

Twin Hopes of Assurance

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[0 : 00] okay um when i come back up on the screen again well even if i don't come back on here i go here i go uh i'm going to read the bible now and then we'll we'll spend a few minutes just um thinking about one peter chapter one and i just can't help thinking that at this time it's just lovely to hear about jesus total commitment to us and our salvation secure there's nothing else much secure in this world at least it feels like nothing else much secure in the world this week but our salvation is just as secure as it was last week last year last century and we can never hear enough of that especially that time so this time so thanks alex now i'm going to read from one peter chapter one uh the first nine verses and then we'll spend a few minutes just uh thinking through some of those things so hopefully um you've got your bibles open uh maybe you can they said yesterday there might be some complication with having um electronic devices and zoom open so you might have to go back and use an old-fashioned uh word bible like like i do anyway here we go so verse one of chapter one of one peter peter an apostle of jesus christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in pontus galatia cappadocia asia and bithynia according to the foreknowledge of god the father in the sanctification of the spirit for obedience to jesus christ and for sprinkling with his blood may grace and peace be multiplied to you blessed be the god and father of our lord jesus christ according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of jesus christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled 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 in this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is 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 see him now you believe him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls well rob's already said uh summed it all up hasn't he what a week what a week it's been just imagine something as microscopically small as a virus totally disrupting interrupting our life if not changing it forever forever that great thing that we've all talked about over the years that australian way of life socially we've moved from being party central as a nation to being a nation in nervous isolation economic talk of economic growth has moved to talk of economic recession and even depression pretty bleak our health system that a week ago most of us would have thought would have been able to deal with any eventuality is now threatened with being overwhelmed the aussie spirit so-called aussie spirit of looking after your mate well that's fast becoming a look after yourself type attitude isn't it hoarding panic buying and then as rob's already mentioned our church family now for the first time ever being forced to meet online trying to be together while being separate now it's already been mentioned a few times that as

always change creates fear we've heard a few of them this morning it's fear of the unfamiliar fear of loss of relationships and growing aloneness fear of losing your job fear of ability to provide for your family fear of losing your retirement nest egg as you see the stock market collapse fears even of contracting covered 19 fear of death I mean the fear is the list of fears goes on and on and on but you know what my biggest fear has been this week doing what I'm doing now speaking online I'm not so much worried about covered 19 I thought actually come Friday night that might have been a really good option rather than preaching online but here I am so fierce they're very real fears they'll be very specific to each of us but regardless of what they are each of them impacts on our faith in the present and impact on our hope for the future and you see that one up in the the quotation up in the screen so one I saw this week if we view ourselves as besieged victims who need to go into hiding then we will cultivate fear and hoarding if we view ourselves as a community working hard to protect the most vulnerable among us then that will have its own outcome so our hope mindset really impacts the way we act and think everybody needs some sort of hope for the future we're shaped by our hopes mindset which drives us to list the things we believe we need to be secure and that happens from when we wake in the morning we express our hopes mindsets so let me ask you there's a hopes mindset up on the screen happy new year that's a that's a form of hope let me ask you this morning what was the first thing you hoped for when you woke up this morning perhaps like me you just hoped that all this would go away and we'd get back to life as normal as life as we know it or perhaps it was that my me and my loved ones would be healthy that my home and possessions and wealth might survive that I might still be able to get that lifestyle that I've worked for all my life and which now seems to be perhaps slipping away our hopes mindset will shape the way we speak and it will shape the what we invest our time and energy and resources in put simply we throw ourselves into doing things that we believe will make our hope a reality and coming up in the script at the moment there's a couple of more quotations about that we're hearing these sort of hopes on the tv news every day at one extreme there's a form of despair hopelessness driving panic pushing people to get what they want regardless of others at the other extreme then there's the bland optimism of positive thinking we've heard it so many times you know we will get through this crisis we will come out the other side stronger and better than ever and there are numerous options in between those two extremes but whatever option you go for we need hope wherever you sit on that spectrum we need hope and here's the really important thing the object of our hope is the thing that's really critical if the person or thing we invest our hopes into fails to deliver then we're going to crash and burn big time we'll be consumed with fear we'll be consumed with disappointment we'll be consumed with frustration because our hopes are tantalizing they're there but we can't quite get a hold of them

