

What God has done for our Faith

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[0 : 00] All right, 1 Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1, 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 20 through 21. Just two verses this morning and shouldn't take us too terribly long to walk through this.

Beginning in verse 20. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God.

Who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for what you have given to us.

And we pray, Father, that you would help us to grasp and understand the truths that are here. That you would increase our faith in you. And we pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. So we've talked about how Peter is writing to people who are going under persecution, people who are going to be suffering. And my sort of theme of the whole book is this idea of shaped for suffering because there's so many truths that he talks about that help us to be prepared for the kind of suffering that we potentially will go through.

[1 : 21] And I just want to talk about suffering for just a second. Suffering is one of those things that most of us would rather not experience. Maybe there's a few of you that think to yourself, no, I thoroughly enjoy suffering.

Suffering tends to bring one of two things, just as I'm trying to process this in my own mind, just trying to wrap it up into some categories so we can think about it.

Sometimes it brings negative emotions. And that is that the suffering will come to us and it produces in us all kinds of negative emotions. Those emotions could be anywhere from fear to anger to depression to hopelessness and frustration.

And we either follow the way of the world, and the world has a tendency to want to talk about our emotions so much that it becomes sometimes nauseating.

But sometimes we go a different direction where we repress those things so much that we become nauseated. It has an effect upon our bodies because we are not just some creature that can get by without dealing with things in a proper and healthy way.

[2 : 43] But those negative emotions, they can be tough. They can be tough. But sometimes it brings negative consequences.

And these are the actual things that happen. You know, if there's a downturn in the economy, then the actions that you will face are going to be various.

You know, all the way from losing a job to just making it harder to make ends meet. It can be that loss of that job. It can be that loss of maybe even a skill.

You can get into an accident, and now where you used to be able to do the thing, you can't. You know, when I cut my thumb with the woodworking chisel several years ago, I had this nice scar.

I've got the picture with the stitches, too, if you want to see it. I'm proud of that scar. I'm just going to say, right? I'm proud of it because of how bad it was. I'm not proud of it because I was kind of dumb doing it.

[3 : 40] But the point is, is that I was afraid I wasn't going to be able to play the guitar anymore. And there was some consternation, if you will, during that time thinking about that.

And so suffering can bring negative consequences, things that we can't affect and things that we can't change. But it's usually a loss of some kind, even to one of the greatest consequences that we would face.

And that is the loss of a loved one. And so suffering comes to us, and when it does, it either brings these negative emotions or these negative consequences.

And we are often tempted to want to handle suffering by either relieving the negative emotions or removing the negative consequences. That's the way that we normally, just as humans, we would

like to deal with this suffering is by relieving the negative emotions or removing the negative consequences.

But the thing that God is most concerned about in our suffering is not about removing the consequences or relieving the emotions. His highest priority is our faith.

[4 : 50] His highest priority is our faith, and specifically our faith in Him. Peter is writing to these Christians, and he's talking about these things that are helping them to be shaped for suffering.

And the two verses that we're looking at today are kind of the leftovers. They're the leftovers of the paragraph before. They really go with verses 17 through 19. Let me just show you this real quickly. Verse 17, you'll remember, says that if you call on Him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, then you do this, right? Conduct yourselves with fear throughout your time here.

Verse 18, how do you do this? Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not, and he didn't tell you what you're not purchased by, but then verse 19, he says, but with the precious blood of Christ.

So you need to live in fear because you've been purchased by the blood of Christ. That's his whole point. But then he says in verse 19, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

[5 : 56] So Christ, as the sacrificed lamb, is the reason we should live in fear in this earth. And then in verse 20, almost as a description and a parenthetical sort of idea, a side note, if you will, he says that he was foreknown before the foundation of the world.

The he there refers to Jesus Christ as the sacrificed lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world, but he was made manifest in the last times.

The person who's done the foreknowing and manifesting is God the father, right? But then he says this for the sake of you who through him are believers in God.

He's done all this for your faith in God. And then he goes on in verse 20 says, who raised him from the dead. The father raised the son and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

In other words, the father has been working from the beginning to secure your faith. That you might have faith in God, that you might continue in faith in God, and that nothing might sway you and keep your faith from believing wholeheartedly in God, even while you go through suffering.

[7 : 13] So the purpose of this passage is to tell us what it is the father has done for the son that then turns into us having our faith secured.

