

Hope Outside of Us

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: 04 February 2024

Preacher: Jon Moffitt

[0 : 00] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org.

And now, today's sermon. Today, I tend to deliver my sermon in reverse order. I will present the final application up front, what it is that we are looking for and how it applies to our life, and then provide to you the supporting arguments and application after.

I think you'll understand why here in a minute. Peter addresses his letter to cherished saints, saints he loves, who find their hope wavering, wandering.

Their complaints probably would have sounded something like this, to which Peter is responding to in his letter. Peter, we've relinquished everything in our lives to embrace and live for Jesus, yet we are now strangers, exiles, and scorned by the world.

What are the tangible benefits of following the king, who supposedly reigns over the entire universe, but seems unable to govern our city? With thousands of angels under his dominion, could the king not spare a few to aid us in the persecution we face in Rome?

[1 : 24] The gods beloved by the Romans appear to heed their prayers and sacrifices, while we are only promised suffering, trials, if we remain faithful to our God.

With that in their hearts and in their minds, Peter takes up his pen, and he writes verses 18 through 21. His sole aim is to direct them toward a hope beyond themselves and their circumstances.

This is known as what's called an objective hope. Here is the application for our day. And some of you are thinking, wow, the sermon is over. No.

The gospel proclaims the good news that our hope is objective. That is, existing outside of our efforts and capabilities as well as beyond our circumstances and even our world.

Objective hope. For the remainder of our time this morning, I aim to demonstrate really the potency of Peter's words in these verses. They powerfully draw a picture that a hope that we should have that nothing in our world can destroy.

[2 : 46] And since we're on the path of doing things different this morning, I'm going to take another detour and do something I don't think I've ever done before either. No, I'm not going to dance. I have been praying about spending time in our city.

How is it that we can reach those who are either discouraged and those who are lost, who don't even know Christ? How is it that we can reach more people with the gospel of the good news of the kingdom in our local town?

And when I was in California, I began writing this little track or book, whatever you want to call it. And I want to read a portion of it to you this morning because it relates to what Peter is dealing with in this idea of objective hope, hope that's beyond ourselves.

That verse 21 where he says, so that your hope and faith may be in God. This is how it begins. You stand on the precipice of your existence, your toes teetering at its edge, peering into the abyss of what lies ahead.

All that greets you is darkness, a vast emptiness. Each day feels more like a descent into oblivion rather than a journey of living. Despite your efforts, the landscape remains unchanged.

[4 : 00] Hopelessness intertwines with shame and regret echoed by a relentless inner voice. This is the harvest of your past choices. If only you had exerted more energy and exercised greater discipline, you should give up.

You have learned to live a double life with time. One portraying normalcy to the outside world while the other, your genuine self, slowly yields to the shadows.

Regardless of your efforts, the inner darkness persistently torments you. Pleasures like sex, wealth, and fame offer only a fleeting satisfaction like that of the warmth of steam from a hot cup of water.

Fate seems to mock you mercilessly. Despite your attempts, you're left with an overwhelming sense of brokenness. This book doesn't offer another suggestion.

There are no fresh concepts, strategies, checklists, or purchases here. The book comes without a price tag and the hope it offers won't demand anything from you either. What can this book offer?

[5 : 09] Objective hope. A hope that is outside yourself and your circumstances. So what is objective hope? The quality of hope hinges on the reliability of its source.

As caring parents, we aspire to shield our children from harm and may even make solemn assurances to safeguard them. Yet these pledges lack a crucial component, power.

How much capacity do we really possess to safeguard our children from cancer, illness, or mortality? Very little, if any at all. Hope gains power when nothing can prevent the promise from crashing.

Power beyond pain, suffering, even death. We stop hoping because we can't take any more broken dreams and promises. What is the use of hope if nothing ever really changes?

Objective hope involves placing trust in something or someone beyond oneself. What if I could erase your past regrets and guarantee an absence of further pain and suffering, with your future brimming with love, purpose, and happiness?

