one that we will like. Number three, trials are seasonal.

I like that. You say, well, preacher, I have a chronic situation. It's still seasonal. It may be chronic for the duration on this side, on this earth, but it's still seasonal.

Because there is coming a day when you read Revelation 21 that he's going to wipe every tear and every hurt and every grief and every pain and he's going to make all things new. That's not something to make us feel better.

[19:38] It's a promise from the word of God that we can take to the bank. And see, the unbelievers suffering, here's the reality, and this should help us to reach out to our friends that don't know Christ.

Their suffering is eternal. And the unfortunate thing, this is the best that it's going to be. And I'm thankful for the life God has given me.

I think many of us would say that. You know, through the ups and the downs and the trials and the difficulties, we can still say this, we're blessed. That God loves us, that he cares for us, but I'm thankful this isn't as good as it's going to be.

That there's going to be a day where we are with him and he is our God and we are his people and we have a communion with him. And it just reminds us that these manifold, these heavy temptations, they're just temporary.

I love this thought. Every trial has an expiration date. Now, if you're like me, maybe you're thinking, I'd like to know when that is. Lord, can you send me that date, please?

[20:38] I'd like to put it on my calendar so I could just be ready for it to celebrate. But trials are seasonal. And when you think about men and women in the scriptures, you think about Noah and Abraham, we talked about Joseph last week, Job, David, Paul, and Peter, and the list could go on and on and on.

But you know what you're going to find? They suffered. Life was hard. I think sometimes we think of them and we kind of have this Monday morning quarterback, we see all the good things in their life.

Well, David was the king. Yeah, but don't forget, David was on the run for his own life for years.

Like, he was anointed as king, but it was a long time before he actually took the throne.

And it was a lot of difficulty. We think of Job and all the things he went through and Paul. I mean, we look at Paul, man, this great missionary, this great Christian. Paul's life was hard.

I mean, you read the list of all the things Paul went through, you're thinking, no thanks. But Paul said this, this light affliction. You know why he said that?

[21:46] Because he knew it was seasonal. This wasn't what his life was. God would use those things. And in his focus, in his filters, we kind of talked about on Wednesday night, God, he looked at it and said, listen, I don't know why this is happening, but I'm going to filter it through this lens, that God loves me, that God cares for me, and he's going to work this for my good and for his glory.

We see number four, we see this as well, that kind of Peter's going to remind us as we kind of walk a little bit further through his book in the coming weeks, that trials cannot steal our joy. You think, well, sometimes they do.

Sometimes they do, but they don't have to. If we allow it to, it will steal our joy. But Peter's going to remind us, and we see here, that it doesn't have to be that way.

That that's not how it works. I mean, you read the book of Acts, we've already mentioned a little bit, but Acts 5 tells us, listen, the apostles were arrested, beaten, thrown into jail, and they rejoiced. Instead of saying, Lord, why would you let this happen? They rejoiced that they were kind of worthy to suffer for Christ. I think, man, these people are weird. I mean, that would be the world's mindset. [22:59] That's kind of when we read it, like, I don't know if I would say that. I mean, maybe some of you have read the Fox's Book of Martyrs, and people that have died for the cause of Christ. I mean, not just in Scripture, but really throughout history.

And by the way, that's still happening today. That people are still being persecuted to the death for the cause of Christ. But you'll read and hear about people that are singing and praying for those as they are being burned alive at the stake.

You think, that doesn't make sense. Well, it doesn't make sense unless hope is real. And it is. And that's why we can see that.

That's why Peter can stand here and he knows what they're going through, that they have been scattered. You look at the book of James and the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad. It has that same idea. Now listen, life has thrown them a curveball, but it doesn't mean that hope has left them, that it's still available for them today.

And here's kind of the takeaway for us before we move on throughout the message. is we don't need to interpret hardship in our life as God abandoning us.

[24:08] That's not what it is. That's not how it works. I mean, sometimes we can do it without even realizing it. We may think things and we get down and we're kind of focused on the circumstances and we think like, well, if God loved me, then marriage wouldn't be this hard.

Newsflash. Marriage is hard. And I love her to death. And I think she loves me to death most of the time. But you know why marriage is hard?

Because you take two sinners and you put them in the same house. Marriage is hard, but here's the thing. It's worth it. But if we get frustrated, we get struggling, and our world says, hey, well, it's just not working out, just drop them and get a new one.

You know what you're going to find out? It was probably the Indian that was in the other one too. It's the same issue and we begin to think things that aren't true and we think, if God was blessing me, then I wouldn't be struggling financially.

