

# The Hope and Joy of the New Birth

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[0:00] So 1 Peter chapter 1, 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 through 9. We'll read it in just a second. And just to kind of catch up to speed, we walked through the book of Leviticus and now we're in the book of 1 Peter.

And last week we just sort of introduced the topic and looked at suffering. The kind of suffering that it deals with is primarily the persecution that is to come to them.

But what we see here is applicable to all areas of suffering. And so it becomes a good book for us to walk through. And so 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 through 9.

And you'll notice a lot of similarities between what we're about to read and what we just heard in that song. There are definitely some differences, but those differences are there if you kind of pick up on it.

Beginning in verse 3, it says this, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that's imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who, by God's power, are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[1:23] In this you rejoice, though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials. So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word and we confess that unless you, by your spirit, illuminate our minds to understand not only the content of what is there, but the meaning that you intend for us to see, we are without hope.

And so we pray that you would help us now what we see and we pray this in Christ's name and all God's people said, amen. So preaching is one of those weird things, right?

Preaching is strange because you have to sit there and listen for a length of time, depending upon who's preaching, it's shorter and longer. With me, you're just out of luck.

[2:41] I just go until I'm done. So sometimes it's noon. But the thing about preaching is that what we're trying to do is we're trying to take what is in the word of God and explain it.

So the message or the meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon. The meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon. So I'm not trying to come up with things out of my head or from a newspaper clipping to share with you that made me feel something.

I'm trying to explain something that's there in front of us. And one of the things about preaching a lot of times, and even about the Christian faith that a lot of people have a tendency to feel is that they feel as though there's a lot of you oughts.

You know what I'm talking about? A lot of you oughts, a lot of commands, a you shoulds, you must do's. And I know a lot of people, you know, try to downplay that as we talk about a relationship with Jesus Christ, because a lot of people will say it's about a relationship, not a religion.

It's about what Jesus has done and not what we do. And so when we come to preaching, we have this moment where you're kind of wondering, well, what's going to come from this? Because if we begin to give a lot of do's, you need to do this, you got to do this, here's a command, here's a command.

[ 3 : 53 ] If you do that and only do that, that is debilitating to your spiritual walk. But there's another part of things, and that's where we describe, we declare, we have statements of truth that we just hand out.

These are things that are just true, just true, just true. And if all you do is preach these, then you end up with a faith that feels good but goes nowhere.

True preaching has to involve both. And what's fascinating is that if you read through the epistles of the apostles, you will see, like with Paul the apostle, the first half, take any letter he wrote, the first half is doctrine, truths, declarations, statements, truth ideas.

And the last half is you shoulds, you musts, you got tos. Does that make sense? And so you really have to have both. And the reason I'm telling you this is because, like as a pastor, you're always trying to make this applicable and practical.

Like, I really want you to walk out of here with something as you walk away. But this passage, I don't know if you noticed it, but this passage, Peter does not one time in here say, you should, you ought, you must.

[ 5 : 16 ] He just describes. He tells you what is, not what should be. And that's a very interesting thing to preach.

And so that means that my takeaway for you, I'm going to just tell you right now, here's the application of the sermon. You just need to believe it. It's the truth. And since it is the truth, it's the truth about suffering.

And it's about how we are shaped to endure and go through suffering by what God has done for us. And in this passage in particular, there are two things that I'm bringing forward.

One is that there's a, our salvation is hopeful. And secondly, our salvation is joyful. And that hope and that joy shape us as we face suffering in the future.

So let's look at those two things. Your salvation is hopeful. That's verses three through five. And your salvation is joyful. That's verses six through nine. So first of all, your salvation is hopeful.

[ 6 : 23 ] Verse three through not three through five. And what's interesting is that in this passage, what I'm going to have to do is I'm going to shift a little bit because the hope that our salvation brings to us, the hope is caused by the new birth.

What he calls the new birth. And so verses three through five talks about this new birth. And so that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to talk about this new birth. And we're going to come back to the hope before we end this point. Okay.

So just, just because I don't say the word hope for a while, don't think that I have left it. Okay. So the new birth, the new birth, he tells us several things about it. Number one, he tells us the cause of the new birth.

And the cause of the new birth is God, the father, God, the father caused the new birth. Now this new birth ought to ring in your mind, this story about Jesus and Nicodemus, where Jesus tells him he must be born again because the new birth and born again, this is the same kind of language. And with Jesus talking to Nicodemus, he tells Nicodemus, listen, without the new birth, you cannot see the kingdom of God, which that means to see the kingdom of God means to understand it, to grasp it.

[ 7 : 36 ] Okay. Then he tells them without the new birth, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. So that's, that's you coming into the kingdom and becoming a kingdom citizen. In other words, this is why the new birth is built upon the mercy of God.