[6 : 28] Would that capture your attention? Only if you believe I can fulfill the promise. You would seek proof and evidence that I have either accomplished it previously or can demonstrate my capability to do so in the future.

The effectiveness of objective hope hinges on its power. A man 2,000 years ago claimed he was both man and God of this world.

He also proclaimed remarkable promises. The ability to resolve every problem that has ever afflicted our world. Most importantly, death. What an audacious claim.

He is one of many to make such declarations. What sets this man apart? Proof. What typically follows when someone performs something seemingly magical, the instinctive question arises, can you do that again?

We aim to discern whether it was a stroke of luck or if we can unravel the mystery. There must be an explanation. Miracles are not part of our normal life experience.

[7 : 41] That's what makes them supernatural. Jesus was the God-man who made these claims of deity. What distinguishes Jesus from other humans who made similar claims? Evidence.

The most compelling testimony widely acknowledged globally derives from eyewitness testimonies. The bedrock of our history lies in the accounts of individuals who directly witnessed the events and preserved them for future generations.

The greater number of eyewitnesses, the more robust the evidence becomes. The Bible isn't a rule book enforced by an angry God aiming to purify the world of wrongdoing.

Instead, it narrates a tale of pride-driven rebellion that tarnished what was good and pure in our world. The creator pledged redemption to believers in his covenant.

Through successive chapters, the narrative unfolds, illuminating the covenant's validation. The story's apex lies in the Messiah, God's chosen, who atones for sins and reconciles humanity with its creator.

[8 : 55] The Bible's first part, known as the Old Testament, introduces the covenant promise to save sinners. While the second part, the New Testament, tells of its fulfillment.

And here's the key. Human and divine witnesses verified each promise over 1,500 years. Documented by 40 authors.

Without one promise left unmet. Amen. That's the first half of the book. I'm still writing on the latter portion. This is what Peter is writing.

Objective hope. A hope that has power beyond our capacities. Here's the problem with the word hope. The problem with the word hope is that we have a definition that's different than of Scripture.

When we use the word hope, often we use it as wishful thinking or a positive approach to life. Mere optimism. We'll say things like, I sure hope it works out.

[10 : 02] Now, it's not wrong to say that. It's not a wrong statement. It's just not how the Bible uses the word. We've changed. It's biblical meaning. You can't bring wishful optimism into the text and hope to fully understand Peter's point when he says that your faith and hope are in God.

I'm optimistic about what God might do. That's not what Peter means. Let's contrast this with the word faith so you understand there is a difference.

Faith acknowledges facts, believing they are true, and then trusting in these promises. Faith is to believe what has happened.

Jesus Christ really was a man. He died and rose again, proving his divinity. And if we put our faith in those facts, we have salvation. And hope is then connected to the expectation of something to come.

That is, in the future. Hope is connected to a future promise. And so we live anticipating a new life without death or pain or suffering.

[11 : 14] Hope is connected to a future promise.

When he says hope in God, I'm excited to see. Now, you don't get excited about possibilities, do you? You get excited about something that's not yet, but you know is coming.

Right? Like when you get home from work and the door opens and the overwhelming smell of food comes your way. I hope this is good. See, that sounds negative.

Like, it could be bad. No, how Peter's writing this is, I am excited because this will be good. The aroma that comes our way is the text.

We open its pages and what flows into our heart is the aroma of what God has done in Christ. So with this definition in mind, let's go back and read encouraging words of Peter.

[12 : 36] Of this objective hope of the excitement of what's to come in the midst of pain and suffering. A hope that is based on reality. Verse 18.

Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers. Not with perishable things such as silver and gold. But with the precious blood of Christ. Like that of the lamb without blemish or spot.

This is dealing with your faith. You believe this has happened. The reality that you can be forgiven and loved. He was foreknown before the foundations of the world. But was made manifested in the last times for your sake.

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. And I want to quickly provide here a three part outline.