we can't make them secure so let's turn to uh peter's letter and see that real hope is inseparably tied to relationship with jesus so i'm going to read uh the first few verses when they come up on the screen here here we go um peter an apostle of jesus christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in pontus calesia cappadocia aesia and bithynia according to the foreknowledge of god the father in the sanctification of the spirit for obedience to jesus christ and for sprinkling with his blood may grace and peace be multiplied to you now that's the context in which peter's going to tell us about our living hope and it's a really important context to remember he's writing to christians that are scattered all over the roman empire they're living like refugees or exiles in days of severe persecution incredible insecurity for them these are christians who have been marginalized isolated or even cut off from their families and cut off from local village life simply because they've become christians we can feel their fear fear for themselves fear for their families we can feel their sense of isolation their sense of dislocation their pain their suffering they become refugees in their own land things look familiar and yet they're so unfamiliar not unlike i think i've been feeling this week everything that's comfortable and familiar is there but it's not there we sense their longing longing like refugees to know that somebody cares that they're valued as people they want to have a home they want to have security they want to know that a better life is ahead given the awfulness of their current predicament it's that context that peter reminds the christians that we have a living hope not just wishful thinking not just positive thinking it's a hope which is ours by right of birth it is our inheritance it cannot be stripped away from us as alex said in his children's talks as christians we're united with christ not only in his death but in his resurrection because he is raised to a new secure life with the father in heaven we can be absolutely certain that we also will be raised to this secure life in heaven we haven't actually got there to experience it in its fullness yet but we are tied into it now by virtue of being tied into christ because christ is living we have living hope it's that simple in and through relationship with him now peter goes on then to spell out the twin truths that underpin that that real living hope that security for the future the first is in verse four oh thanks so we'll get that up on the screen in a sec um our inheritance is kept in heaven for us blessed be the god and father of our lord jesus christ according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of jesus christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled unfading and kept in heaven for you now i've used this illustration before but children when children leave home parents often present them things that they've collected over the years things that the parents have kept because they know jolly well if they give them to the kids uh they would have been lost they would have mutilated so the parents keep them the kids can't get their hands on them and so they're there to be presented at the right moment well in the same way

our heavenly father has our security our salvation our future stored up in heaven for us we can't get our hands on it therefore we can't mess it up and that's surely what we'd do if it was down to us but it's kept for us ready to go and able to do everything that christ promised it's tamper proof the second truth then is uh we are kept by the father so you see the twin truth our salvation is kept for us and then the other side of the coin is we are kept by the father so that we will might eventually enjoy our inheritance verse five continuing on the sentence who by god's power are being guarded through for a salvation ready to be revealed thank you in the last time why can i be confident why can you be confident as a christian you will persevere and you will ultimately make it home to heaven answer because god preserves you god will preserve you he's promised to preserve you for the inheritance that he's already set aside for you he's already storing for you and he's going to bring the two of them together uh in at some point in time in the future we can't see the full security we have now and sometimes doubt it we can't see the the beauty of what we have in its fullness and so we sometimes doubt it but one day jesus will come back he will take us to be with him in heaven where we will experience in full what he has stored up for us and which we can only now appreciate through faith now friends that means our hopes mindset as christians is not in how we can mold our lives by our own resources it is not wishful thinking it is not bland optimism of positive thinking our confidence now and into the future is based on christ's death and resurrection in the past there's not a chance we will miss out on what god intends us to have because both sides are in god's hands however there's another wonderful truth that's that's brilliant so far but there's another wonderful truth in these verses and that is living hope massively transforms our perspective on suffering now uh peter doesn't just present this truth the twin truths of hope in a vacuum he means us to connect them into real life and here's the connection into real life that these twin truths massively transforms our perspective on suffering let me just read these verses again to you they're up in your screen now in this you rejoice that is in this truth twin truths of salvation though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though is 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 see him now 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 notice that in verse 6 it is in living in this living hope you rejoice the same thing again in verse 8 you rejoice get this you rejoice with inexpressible joy filled with glory now what does that mean well it's i think it's probably too big for me to actually completely expand and exhaust but let me let me just try this on you because i think this is

this is really helpful what it means is this when i live confidently in the light of those twin truths that my salvation is kept for me and i'm kept for my salvation when i live confidently in light of this then i reflect christ's glory how do you do that both as i display how christ himself has changed me from the inside out it's not normal to hope in somebody outside yourself but also as i happily walk the path of suffering which jesus also worked those two things are a form of inexpressible joy i know in whatever situation the lord makes me walk into and leads me into the truth of my salvation remains unshaken and as i walk into the path of suffering to my ultimate glory in heaven then i'm simply following the path that jesus has walked before me and as his disciple has asked me to follow there's the source of inexpressible joy things might be falling apart all around us there might be incredible physical taxation but that pathway cannot be broken we will not slip off the pathway we will not be barged off the pathway we will be led home to that inexpressible joy and beauty of being with jesus forever so suffering therefore moves from something that we need to fear as the text tells us to something which is an opportunity for us imagine that that's a big call to say that suffering is an opportunity for god's people what's it the opportunity for it's an opportunity to trust jesus more to grow more like him to be more joyful to be more thankful for to the lord for his goodness to us in jesus now this is a really really important one to think through especially where we are at the minute as a church and where we are as a society where we are globally see most people including many many christians think that suffering in and of itself is bad and that should be avoided they would say things like suffering and happiness or joy are incompatible and that god wants us to be happy therefore we should minimize or or do everything we can to avoid any sort of suffering others have a more stoic you know a stiff upper lip mentality towards suffering they think suffering is just an opportunity for the likes of me to prove my mettle to prove my character to show people what i'm made of and so the idea there is that you just tough it out you you you you have a stiff upper lip and you just put your head down and shoulder it and and you just say well okay people will see what i'm made of i'll come out this other side of this you know that that thing i said about um australians you know we will get through this we will come out the other side we'll be better for it well that's a form of approach to suffering but it's not a gospel shaped approach to suffering the hope there is in strength of my own character to deal with whatever life throws at me it might be a real hope but it's not a gospel hope peter speaks of the reality of suffering in a very positive way which trusts increasingly in who we are and what we can do in jesus and not who we are and what we can do in ourselves rejoice with joy inexpressible filled with glory