He is the source of our new birth. Then it tells us the means of the new birth, as he says, that it is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Okay. So the new birth happens because God, the father makes it happen, but it happens by the power of Jesus rising from the dead. Now, how is it that the resurrection of Jesus rising from the dead brings the new birth to us?

Well, we could go a couple of ways, but we'll just go one direction this morning. And that is talking about the new covenant for just a second. When we partake of the Lord's supper, right?

You've got the bread and you've got the juice that's there. That supper is a symbol of the new covenant. We call ourselves new covenant Christians or new Testament Christians.

[ 8 : 46 ] The new covenant was promised in the old Testament. And it's about our relationship with God. He's made promises to you in this new covenant.

And here's one of them. It comes from Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 26. He says, I will give you a new heart and I, a new spirit. I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Now, Ezekiel's language is about a heart of stone and a heart of flesh, but it's the same thing. And that would take me a while to show that to you. So I'm just not going to bore you with the details. If you want to know more, come ask me and I'll show you the pathway that that goes.

But the language of a hard heart and a heart of stone coming out of a person and the language of new birth, they talk about the same reality. And so one of the promises of the new covenant is the new birth.

So when Jesus goes to the cross and he dies upon the cross and he pays for our sin and then he rises from the dead because the father is pleased with his death, then the promises of the new covenant are secured by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 57 ] Because he died for us, that new birth is possible. Now, here's where we need to get to though, because the results of the new birth are two things.

One is a living hope. That's our word. The second thing is an inheritance. All right. Now, they're together, but here's the way I understand them.

We're going to have the hope. But what is the hope latched on to? I think the hope is latched on to the inheritance. But let's talk about the two of them separately. Let's talk about the hope first.

Number one, it's a living hope.

Peter uses this word hope to signify an inward confidence and expectation connected to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

It's more than faith. It's a confident expectation. Let me see if I can help you grasp what I'm talking about.

[ 10 : 54 ] If you found out that famous person X was driving down Highway 16 and you desperately wanted to meet them, then you might take your shade cell or you might take your pop-up shade structure and maybe a sound system and cowbells.

Anyway. And you might take signs. You might take everything else and do all you could to attract their attention and get them to stop so you could meet them. And you might say to yourself, I hope I get to meet famous person X.

Which is really another way of saying, I wish. That's not confident. That's not an expectation. That is dead paganism.

Lifeless. Without any hope at all. However, if famous person X called you on the phone and said they were going to be driving through and they said they wanted to stop at your house to visit with you, then you'd get your house in order.

You'd have everything ready and you would stand at the door. And this is me standing at my door. I've got this little window at the top of the door. Come on. You guys lighten up. If you ever look over at my house and you see something dark, you're just like, Brady's looking out of his door or window.

[ 12 : 16 ] And so if somebody's called me and said they're coming to my house, you know, I'm looking out. And why am I looking out? Because when somebody comes to see me, I'm ready to open the door. I'm not doubting that they're coming.

I'm looking forward to their coming. I know they're coming. I'm just ready to welcome them in. When they roll up, I want to open up. You know? That is a living hope.

It's a hope that knows so. It's a hope that's alive. It's a hope that has expectation. It's a hope that's confident. Not just wishing. And here's the thing.

The new birth brings that kind of hope into you. But the other thing is this idea of an inheritance. This inheritance.

He describes it in four ways. He calls it imperishable, which means it's impervious to corruption.

Unlike all the metal around my house on the Gulf.

[ 13 : 15 ] Right? All that salt air will eventually erode the metal. It's an undefiled inheritance. Which means it's pure. It's without any mixture of anything.

It's an unfading inheritance. Which means it remains fresh and new. It doesn't wear out like the new car smell does. Right? It's always got the new car smell.

This inheritance that I've got. And it's kept in heaven for you. That means you don't have it yet.

It means that it's something that's out there. And so the new birth brings to us both an inward sort of confidence and hope that out there there's an inheritance waiting for me.

And what's interesting about this inheritance, if you think about these three words, it's imperishable, so it's impervious, so it's powerful.

[14:15] It's undefiled. That means it's pure. Therefore, it's like holiness. It's unfading, which means it always remains new. That's eternal. What is this inheritance?

Well, we don't know 100%, but let me give you a clue. Ephesians 1, verse 13-14 speaks that in him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glorious grace.

That inheritance is the eternal, holy, powerful relationship, unfettered by all the things of this world, relationship we have with the triune God.

And the Holy Spirit is the God. And the Holy Spirit is the down payment on that experience. The new birth comes through the Father, through the resurrection of the Son, to an inheritance that the Spirit is a down payment of.