For those of you who would like to exegete the text for me. And you like to write outlines down. This is for you. And for me. Peter is giving them three objective realities.

[13 : 38] That is connected to this faith and hope. Here's the first one. Ransomed by his blood. What would be the contrast with this? It would be our blood.

Our sacrifice. Our death. Our obedience. Our payment. When the apostle talks of hope. They must always point to the work of the cross.

To remind themselves. To remind us. He died there. It isn't potential. Or an example. The phrase could never be more important.

It is finished. He points to this as a reason for them to have hope in the midst of their life falling apart. Of trials and suffering. And potential death that waits for them.

The ransomed by his blood is what gives them the hope that is in God. Let's say it this way. Your hope is never to be in your ability to make right what you have done wrong.

[14 : 39] We look at the stain of his blood upon our soul. And it cries out cleansed forever and forgiven. Listen. What makes this important.

The way that Paul and the apostles write this. Is that nothing can stick to you. Because it's covered in his blood. I've been really thinking about this a lot lately.

I want to preach a whole sermon on this. But not today. Turn with me really quick to Revelation chapter 12. You need to read this. Underline it. And enjoy what you're about to read. In the spiritual rebellion.

The dark realm. To which Paul refers to. The powers of the air. They have. This realm. They have a full time lawyer. Who they send before the judge.

Day and night. And you know what his job is? To accuse you. Of all that he you have done wrong. And may I tell you.

[15 : 40] He has a lot of data on us. A lot. But read. How it all ends. Revelation 12 10.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying. By the way. Do you know when someone speaks loud. It means they're talking with authority. It's like when your kids are arguing.

And you walk in the room. And you just speak a little louder than them. And they are quiet. The accusations are shut down. They're roaring at the judge.

And he says. While I was hearing this. What I heard next was a loud voice. Now the salvation. And power.

And the kingdom of our God. And the authority of his Christ. Have come. For the accuser of our brothers. Has been thrown down. His. Who accuses them day and night.

[16 : 34] Before our God. How is it that he's been thrown down. Because Christ. Stood in our place. And those accusations.

Do not stick. Because they've been paid for. It's hard to have hope in a God. Who you think. That there's still. Left. Work.

For you to do. There's nothing left. It's over. Now he might be accusing you day and night. Right now. And he is. But there will come a day. When that is accusations. End.

Because they cannot stick. To us. But somehow. Some of us. Can hear. These accusations. As they are being presented. Our past sins.

Haunt us. They drag us. Back into the pit of despair. As we sit. Rotting. In the jail cell. Being robbed. Of the hope of our salvation. Whose authority.

[17 : 28] Stopped the accusation. The king. The king. Not you. Not your repentance. Not your. Ongoing obedience.

Stop thinking. Your sin. Is too great. For his blood. It is. Actually. An offense. To the father. That his son. Who laid down his life.

And was tortured. On your behalf. Is not enough. Payment. To take care of. The sin. To which you struggle with. He could not only cover.

Your sin. But. Millions. Far worse than you. And he did. So Peter says. I remind you of this. So you stop putting.

Your hope. In yourself. Or in your circumstances. But where? But God. Objective reality. Number two. Ransomed by his blood.

[18 : 22] And redeemed. Before time. Just in case you think. God is responding to you. Or to Satan. He is not. Look at verse 20. First Peter chapter 20.

He was foreknown. Before the foundation of the world. But was made manifest to. In the last times. For the sake of you. I love Spurgeon's comment. On this verse.

With God. There is no contingencies. This isn't a response. Or plan B. Write this in your notes. This is a great cross reference.

This is Acts 2.23. The Messiah. The chosen one. As Peter is saying. This plan to save you. It is God's. Fixed. Plan.

To overthrow the rebellion. Before the world began. That means your salvation. The cleansing of your blood. Their standing before God.

[19 : 23] Was securely written down. In the Lamb's book of life. Before creation day took place. How do we know this? Acts 2.23. This Jesus.

Delivered up according to the definite plan. And foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed. By the hands of lawless men. You see. Often.

