

# An Unshakeable Hope

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[ 0 : 00 ] In preparation for this morning, I found a podcast, granted I didn't listen to it, but a podcast called Hope is a Verb.

It seemed like a fairly prominent and popular podcast. It was the first one that came up when I typed in hope into the search in my podcast app. And what was really interesting about it was it was a series of talks by, I'm presuming, key leaders in various fields who had the solution for something that seemed hopeless.

In one situation, it was the refugee crisis. In another situation, it was the climate. In another situation, it was the economy. In another situation, it was politics.

Some of them were kind of a bit bizarre. It was on teaching birds how to fly. I didn't listen to it. I'm not sure. That might be a hopeless thing in some areas of the world.

I'm not exactly sure. But nevertheless, the podcast, Hope is a Verb, what was interesting in this podcast was that it recognized that there was very big, insurmountable or seemingly insurmountable problems that had to be fixed.

[ 1 : 24 ] Hopelessness was not an option. But hopelessness is something that we all go through, that we feel very acutely depression at times.

Maybe it's not at times. Maybe it's more frequent than we'd like to admit. What's interesting with this is that we live in, by far, the most affluent time in human history for the most amount of people.

The most opportunities. The most monetary opportunities. To build ourselves up from nothing to something. To travel the world.

To experience new things. There is no shortage of opportunity and experiences. And yet, even with all the opportunity to curate our own lives, we suffer from, collectively, we suffer from hopelessness. I'll go a step further. I would venture to guess that if I was to take a poll, that almost everybody, if not everybody in the room, has some kind of direct or a degree-removed connection to suicide.

[ 2 : 44 ] The very thing that is, in a sense, the culmination or the end of hopelessness. We have to ask a question then.

Why do we need hope? Why is hope such a very important, dear, critical thing for us, for humans, for people in 2024, but people across the world, across time?

Why do we need hope? And if we need it so dearly, what is the nature of such hope? And how can we find an enduring hope? Because surely, if hopelessness is something that is a huge, monumental problem, we don't want to get a hope that lasts for a moment or a few months until hopelessness finds its way back into our lives.

We want a hope that is not fragile but resilient, a hope that is enduring. If you were away last week or if you're visiting this morning, we have begun a series in the first epistle or letter written by the Apostle Peter.

It's a letter written to equip us as God's people to live as sojourners or exiles or resident aliens in this world, in Ottawa.

[ 4 : 03 ] That call does not mean we are to live as people just passing through, without care or concern with the situation or people or city around us, but rather we are called as sojourners to be people who work and strive to see the good news of the gospel transform our city in small ways and large ways.

As the grace and peace that is given to us in the gospel multiplies in our lives, Peter tells us that we are then to extend it out.

If you remember last week, we were only in two verses, verses 1 and 2, and the end of verse 2 ended like this, May grace and peace be multiplied to you. So our section today, verses 3 to 12, is in the original language one sentence, and it explains and expands this idea of grace and peace

being multiplied.

And it loudly proclaims there is such a thing as unshakable hope, anti-fragile hope, resilient hope, enduring hope. And that hope is only found in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

This unshakable hope is expressed in three ways. Peter maps it out in three kind of movements in our section in verses 3 to 12. The first is an imperishable inheritance.

[ 5 : 30 ] The second is a joyful suffering. And then finally, it's an eternal glory. An imperishable inheritance, a joyful suffering, and an eternal glory.

So first, an imperishable inheritance. A bit too much alliteration, I think. Verse 3 to 5. Look with me. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'll just pause here. Remember, this is one sentence, verses 3 to 12, in the original language. I was saying to Christine last night, before we were heading to bed, that even though this is written in Greek, it is written by Peter, who was a Jew.

And you almost get the sense that his first century Semitism is coming out. It's bursting forth.

There's an excitement. It's like he can't stop himself glorifying God.

It gets louder and louder and louder. I'm not going to read it that way. But you get this sense, this idea, that Peter is just jazzed. He is jacked up.