There's the triune God again. There's one last thing about this new birth and this hope, and then we'll wrap this point up. And that is the endurance of these things, the endurance, how long does this last?

[15:39] Because, you know, we're a little bit ready to have whatever it is we're going to have now. You know, I mean, microwave, popcorn, it goes really fast these days.

It's like a minute 30 seconds now in that thing, and it's like, well, that's like 30 seconds too long. And here is this hope, this inheritance, this thing that's out there.

Verse 5 says, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

You see, it's not just our inheritance that's being kept. It's us that's being kept. I'm being guarded. I'm being guarded by the power of God, not my own power.

I'm being guarded by the power of God through faith. The same faith that I used to come to Christ and to be saved is the same faith that I have all the way through until I die or until He comes back.

[16:42] It's not a different faith. It's the same faith. I'm throwing myself upon Him. I'm trusting Him. He's guarding us for this salvation that's ready to be revealed in the last times.

What part of our salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time? You'll remember that I've said often that the word salvation is like a big umbrella. It's a big umbrella term.

And under it are all kinds of pieces or facets of salvation. There's this regeneration. There's this effectual call.

There's this conversion moment of faith and repentance. There's justification. There's sanctification, being made holy. There's adoption by the Father.

And eventually, at the end, there's a thing we call glorification. And when you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, this is all yours. And so you have to look at what is exactly He talking about here when He uses the word salvation.

[17:46] It's the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. What do we get at the last time? We get glorification. What is glorification? I'm glad you asked. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 summarizes it very well.

He says, For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. And when the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. The power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, your inheritance is not the only thing being guarded, but your faith and hope in Christ is also being guarded until you get to the end.

Now, what do we do with this? What do we do with this? Again, I'm just going to tell you, this is a description of the salvation of every single Christian.

[19:01] If you are truly a Christian, if you've truly trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation, these are things that are true about you, and you just need to believe it.

But if these are realities and truths that are not true about you, if you find yourself saying no, no, no, then you need to examine your own life and ask yourself, are you really a Christian?

Do you have that hope? Do you have that inheritance? Just because you feel the lack of hope doesn't mean that you are not a Christian, but it means that there's something going on, but it could

mean that you're not a Christian.

So it's important to test and see. But Peter writes this down because he knows that we're about to go through suffering, that these people were about to go through suffering.

And he wants this to help them, I think, in two ways. Number one, understanding this hopeful salvation helps us to see rightly in the middle of suffering.

[ 20 : 07 ] Understanding these truths helps us to see rightly in the middle of suffering. Suffering is like a darkness. It's like a darkness that pervades everything where you can't even see your hand in front of your face.

And it's hard to tell what's what. It's hard to tell where you are. It's hard to tell where you should go. It's hard to tell what is true and what's not. It's hard to even tell if anybody's with you when you're in the middle of suffering.

And hope like this is like a candle in the darkness. This kind of hope does not make whatever caused the darkness to go away, but it does help you begin to see in the middle of the darkness. So that you can know where you are. You can know what's what. You can know which way you ought to go. In other words, the hope of salvation gives you a proper understanding of what you're going through and where you're headed.

And that's all we've got. The second thing that this hopeful salvation does is that encourages you to look past your suffering. When we're suffering, it tends to focus our attentions right here.

[ 21 : 25 ] Things that were extra, things that were frivolous, things that might have been at one time fun or whatever, those things tend to fall away when suffering comes, and we tend to focus right here.

And in some ways that's good, because sometimes we need our sight adjusted. But what hopeful salvation of the new birth does for us is it puts lenses on that help us to see past the suffering to there.

Because the truth of the matter is is that all suffering that we endure is only for this life and this life only. We need to be able to see out past in front of us to what is coming in the inheritance that God has given to us.

But it's not just the hopefulfulness of this salvation, it's also the joy. Verse 6 through 9, he changes his direction just a little bit. And in this joyful salvation, we first see the source of this joy.

The source of the joy is the work of God in your salvation. Look at verse 6. He says, In this you rejoice. In this you rejoice.

[ 22 : 44 ] In this. This. This what? The word this refers back to verse 1 through 5. All that it is that the triune God has done to save you and to keep you saved is the source of joy as we go through trials.

What God has done for us in saving us. Saving us from our sins. Saving us from his wrath.

Preparing for us a glorious inheritance. This is where our joy needs to live.

But then there's the object of our joy. Verse 7. I love verse 7. So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it's tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Christ, the object of our joy. In other words, the thing that we're rejoicing over as we're in suffering is not suffering. When suffering comes our way, we're not happy.

Oh, look, I'm enduring great suffering. I love this suffering. No, it's not the suffering itself, but like gold in a crucible that gets heated up and the dross rises up, the impurities rise up, so you can scrape it off.