Our hope can only go as far as we can see. Taste. Touch. And feel. Right. We look around. Within a six feet radius. And this is how we find our hope. How am I feeling today?

What have I accomplished? Peter goes. What has he accomplished? And with what power? And in what time frame? It's far beyond the way.

In which you can even comprehend. God didn't move toward you. God didn't move toward you. Because you moved toward him. He chose to love you.

[20 : 19] Before the world began. And yet. Man's free choices. Played a role in the accomplishment. And the fulfillment of it. I don't understand how that works.

But that's what was written. In the sermon of Peter. In Acts 2.23. Remember that confession I held up and said you should read this? Let me read some of it to you.

This is what you're missing out on. This could be Sunday afternoon reading for you. It's wonderful. This is chapter 5 under divine providence. God. God.

The good creator of all things. In his infinite power and wisdom. Upholds, directs, arranges, and governs all creatures and things. Now listen. That is good news. You want to know why?

There's no monster bigger than him. There's no God more powerful than him. There's not another universe with another alien who can dethrone him. This is good news.

[21 : 15] Right? If you ever watch Marvel, it's like the war of the gods. And whoever's got the biggest hammer went. He's it. But yet.

But yet. Listen how he decides to interact with us. This is point two. All things come to pass unchangeably. And certainly in relationship to the foreknowledge and decree of God.

So. As he has designed it to come to pass. It will. But how he chooses to do it is very different than how we would. See God is what's known in our confession as the first cause.

He's declared what will happen. Listen to this next paragraph. Thus. Nothing happens to anyone by chance or outside of God's promises. Yet by the same providence. God arranges all things according to the nature of second causes.

Either necessarily freely or in response to other causes. Which means. The decisions that we make are real. They have real consequences. They have real outcomes. And yet. Somehow. In some way.

[22 : 16] This is if you go back to Acts. He says. You killed Jesus. Using lawless men. And it was God's plan. Do you understand that even the decisions that you make.

Being that they might be wrong. And sinful in rebellion. God says. Child. I know. You cannot get outside of my will. If my will is to save you.

You will be saved. It's overwhelming. But we're talking about a power and a reality outside ourselves. Our redemption was outside of ourselves.

We were ransomed outside of ourselves. And here's the third objective reality. That Peter offers them. A hope beyond themselves. Resurrected power.

If you weren't taking notes. I'm very proud of myself. I did use all R's there. Look at verse 21. Who through him are believers in God.

[23 : 14] Who raised him from the dead. And gave him glory. So that your faith and hope are in God. Most of you probably already know these statements.

Our dreams. They're going to all die. All of them. Our hopes crumbled on the floor in a million pieces. Any and all hopes and dreams outside of Christ.

Will fail. I'm not making this claim. The God of God's promised. This is what happens. In a rebellious cursed world.

This is why Peter says. Your God rose from the dead. Proving. Hope is not in vain. He walked back out of death gates. Holding.

The keys. He went in. They locked it. He went over and grabbed them out of their hands. He goes and says. I now hold the keys to death. You cannot be locked there anymore.

[24 : 15] You may think that you have died and there is no hope. But remember who holds the power over life and death. Your hope is not in how you might resurrect your spiritual life.

Or your emotional connection with God. Or your discipline to spiritual habits. Your hope is that God rose from the grave. In my study this week.

I started to compile a list of how the apostles used the concept of hope that Peter is using here. Peter is one of many authors who speaks of hope in this way.

We're not going to have time to turn to all of these passages. So write them down. Maybe look at them later. Listen to how Romans. Paul writes to the Romans at the end of his letter. Verses 15. Sorry. Chapter 15 and verse 13.

Romans 15, 13. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. So that the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

[25 : 15] So when you hope in God. It actually produces that which you're trying to do right now. He gives you peace and joy. Most of us that's what we naturally want. We want to have peace from the chaos.