But maybe that's not why God is doing that. Maybe God is allowing certain things to happen so we learn to lean on Him. We learn to trust Him a little bit more because you know, sometimes it's a lot easier to trust what we have. We can look it up on the bank account.

[25:13] We look it up online. We say, well, I'm okay because at least I have this. Well, that's not where our trust is because guess what? I can go like that. It can be gone. You know, if God wasn't, if God was with me like He promised that He'd never leave me or forsake me, I wouldn't feel this lonely.

Because sometimes we can be in a room full of people and feel alone but instead, instead of allowing those thoughts to come in because of just the difficulty of life, we can remind ourselves, hey, this is part of the journey and I'm going to trust that God knows what He's doing and it's only for a season.

That's what Peter is reminding us here in this verse. So maybe this week, maybe you're going through it right now. When this heaviness comes, sometimes our natural reaction is to kind of panic. Lord, remove it. Lord, get rid of it. I need to get, I need this out of my life when that sorrow, when that anxiety, whatever it comes, kind of boils to the surface. Listen, don't assume the worst because I think that's what we do.

We're naturally prone to do that but Peter reminds us, hey, trials are real but they're not eternal. We can be, we can have hope in that. So the trials are real.

[26:24] He says it. He said, listen, you know this to the people that he's writing to because you're going through it. He wasn't convincing them. He was reminding them just because you're going through it doesn't mean that God has forgotten you.

And he wanted them to understand this. They're not random. We talked a little bit about this on Wednesday night when we were looking at Romans chapter 8 verse 28. Sometimes it feels like that, doesn't it?

You think, I know I've gone through things in life and I thought, man, everything was going well. Where did this come from? You ever been there? I mean, it came out of left field. I'm like, God, how

about some heads up on this?

But let me just remind you, it's not random. That God is still in control. That he is still sovereign. That he is still on the throne. And Peter's going to show us here in verse number 7 why God allows them.

God allows these trials because hope is found in the reason we're going through the trial. Look at verse number 7. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 29] I mean, to be honest, my flesh would much rather Peter have said, listen, if you love God and you have faith in him, you won't have any trials in life. That would be my life verse. I'd be all about that.

I think I would. But in fact, Peter just gives us the exact opposite. He says, because you love the Lord, because he saved you, because he's adopted you into his family, your faith will be tested. And you should want that. You should want that in your life. You think, why would I want that? Because I know growing up in school, I didn't want tests. Now I know we're going to raise our hands.

Brian would want a test. Brian loves tests. You know, I was the one like, do we have to take the test? You know, is that anybody else like that? Okay. I wouldn't want it, but you know what the test was?

It was to, it was to prove what we have learned. It was to remind us of that growth. And, and the same is true in our walk with the Lord. Faith that has never been tested is faith that's really never been proven.

[28 : 32] Because the reality is you're going to walk through a fire. Life is going to throw you a curve ball. And we get, we have a faith that's solid. But it needs to be tested.

It needs to be proven. God has always used testing to reveal and strengthen our faith. Because you know what sometimes the testing does? Here's what it did to me in school. It proved I did not study. You know, and you know, I go home to my mom, I'm like, you know, I start throwing things out like every teenager does. Well, the, the average score in the class was this. Anybody ever done that? You know, you're trying to justify all the reasons why your score was.

Here's why your score was. You probably didn't put the effort in. The teacher said, here, here's what you need to learn. And sometimes God gives us the word of God. He gives us the, he gives us the answers.

But you know what? Sometimes we have to learn the hard way. Good thing I'm not the only one. He told Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 8 that he tested them to know what was in their heart.

[29 : 33] He wanted them to see what was in their heart. He wanted them to see where they had areas to go. James chapter 1 tells us this, hey, when trials, when difficulties come in your life, rejoice. You think, what?

You know why? Because the trying of your faith work with patience and when we let patience have our perfect work, then we're complete and entire wanting nothing. And if we struggle and we come into a difficulty, James tells us, let him ask of God who giveth all men liberally.

If you need wisdom, go to God. You don't have to go through the trial and just kind of wonder. No, you can talk to your father. I mean, think about it. We kind of mentioned already, but think about all the great men and women in Scripture.

We admire them for so many reasons. I mean, you think about Noah. I mean, God told him to build a boat. It's going to rain. What's rain? He doesn't know what that is.

From what we can tell in Scripture, he's never going to experience that. And yet, for 120 years, it wasn't like build a boat and the next day it's going to rain. No, for 120 years, the Bible says he was a preacher of righteousness.

[30 : 32] I would imagine Noah had days where he's thinking, I'm not sure what is going on. Lord, is this really worth it? Is this boat really worth it? Guess what? It turned out it was pretty worth it. You think of Abraham.