[ 23 : 58 ] Suffering is the crucible for the Christian faith to draw out the impurities of our lives so it can be scraped off and done away with. We rejoice in the object that we're being purified by God.

We're being made more like him. And the conclusion of that is that it results in the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And then we think about the endurance of this joy, verse 8 and 9. Your faith is not just an idea of a ticket to heaven and that's all you need, you know?

I think so many churches have done a disservice thinking to ourselves that this idea of faith and the gospel and what Jesus has done on the cross is just so you can get some fire insurance and that's it. It doesn't have anything to do with anything else in your life.

But listen, you may not get what I'm saying, but I'm talking about your salvation and I'm talking about the suffering of the go-through. There's nothing more rubber meets the road than that.

[ 25 : 00 ] And there's a joy to be had because that joy continues. And listen to how he talks to these Christians. He says, though you have not seen him, though you've not seen Jesus himself, that's what he's saying.

Has anybody in here seen Jesus yourself? No, you're in the same boat as these people right here, right? Then he goes on to say, though you do not see him now. Now just think about that.

We're in the same boat as these Christians. You haven't seen Jesus. You don't see Jesus now. Yet Peter is saying the truth about a Christian is that even though you don't see him, you still love him, believe him, and rejoice in him.

That's what the faith of a Christian does. And in spite of not seeing him, we have this deep, abiding joy in him because he's purifying us to make us ready for this end time, obtaining as the outcome of our faith the salvation of our souls.

This joy is something that begins when we trust in Christ and goes all the way until the revelation of Jesus Christ. Then, we don't have to have this kind of joy because then we will see him face to face.

[ 26 : 28 ] And it will be a more pure joy than anything we've had here. So again, what do we do with this? How do we live this out? Because again, Peter is not telling us to do something.

He's telling us truths that are true about Christians. Are you like these Christians? You haven't seen him, yet you love him?

Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ more than anything? Though you do not see him now, yet you believe in him, you rejoice in him.

Do you rejoice in Jesus Christ more than anything? As Peter will go through the rest of his letter, he will definitely tell us some things we ought to do.

But today, he's just telling us some things that are true. And these true things shape us for suffering. And a joyful salvation in which he is the center and the apple of our eye and all that we go through is to purify us and make us more for his glory.

[ 27 : 45 ] The way that shapes us is that this joyful salvation offers us something eternal and more sure. to rejoice in than our sufferings offer us to agonize over.

Your salvation offers you something more eternal, more sure to rejoice in than what sufferings offer us to agonize over.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 16 through 18, he says, so we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient. But the things that are unseen are eternal. It might be hard to hear and it might be hard to even think about.

[ 29 : 08 ] But again, suffering is only for this life. And this life is short. and it hurts and it's difficult here and now to have this sort of suffering to happen to us.

But the thing we're supposed to do is to look past the suffering to the future, to the inheritance that we have and recognize and see that that is going to be something that we experience for all eternity and this is just for a moment.

that joyful salvation offers us something more real to relish and take joy in than anything that our sufferings bring to cause us agony.

But the second way that this joyful salvation shapes us is it gives us something to share with others when they are in need. Now, listen, when people are undergoing suffering, we need to keep a couple of things in mind.

We need to keep Proverbs 25, 20 in mind. Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day and like vinegar on soda. You don't take a garment off on a cold day.

[ 30 : 27 ] That is annoying. That's troubling. It's difficult. Singing songs to a heavy heart. You see, we have to have wisdom about how we approach people as they're in their suffering.

We can't just walk up to them and give them some big truth and slam it down and expect, well, that's just going to solve all the suffering problems that they're going through. No, you need to understand that there is a right and good way for us to weep and mourn and grieve.

And it is good for a person to be in grief for a season. It is a good godly thing as long as we take it the right way. So we don't want to come to somebody without being wise with what we're doing.

We need to do instead what Paul says in Romans chapter 12 verse 15 to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. And so not every moment that we have with a person who's suffering is a moment for us to share with them these great truths that we've come to understand.

But we watch, we wait, we pray, and we become as wise as serpents and harmless as doves to bide our time to share with them the truths of this hope and this joy of salvation that we have in Christ.

[ 31 : 42 ] It is what is needed. But we need to be wise as we approach them. And that's one of the reasons why I asked David to introduce that song to you today, you know, because I think that that is a good way to get a song in your head with the truths of scripture that you can then have pervading your own heart so that when you go to sit down and talk with someone, because I could tell you this, you just need to memorize this passage, but it's far easier to memorize a song sometimes than it is a passage.

I pray that the Lord would use us in the lives of others as we take these glorious blessings that he's given to us and we share them with others.

Let's pray together. Amen. .