In other words, the father has secured our faith because of four things that he has done for the son. Now, one of the things that we need to think about before we get there is we need to kind of think about what it is to become a Christian, what it is to have faith in God, because I think we have a lot of misunderstandings.

Many people think that becoming a Christian is a little bit like getting a job. That in getting this job, God has provided for you everything that is necessary, the equipment and training and truth you need.

You just need to take these things and live the best life that you can. And some people think that becoming a Christian is like signing a letter of intent with a college to play sports.

That you have been made an offer by God that's too good to be true, and you just need to make a decision to sign on the dotted line. But if that is your understanding of your faith in God, then when suffering comes, it's that kind of faith that will dissipate and be no more.

[8 : 32] And that is not the kind of faith that the scripture teaches us about. Becoming a Christian is not some sort of just decision that I get to make. Becoming a Christian is more like taking a dead man and raising him to life again.

That's what becoming a Christian is all about. I have nothing to do with it. Therefore, I can't change it once it happens. And so what is it that God has done for his son that secures our faith?

There's four things. Let's just take a look at these just briefly. The first thing in verse 20, the father has foreknown his son. Verse 20. He has foreknown his son.

Now if you have an NIV, the NIV translates that as the father has chosen the son. And really and truthfully, theologically, those two concepts are the same.

To foreknow is to choose. To choose is to foreknow. And the reason for that is because foreknowledge is not just knowledge of bare facts out there in the future somewhere.

[9 : 41] But foreknowledge is much like this concept that you get in the old King James when you think about the garden where it talks about Adam knew his wife Eve. It's an intimate relational

knowledge of someone.

For God to foreknow is for God to foreknow people, individuals, persons, and it's for him to set his affections on them.

So often we view it just as God knows what I'm going to do. Well, that is not the biblical concept. Yes, he does know what you're going to do, but he knows what you're going to do because he knows you.

And he has known you since before the creation. And in this case, it's about him foreknowing his son, choosing his son. And this idea of before creation, that's before Genesis 1.

Before there was this word that says in the beginning, God, before that ever even was a thing, God chose his son.

[10:50] He foreknew his son. And so our faith is secure because God spoke into existence the world and the universe and was already at that moment planning to secure our faith by his son.

He was before time looking at you ready to secure your faith for all time. Well, the second thing that he does for his son is in the same verse.

And here it's the father has revealed his son. It says in verse 20, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.

And I'll stop there because that sentence goes on into verse 21. The ESV reads made manifest, right? Made manifest. And that's this idea of reveal.

Reveal or make clear. Like here's something that was hidden. Now we're going to show it out for everybody to see, right? This is talking about the incarnation of Christ.

[12:01] That what God had planned before the foundation of the world begins to take place as Christ is incarnated into this world. As the second person of the Trinity. Now let's stop right there and just pause for a second.

As we say second person of the Trinity. Let's define the Trinity for a second. A lot of times people like to use analogies to talk about the Trinity. I would encourage you not to do that.

Instead just use a definition. Here's the definition. There is one God. Who eternally exists in three persons.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father. Yet they are one. And He is God.

And you say, but that doesn't make any sense. It's okay. It never will probably. Even in eternity. We may still be grappling with this. But that is the definition from Scripture.

[12:58] So there's God the Father. God the Son. God the Holy Spirit. Even before there was time. He's not the Son because something was created. Something was created because He is the Son.

Understand what I'm saying? This whole relationship of Father to Son was not something that existed that God said, Wow, that's a really good relationship. I think I'll use that to describe the relationship between me and my Son.

No. That relationship of Father and Son exists in order for us to have an illustration of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son that existed before creation. And this Son was made manifest, which it means He took on flesh so that He was 100% God and 100% man. He was not some sort of weird amalgamation. He was not some sort of weird hybrid creature. But He was 100% God that was never changed. And He took on flesh, 100% human flesh.

And it says that He did this in the last times. Do you know when the last times are? Right now. Do you know when the last times started?

[14:10] At the first coming of Christ. Do you know how long the last times will last? Till the second coming of Christ. We are in the last times, the last days, and the last hour since the first coming of Christ and will be until the second coming of Christ.

So when people begin to say, it's the last days, it's like, yeah, it is. It has been for quite some time. That is not to downplay that we need to be ready. But that is just to help us understand that some people have forgotten that we're always in the last times.