I mean, a man of the father of faith, we would call him sometimes. Leaves his homeland, goes to this land. He doesn't even know where he's going. He gets there. But you know what he finds as soon as he gets there?

The land that he was promised is full of enemies and then there's a giant famine. And so many times he didn't do what he was supposed to and God brought him back and yet we see also times where he said, hey listen, I know you waited years and years and years for this son but here's what I want you to do, sacrifice him.

That's kind of testing your faith a little bit. I'll just be honest, I'm not sure I could go up that mountain like Abraham did. But he did and he found out, the Bible tells us in Hebrews, you know why he did it?

Because he thought even if I sacrifice him, God will raise him from the dead. That's a faith. But it was something that strengthened Abraham. We see Job, we see Moses, we see Daniel and the lion's den, we see the three Hebrew boys and they trusted God and even Peter and Paul.

[31 : 44] And the reason we admire their faith so much is when it went into the fire, it came out genuine. Listen, sometimes that's why God wants you to go through the fire.

That's why he allows you to go through the fire. Because he wants to deepen and strengthen that faith. Because maybe there was something you went through in your life and you wish you wouldn't have but now you're walking through something right now, you know what you're holding on to? Well, God came through here and here and here and I think if he did it here and here and here, I think he can do it right now. That he's never failed us. That not one of his promises ever come untrue.

See, God is not interested in this untested faith. No, he wants to test. You should desire that. We should desire that God works in our life and he tells us here in verse number seven the purpose of the fire, the purpose of the trial.

He says it's the same way it's for this one goal to refine our faith. That's what they do with gold. When you put gold into a fire, it doesn't lose its value.

[32 : 52] You know what it does? It gains purity. It gets rid of some of those things that shouldn't be in there because it can get contaminated with things and they put it in the fire so it's pure gold.

And that's what God wants to do in our life. And sometimes it feels like where is God in this trial? And I love what Job told us in Job 23.8.

He feels the same way that you probably felt at some point in your life. He said this, Behold, I go forward, he's not there, and go backward, but I cannot perceive him.

On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand and I cannot see him. You ever felt like that sometimes in life? He's looking for the Lord and he's going everywhere that he thinks he should be and he can't find him.

But here's what Job said, but he, but God, knoweth the way that I take and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job didn't understand everything.

[33 : 55] And Job was struggling and at first he was kind of strong and then his friends were kind of beating him down and he's thinking, okay, well maybe I got some issues going on here. But you know what God was really doing in Job? He was refining him. He was purifying him.

He wanted Job to be more and better and closer to him than he had ever been before. And for Job, that's the way that he was going to grow. And that truth isn't just for Job.

It can be true in your life. That you might be walking through something right now. You're going to walk through something at some point in your life. And you're tested faith and when God proves it, here's what he wants it to do.

He wants it to bring praise and honor and glory to him. And to help you grow in him. Because there is coming a day that we will be with the Lord forever.

But you know what I want to hear from the Lord more than anything? Well done, thou good and faithful servant. How do we do that? We trust him in the trial.

[35 : 01] Because he reminds us at the end of that verse that we're going through all of this and it's going to be something we can present at the appearing of Jesus Christ. that we've been faithful through it all.

Listen, faith matters to God. Without faith, it is impossible to please him. But it's not just faith as a generality. Here's what matters to God.

Your faith. He wants to grow your faith. Listen, you might walk through trial. Your trial's not for everybody. It's for you. It's to help you grow. It's to bring you closer.

And Peter's reminding them of this truth and reminds us today as well that this changes how we view trials. When you realize that maybe what you're going through is not punishment, it's the fact

that God loves you.

And he cares so much for you that he wants you to grow. I know my knee-jerk reaction is, why is this happening to me? Anybody here else think that?

[36:04] I mean, something happens in my life, like, Lord, why is this happening to me? I mean, you should have talked to Renee. I mean, sometimes we do. We think, well, I don't deserve this.

And we may not say it out loud, but sometimes it's what's in our heart and that's what's in our mind. Maybe we just need to ask God, what do you want to shape in my life? Lord, how do you want to grow me here?

God, why are you stretching me here? Is there something you want me to learn? Because it could be the fact that he is teaching you to trust instead of trying to control everything.

Because I want to control things. I want to be in control of all of these things. And here's what God says, why don't you just let go? But God, what if I let go? What's going to happen? Just trust me.

And maybe that's what the trial teaches us. Maybe he's teaching us patience instead of panic.

Anybody here super patient? I think patience is one of those things we could all grow in.