[20:15] means moving into and through our suffering knowing that Jesus is ahead of us shaping us through it and leaving us home so my friends this inheritance this new and living hope is not just a theory to live by I would say to you it's a truth to die by if that becomes necessary over the last few years I myself have been uh trying to learn to crave this inexpressible joy and suffering by trying to find a gospel place in suffering that is what by a gospel place I mean recognizing in whatever suffering I'm I'm experiencing at that moment that I can say to myself this is where Jesus wants me to be this is the best place for me to develop my trust in Jesus to be exposed to my own sinful life trust and therefore this is the place where I can be even in the midst of suffering free to learn the lessons he wants me to learn and free still to have a mind to others before myself so here's the big question that I wrap up this morning big question is do we do you have a living hope in the face of covered 19 because if your living hope doesn't help you address covered 19 with confidence I'm not talking about being foolhardy I'm talking about being confident then you don't have the living hope that is rightfully yours to be understood and lived out as a Christian and the answer to your question as you answer me do you have a hope a living hope for covered 19 the answer whether it's yes or no will be very clear and obvious as you daily express your hopes mindset so here's how it works if all we have is this world and the things of this world health wealth comfort then there's no alternative you will become increasingly fearful you'll become increasingly self-interested and self-protective you'll become increasingly angry frustrated that the good things of this life that you've worked so hard for are now being stripped away by some microscopic virus that's random but if on the other hand our real hope our real security our real home is in heaven and if our joy is to be like Jesus and follow his pathway of suffering to heaven then we like him will be free to be selfless in times of danger and we'll actually grow in this time of uncertainty and fear we'll actually mature in this tough time whether it be three weeks three months or indeed three years and you know what throughout history that's what Christians have been known for they've had such a hope a living hope in Christ that they've been the ones who've run into danger to care for other people even to the point of sacrificing their own lives and countless thousands have done that wouldn't it be great no matter what happens here in Newcastle if we as believers of this church became known as people who are running into danger

keen to help others not foolhardy not ignoring those basic things of hygiene that we can do to protect ourselves but nevertheless not being driven by fear not being driven by self-protection not being driven by self-interest but moving towards people and showing people in practical ways that we have a hope that's far beyond health and wealth and prosperity in this life but there's another line and I'll finish on this then we can also perhaps begin to think this morning that this pandemic is already starting to expose the roots we find so easy to put down into this world when there's nothing to challenge us when there's nothing to expose our true securities and that happens it happens to us all every day those roots go deeper and deeper and deeper and sometimes we're not even aware of them until they're exposed and challenged you see that's what Satan's job is he'll trick us into believing that we have here in this that what we have here in this world is better than having God and so the roots go down and he'll show us all the shiny things the world offers for security and as we salivate over them the roots get deeper we choose the bigger house the luxury holiday the career getting married having children pursuing my dream and whatever form that comes in and it comes in myriad forms and the roots get deeper and deeper my friends as we start this stage of our church life online can I encourage you can I encourage you to encourage one another not to put down roots not to accept substitute hope in this world because if you invest your hope in this world you'll be mightily disappointed let's help one another expose these roots where they exist this past week

Alice and I have just been talking about the impact of the stock market collapse on our superannuation now as we come towards the age of retirement I don't like the word and I'm going to redeploy but nevertheless you understand what I'm saying and it's really been a challenge to us to say well where is our security what impact is it going to have to read those figures and say you know upwards of 40% of our superannuation that we were looking forward to enjoying last week 40% of it's now gone and perhaps more to go with no prospect of it coming back in less than 8, 10, 12 years these sort of thoughts expose our securities don't they expose the roots that we need to dig up and we need to cut off so our connection to Jesus might be the true root the true sense of abiding that takes us forward well this has been a big thing for me I'm only starting to relax a little bit now if it's been a bit wooden and artificial

I will try and improve over the weeks thank you very much for listening and may God go with you this week thank you a big deal I'll be back and plucked if he's going to come here to get us what we're you're going to do