And it's here that the Father has revealed the Son to be His Son. Has made Him manifest. Has begun to bring about this plan that He has had from all eternity.

The Father loved the world and sent His only begotten Son. And He did that as a part of the process to secure your faith.

You see, before time began, as He foreknew and chose His Son, He was already making a plan to secure your faith. That's a plan He had before time.

[15:20] We call that His decree. And in time and space, He sends His Son into this world to secure your faith as a part of what He's going to do in His work.

We call that His providence. That both in His plans before time and in His work in time, He is working to secure your faith.

That you, as someone who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, He has been working since before you existed, that you might believe in Christ, that you might hold on to Christ, and that nothing would sway you from Christ.

And so even those of us that, as we face suffering, you have to remember, He is working to secure your faith in the middle of that suffering.

The third thing that He has done is that He has raised His Son. You look at there in the middle of verse 21, and it says, Who raised Him from the dead? The who is God, the Father.

[16:20] God the Father is the one who raised God the Son from the dead. And that is revealed throughout Scripture. But just let me give you a couple of references. If you want these references, ask me for them later, because I'm just going to fly through them.

I'm not going to read them. I'm just going to tell you where they are. But in Acts 2, 3, 4, 10, 13, 17, Romans 4, 6, 8, 9, 1 Corinthians 6, and 15, 2 Corinthians 4, Galatians 1, Ephesians 1, Colossians 2, 1 Thessalonians 1, Hebrews 13, and our current passage.

The Father is the one who raised His Son from the dead. And the reason that He did so was because He was pleased with His Son.

And being raised from the dead implies that His Son died. And so what you have in this phrase is this view to the cross and the resurrection of Christ. And that as a lamb who gave His life as a ransom to ransom us from this futile way of living, the Father was pleased with the Son's sacrifice, so raised Him up, declaring Him to be the Son of God with power, Romans 1.

And so the Father, in planning to secure our faith by choosing His Son, in bringing about the securing of our faith, sent His Son, but also had His Son pay the ultimate price at putting Him up on the cross, raising Him from the dead so that we might have faith.

[17:54] Because you have to understand, we do not have faith naturally occurring in us because we're humans. Faith is a work of God, a gift of God given to us.

In Ephesians 2, verse 8 and 9, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God.

Lots of Greek grammar here I could go into and why this is the case, but here's the point. The it is the gift. It refers to both the faith and the being saved.

The Greek grammar has to be that way. It's just the way it is. It refers to all of it. So as salvation is a gift, so is the faith necessary to be saved a gift.

It does not naturally occur in you, but He has given it to you because it was purchased by the blood of Christ in the new covenant. And so He has worked to secure your faith by sending His Son to die and to rise.

[19:02] And so our faith is secure. But there's one final thing. The Father has glorified His Son. Verse 21 just says the words gave Him glory.

If you trace out Peter's thought about glory, we can see in chapter 1, verse 7, that glory here has something to do with the second coming of Christ. Right?

That our genuineness of our faith that's tested may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. So there's going to be glory given to Him there. But then we find in chapter 1, verse 11, that the prophets were inquiring what kind of person the time or spirit in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings and subsequent glories of Christ.

So it has to be something that's after the crucifixion. It at least has the resurrection, if not more. And because He's got it paired with the resurrection already, He's looking at further things.

What else is there in the work of Christ? So often as Christians, we think only of the death and resurrection. Maybe once a year at Christmas, we think of the incarnation. But there's so much more to the work of Christ.

[20:10] Because He ascended. He was enthroned. He is ruling and reigning. And He is coming back. In other words, all of the glories of His ascension, all the glories of His enthronement, all the glories of His return, God the Father has secured your faith because He has enthroned His Son upon the cross.

I mean upon the throne. He's enthroned His Son and therefore we have our faith secured. Because He rules and reigns currently, our faith is secure.

Now, you might think to yourself, wow, that was really fast, so we're done with the sermon. Well, I've got one more point. Because what I've just told you is true, and I didn't feel as necessary for us to really dive deep as to what these things are, because I feel like most of these things are things you understand and know.

But how do we make use of this? How does this help us? And I just want to give you two points, and then we'll be done. When you think to yourself that the Father has chosen the Son in His decree, His plan before time, He has revealed His Son in the incarnation, sent Him into this world. He has resurrected His Son and then given Him glory. And all of that is so that your faith and hope are in God. then when it comes to our lives and how we live and what we're doing and going through suffering, God cares more about your faith holding firm and steadfast in the middle of suffering than you do.