We want to have joy and not be sorrowful. How is this contrasted? This is Ephesians 2, 12. Ephesians 2, 12. He says this. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ.

Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. And strangers to the covenant of promise. Having no hope. And without God in the world. If you reject the promises given to us.

The conclusion of this divine word is. You have no hope. This is why our world that rejects God. Feels hopeless. Because it is.

Because it's told that it is hopeless. So those who were strangers. Not children. God's children have full hope.

[26 : 20] Not God's. It's important here. That you listen to how Peter and Paul write this. Not God's obedient children. Disciplined children. Kind of good children. Those who believe in him have hope.

You realize that's why it's objective hope. It's outside of yourself. And what kind of hope does this bring? Now do turn here. 2 Corinthians chapter 3. Because I want you to highlight it in your phone.

Underline it. Screenshot it. Blow it up. Tweet it out. Share it on Instagram. I already beat you to it. So you can share my post if you want. If you follow me on social media.

You'll notice that. I have a hard time keeping silent. When I'm about to preach. It kind of just comes out in my tweets. 2 Corinthians 3. 12.

Small verse. Big punch. Since we have such hope. We are very bold. What causes the boldness?

[27 : 29] Fear? Anxiety? A pastor pointing his finger at you and saying how dare you or else? Rewards? Punishment?

What produces boldness in our world? Hope. Hope. But bold about what? What? What? In this context.

What is he bold about? Our faith in the king of kings and the God of gods. We are not bold in our sin. That's ridiculous. But in the grace we have received.

Don't let people scare you away from this hope. John emphasizing grace and hope will cause people to stay in their sins and be lazy and lukewarm Christians. Well apparently they forgot this part of their Bible from Paul.

Loving Christ and seeing his mercy upon us makes us bold. Not desire more sin but running from it. Turn with me to Titus chapter 2.

[28 : 31] This is also a really great passage. Titus chapter 2 of talking about the power of hope and what hope produces. And this church that Peter's writing to, he's trying to get them to not quit.

Not run away from the faith. Not abandon. Some of them are about to be put up on spikes and all kinds of horrible things. He says, listen, do not think that your God has abandoned you because these things are happening.

He has not. Because your hope is not in what is happening here. But look how Peter, I'm sorry, Paul uses hope here in writing to Titus. This is chapter 2 verse 13.

Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Now by the way, remember that. Our blessed hope, this isn't wishful thinking. It's excited anticipation.

We're excited about him coming back. What causes the zealous for good works and purity?

[29 : 37] The excitement of their king. The hope of God. You keep preaching grace and hope in the king.

It will produce for you boldness, good works, and purity. We don't need less of the gospel. We need more of the gospel.

Especially when we live in a world where it is hard to share our faith. Let's all be frank. Like, your pastor is a really bad sinner. Okay? I'm probably the worst evangelist on the planet.

I was flying home from California, and I got stuck in a middle seat, which no one likes that. Especially a six foot guy where like I can't, my legs, they can't go straight. They got to go.

So I'm always like bumping into people. So I found two dudes, thankfully, which is hard to do sometimes. Some of it's like a woman, some of it's two women. I kept passing rows of two women, and I was like, I really don't want to do that.

[30 : 35] And I sit down, and both of them make it very obvious with loud music playing, buddy, we're not talking to you. And then my heart was kind of like, you know, I'm a little timid like you.

I'm a little shy. I'm embarrassed. I don't know what they're going to think. It's hard to stand up for the king and want to share your faith. Peter says, and Paul, sorry, he says, well, the longer you look at the hope that you have in your king, it creates boldness in you.

Write this down, 1 John 3, 3. And everyone who thus hopes in him, in Jesus, purifies himself as he is pure. What a great comfort.

Remember, here's the last verse I have for you this morning. Hebrews 6, 19. Hebrews chapter 6, verse 19.

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place beyond the curtain.

[31 : 43] The anchor of your soul rests with who and whose work? Jesus as your great high priest who intercedes before the Father on your behalf.