[37:09] But it's a lot easier to panic, isn't it? It's a lot easier to try to figure it out ourselves instead of just standing still and letting the Lord work in our life and taking that step.

Because I know in my life, God sent trials to me before and he sent things in my life and I've tried to run past them. I'm trying to run away from them. You have too, probably.

And you know what I have to realize? They keep chasing me down because God's trying to teach me patience. It's not for me to outrun. Maybe he's trying to teach us how to really get a hold of him. How to really pray instead of just being self-reliant. Because when our prayer life is lacking, here's what we're really saying.

God, I can handle this. I'm good right now. I don't need you. You say, well, I would never say that. But prayer just reminds us who we're dependent on.

[38:08] Because he already knows what we need. He already knows what we're thinking. He knows everything about us. But you know what prayer reminds us? That he knows that.

And that he loves us. And that he wants us to come to him. And it's that posture of dependence.

And maybe that trial is something that pushes us to our knees.

And that's exactly where he wants us. And we really begin to see how much he loves us and how dependent on ourselves we've been while maybe saying, yeah, I trust God in everything. And really, we're just leaning on ourself and our ingenuity and our intellect.

That's not what God has called us to do. Listen, he's trying to refine you. That's the purpose of a trial. Just like gold, he wants us to come forth better than we went into the fire.

And sometimes I think we can waste a trial. We try to rush the process. But we need to trust that God is just maybe doing a refining work in your life, not a punishing work.

[39:11] Sometimes we look at people's trials and say, wonder what they did. That's the book of Job, by the way, in a nutshell. No. Job had all these things going on and his friend said, wonder what he did.

And for like, I don't know, 30 chapters, they tell him everything they think he did. But it really wasn't about that. Yes, there was areas in Job's life that needed to be refined, but it was just this.

God wanted Job to be closer to him. See, faith that's refined by fire leads to something much deeper. It reminds us how much we love God.

When you walk through the difficulty, when you walk through the trial, and you see God work, and you see him move, and you see him sustain, and you trust him more and more, we begin to love him even more.

So verse number eight tells us, that we can love the unseen Christ, whom having not seen, ye love, and whom though you now see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with unspeakable, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

[40:21] When Peter preached there in the book of Acts, in the early church, when Peter's writing these letters here, he wasn't speaking from a secondhand source. He didn't Google all these things about Jesus.

No, Peter had seen Jesus. He walked with Jesus. Literally, physically was there. Shared meals with him. Traveled the road with him. But here's what Peter also saw.

He failed Jesus miserably. But Peter also was on the receiving end of the restoration of Jesus.

There in John chapter number 21. I mean, this man writing here was a man that knew the look of

disapproval.

You know, it's the same look. I feel like the look that Jesus gave Peter at that, maybe at that meal, was the same look your mama gave you at some point in your life. You ever been on the receiving end of that? Sometimes, I mean, I was just like, I don't want to ever see that look again.

I mean, Peter, the Bible tells us when Peter denied Jesus that he went out and wept bitterly. They locked eyes. And it broke Peter. And he just thought, well, I can never do anything for the Lord. But this is also the same man.

[41 : 29] And that's why he's able to write a book like this, who experienced the joy of forgiveness. But Peter says something remarkable in verse number 8.

He reminds us, hey, listen, you can love Jesus the same way I love Jesus, even though you've never seen him. Yeah, it would have been nice. And I can't wait to see Jesus. I'll just be honest. I can't wait for that day. But I still love him. I love him with all of my heart. And I want to remind us today that faith does not require sight, that love does not require physical presence.

No, in fact, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5-7 that we are to walk by faith and not by sight. Hebrews chapter 11 reminds us that faith is the evidence of things not seen and the hope of things that are hoped for.

And if you're like me, you love Christ. You know why you love Christ? Because you've seen his grace in your life. That you've known his mercy. That you've experienced his forgiveness more than once.

[42 : 31] That you've felt his patience with you. I feel it all the time in my life. Jesus told Thomas there in the upper room, blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe.

But as we think about our life, he's saying, listen, you're here and life is hard, guys. But I just want to remind you that you still have joy unspeakable.

Think about all the things that God has done in your life. Think about how God has moved in your life. As Peter was there and he denied Christ and he's sitting there at the fireside in John 21, that moment he just had to feel like an absolute failure.

The beginning of that chapter, he basically quit. He put his two weeks notice in him being a disciple. He said this, I go fishing. And it wasn't like a little trip because he liked fishing. He was saying, I tried and I failed.