[22 : 12] God cares more about your faith holding steadfast in the middle of suffering than you care about your own faith holding fast. Because He's been planning for it from eternity past.

He spared no expense in securing it by sending His Son. And out in the future, there's coming a day when it comes to fruition as the Son returns in His glory.

So, God is not just simply the God we go to in order to try to get our negative emotions relieved or our negative consequences removed.

And it doesn't mean that He doesn't care about those things, but it means that His highest priority is on our faith and our faith in the middle of these things. He cares that we make it through suffering with our faith intact.

He cares very much that we go through our suffering still believing. He cares very much that we make it through suffering being one who is completely surrendered to Christ because we see that He is glorious and He is great and He has spared no expense in making sure to hold our faith firm.

[23 : 31] And this is important because in suffering the one thing we're tempted to think most often is this God, do you even care?

And the answer is yes. Yes, He does. But the second thing that I think that's important for us to remember is that what we usually want most in suffering what we tend to want to happen in suffering is usually the one thing that actually in turn becomes the thing we hope in.

That's a really weird way to say that. Let me try it again. What we look to what it is that we want while we're experiencing suffering is the thing we think would bring us the greatest amount of hope in our suffering.

A couple years back we went to Colorado Sean and I went for our anniversary I don't remember which one it was we went to Leadville was that 30th?

We went to Leadville and we went down south from there to a place on the Arkansas River to do whitewater rafting and you know if you've got a group with you to go whitewater rafting it's great but if you have to be paired with a group that's really not great sometimes because sitting at the front of the raft I'm on the right hand side and this other person is on the left hand side and they were not pulling their weight the whole day.

[25 : 11] It was really annoying because the guide kept yelling at this person put your paddle in the water it was terrible and at one point there was this place where the boat begins to spin around in such a way that this rock outcropping is there and we're headed right for it because person won't pull I mean stick the paddle in the water and pull some water you know what I'm saying like just do it and I'm sitting there looking at this and you do know how to sit in these things I told you this just a few weeks back you're up front so there's a cup on the front and you stick that foot in the cup and then you stick this foot underneath everything under these inflated tubes and then that's it your feet are the only thing holding you in and you got the paddle right and the other things that are around are other people and a rope and that's it and so as we're careening for this rock outcropping

Michelle's sitting right behind me and I'm thinking to myself it's turning towards us I'm going like okay we're going to get hit now chances are you know it's like two feet of water and it's really not going to be that bad just a little bump you know but I didn't know that because I'm afraid of the water so I'm thinking to myself we're going to die you know and so I'm sitting there and as I'm watching this thing coming closer and closer and closer you know what I do right like I have my foot in there up to my ankle but now I'm like bearing it down to my knee I'm just like just shove that all in there and then I'm grabbing the rope and tying myself around it because I want to hang on to something

so that I don't fall out because I can't hold on to anybody else because they're going to fall out and the paddle it's just going to go when suffering comes the thing that tends to be our hope is the thing we tend to think that if we could get this we'll be okay and that gets displayed for the things that we're thinking about most or the things that we cling to or the things that we fight for the things that we begin to demand and our hope is supposed to be in nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ but we will say to ourselves that maybe if I could just get these emotions to subside then everything will be okay or if I could just find the right course of action that I need to take through this suffering or if the person who's causing the suffering in my life would just stop these things then everything would be okay or if I could just not lose my job or if I could just have you know extra savings or if I could just have my loved one back that everything is going to be okay and what we're saying here is that our hope can't be in trying to relieve the emotions or remove the consequences the hope must be in God and God alone and I don't have the kind of power to make sure that my faith and hope are that way but God does as a matter of fact he's been planning from all eternity and spending the price of his own son to secure my faith in him God has not planned for the relief of the emotions and the removal of the consequences to be the anchor points that hold our ship from being destroyed by the ocean he he he is the anchor point and so if I have him but I still feel an immense amount of dread if I have him and I've lost my memory if I have him and I've lost the job I have him but I've lost some reputation and some friends I've lost a loved one if I have him then the anchor holds this is what God has done for our faith and you can trust him you can trust him the challenge is Lord help me help me to trust you more let's pray