It anchors your soul. We all know what this feels like within our soul, deep down inside of us, where it just constantly barks at us, saying, how do you think others would appear you to be?

Look how horrible you are in your mind and your thoughts and your intentions. You have no boldness. You constantly struggle with the same sin. He says, what anchors you, child, is not your power to obey.

What anchors you is the hope of outside power and promises. This is what anchors your soul. What's hard to understand, my wife and I were having a discussion about this this morning.

There are times in Scripture where we read and it makes it appear as if God desires success for us and health and wealth and for us to do well. Those passages often can be taken out of context because they were written to a nation who was providing for us the Messiah.

[32 : 59] At times the Psalms and the prophets will say, God will protect Israel because Israel is bringing us the Messiah. No enemy can overthrow them because if they do, we have no Messiah.

Well, the Messiah is now here and the proclamation of the gospel must go around the world. And you know what the promise is? You're fighting a rebellion. You're fighting a dark realm that hates everything that is of light and they will seek, what does Jesus say?

They seek to kill, steal, and destroy. So when Peter writes to the church, he does not write saying, here's how to overcome the evil and now enjoy rest.

He says, here's how you endure it with hope. What we need is more of God's story reminding us of his perfect plan, that he has accomplished it and that his kingdom is coming.

The problem we face daily is we are working hard to bring about our own will. Just even listening about the Lord's prayer, your will be done, your kingdom come.

[34 : 12] We pray and ask God to make our dreams a reality instead of his will. God knows what is best for us, yet we ignore his words and seek our own kingdom.

As long as we keep placing our hope in anyone or anything outside of God and his kingdom, we will only be met with crushing disappointment and despair because this world cannot satisfy us, even though we keep trying.

If we seek the hope that comes from an all-powerful, evident to us in his word, eternal God who has proven to keep all of his promises.

If we keep looking at that story, this is what he promises us here in a world that is in chaos. He says, you'll have boldness, you'll have obedience, you'll have effectiveness, you'll be loving, gracious, joyful children anticipated to bring others into such hope.

I pray for all of us that we will lay down the hopes that we have in our world and pick up the hope of our king, an objective hope far beyond our capacities.

[35 : 30] And the promise is that it will change our life forever, our experience here and our eternity. We will experience joy, how does Romans 8 say it, that no demon, God, angel, or fallen nation can touch.

Nothing can separate us from the hope of the love of our God. We will have a purpose beyond things such as, that often depress us and drive us down.

Our bank accounts, weight loss, sports, politics, agendas. We will be able to help the helpless. Encourage the brokenhearted.

Give life to those who are dead in their sins. And most importantly, point people to the glory of our king. So what's the first step?

Repenting. Repenting. Repenting. Of any hope that is outside of our God. And church, it is hard to do.

[36 : 45] I had a lot of dreams crushed and hope smashed this week. It is not fun to be a pastor at times.

Because I have to do what the text before you do. The amount of times I'm disappointed are related to me moving my hope off of God and somehow believing I deserve better in this life.

I deserve to be happy and healthy and safe. And our king says, oh, but you are. But in this life, you're a vessel.

You're a temple. You are designed to bring light and hope in a place that does not have it. So what's our first step? Well, it's to lay aside anything that gets in the way.

Our jobs, our families, our hobbies, our habits. Anything that would get in the way of our hope of our king. And as we go back to verse 21. And it says, so that our faith and hope would be in God.

[37 : 54] Amen. Father, I feel the weight of this. But I also am so encouraged. Lord, may your grace and your gospel be what allows us to make it at least one more moment, one more day, one more week.

When we are faced with disappointment this week, may we be reminded that our joy is not connected to our circumstances and our capacities.

But our joy and our hope is connected to a sure reality of what is to come. May we use that to love each other and to be patient and gracious with each other as we spread the good news of our king in our homes, in our jobs, and in our city.

In Christ's name, amen. Thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee, where everyone is in equal need of grace.

To plan a visit or to learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org. Grace Reformed Church