There was some hope for me. You know, I had a lot of things going, but it's not really working out. But here we are studying this little letter that Peter's writing all about hope, all about the things that God offers.

[43 : 41] Because in that moment, Peter, when he thought everything was gone and God could never use him and hope had died, Jesus showed up. And he just reminded him, Peter, I love you.

Hey, do you love me? Listen, I went to the cross for you, Peter. I died for your sins, Peter. It was never about your boisterous. It was never about your claims. It was all about your trust in me.

See, Peter, Peter failed so greatly because he believed with his flesh and with his self that, hey, I can do this. But sometimes our flesh has a head-on collision with difficulties.

And when that hard time comes, that trial comes, we think, well, I gave it a good run. That's kind of how Peter was. But Jesus brought him to this realization that love, that that hope that Christ gives, not the failures, was what his motivation should be.

See, Peter was motivated to quit because he thought, well, that's just what I am. Jesus said, no, I came to change your life. And that's what he did. Some of my favorite verses in all the scripture are Psalm 116, 1 and 2.

[44 : 53] The psalmist says this, I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications, because he has inclined his ear unto me. Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

It's not because we're perfect. You know why we can do that? Because our hope is alive. Because Christ is real in our life. And so the question is simple as we kind of wrap this up.

Do you love him? Do you love Jesus? See, Peter was there at one moment in his life. And it was a turning point for him. Because when you read John 21, he said, listen, when things all get back to where they should be, I'm going to use you.

You're going to be a great help to others. And love isn't just words. I think you had to experience this this past week. If you have a significant other, you know, we had this pack that we're not buying Valentine's Day gifts.

And then she bought a Valentine's Day gift. And then said this, oh, you don't have to get me anything. Listen, this ain't my first rodeo. I'm alive in here today. You know why?
[46:02] Because I went and got something. And I don't have a problem getting something for her. Because love is not just something I tell her. Love is something we show. Love is an action. And that's what Peter's reminding them here, that God is working and difficulties are in your life and they're for your good and they're for his glory and you're going to love him even more and more.

And you're experiencing that right now. He's saying, stop and think about it. Because love just shows up in different ways. You know what it does? It shows up in obedience when it's hard. Because life is hard right here for them.

But he's saying, listen, it's still, we still got to trust the Lord. Listen, you're rejoicing greatly. Think about that joy unspeakable you have. You're on the run literally. But you can still obey the Lord. That we can be faithful maybe when nobody's looking or nobody thinks it's important. They lived in a world where it wasn't a big deal. Faithfulness was something you want to maybe keep under wraps because you can maybe keep your head. And that's where they were. Love shows up when it's trusting, when life hurts. Maybe this week we let love motivate our obedience.

[47:12] Because we think of all these things that we have in Christ. This hope that we have for the life that we live. That we let hope strengthen the endurance. When we think about, hey, all of this is mine.

You know what it can do? It can help you endure. It can help you persevere. It can help you thrive in your life. The idea of these few verses right here is this.

That trials are real. They're going to be heavy in your life. They're going to make you have some difficult times. And there's going to be a lot of them probably. But they're temporary.

We need to hang on to that truth. We need to be reminded of that. What you might be facing in life, it can't steal your identity. Because your identity is not in what you do.

It's in who you know. Our identity is in Christ. That's what we are as his children. It can't steal your inheritance. It can't steal your hope.

[48:08] They tried that already. And he walked out of the grave the third day. It cannot take those. We have hope in who we are and what we have. And Peter says, listen, you can even have hope in the trials of your faith.

And this sermon goes so well with what we looked at Wednesday night. Where Paul told the Romans, And we know that all things work together for good. To them that love God.

To those who are called according to his purpose. From whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed into the image of his son. I mean, we boil it all down to this.

Here's what trials do. They make us more like Jesus. Because you look at Jesus' life, you know what it was? He was a man of sorrows. He walked through the trials.

You know what trials do? They refine us. They do not define us. They help us grow. See, the world tries to define us by all the things that we have in our life.

[49:08] They try to define us by our problems, by our diagnosis. Maybe it's a failed relationship. It's a failure in life. It's a struggle we go through. But you know what Peter's reminding us? What defines us? Redemption.

Grace. Forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ. That he offers a hope that is real for a life that is real. I know we sang this song earlier, but just listen to the words.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil.

The third verse is this. His oath, his covenant, his blood, supporting me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.

[50:12] When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found. In him my righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. Peter's writing to a group of believers. The world around them is sinking.

And Peter says this. You have a rock to stand on. And his name is Jesus Christ. Real hope for real life. Would you stand with your heads bowed, with your eyes closed?

Amen. Amen.