[ 6 : 42 ] This is a hopeful man. This is an excited man. This is a man that knows, has seen Christ, and it's bursting out of him. So I'm going to read it in a regular tone.

But hear this excitement and joy that Peter is writing with. 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 and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter continues his allusions to the Old Testament when he uses this term inheritance. Last week, we took a look in verses 1 and 2 about how Peter is, he's using Old Testament terms that we could double-click or think of them as, they have a hyperlink on them and that if we were to click it, we would see a whole page with Bible verses pointing to various stories in the scriptures.

So in verse 1, for instance, Peter is talking about the elect exiles of the dispersion. We found out that he is really referring back to this time in Israel's history where they were scattered across the known world because of their unfaithfulness with God.

[ 8 : 19 ] A couple other allusions that I won't get into, but he's doing the same thing in the text today. And he is doing that with the term inheritance. What do I mean?

God promised the Israelites the land of Canaan, which would be the land of Israel, as an inheritance with a lasting right to ownership. He promised them. It goes back to Abraham in Genesis 13 and it continues on in the story of Abraham and the story of Israel all throughout Genesis, all throughout the Old Testament.

It was a promise that Israel gripped tight as they wandered through the desert after God saved them from Egyptian slavery, that they were going into the promised land.

It was theirs. They had a home, but really, God was not just giving them a physical place to live. He was giving them Himself. That yes, they had an inheritance of the land, but really it was the inheritance that God would be their God and that they would be His people and that there was this dynamic covenant friendship, love, relationship that's described in some ways as a father to a son, as in other ways like a husband to a wife, but this deep personal connection and that was Israel's inheritance.

However, Israel neglected that. They forgot that. They saw the land as the inheritance alone. The land's important. We're not going to get into the land this morning, but the inheritance given to Israel from their perspective was the land and they forgot about God.

[ 10 : 01 ] They forgot about their true inheritance and so their inheritance, the land of Israel, Israel was destroyed, was defiled, and faded. Not because God's promises were shaky, but because Israel was unfaithful to what their inheritance pointed to, which was God Himself.

So God gave them over to their enemies. Reveal something very tragic about human nature. We desire life and life abundantly, but we are fine to not have the life giver.

We desire a utopia, a heavenly existence, but not the purity and righteousness needed to enter into such a blessed state.

We want a kingdom that is strong and mighty, but we're fine to not have the king. We have visions of a heavenly life, but we want to define sainthood.

We do not bring the culture of heaven to earth, rather we try to baptize the culture of earth to seem heavenly, and friends, such things cannot be done. In short, we do not want to submit our lives to our maker.

[ 11 : 30 ] Rather, we want to become the creator and maker and king and God Himself. Peter makes it very clear that if we are to live faithfully in Ottawa, we must understand that we are sojourners and resident aliens, that we will live as people with a different value system because we have an inheritance of God Himself.

We bend our knee to the life giver, the perfect one, the heavenly Father, the King of heaven and earth. To do otherwise is to fall into the same sinful problems that Israel did.

Unfaithfulness to our God. Remember, Israel failed to do this, to recognize God as their true inheritance because they put their hope in and saw their inheritance in the gift and not the giver. Peter is telling us that our living hope is on the basis of the resurrection of Christ Himself. Christ who rose from the dead and nothing else.

When we become Christians through faith in the risen Messiah, we become united to Christ. We become a part of His mystical body, the church, but in a very, very, very real way, a part of Him.

[ 12 : 55 ] We become united to Christ. so much so that the Scriptures say that His destiny becomes ours, that the glory that He enjoys we get to share in.

We become people that get to enter into His presence forever. He rises from the grave so that death doesn't have the final word.

The Scriptures say so will we. He sits at the right hand of the Father forever to, forever enjoying the fellowship and presence of the one true God.

So do we. Because Christ has done this and because we are united to Him, we can be sure that we will enjoy this as well. So then, our inheritance is never the things that God gives us, the blessings in this life, although they are very important and not to be discarded or ignored.

But our true inheritance is Jesus Himself. And everything He gives us is to help us to understand His love towards us and understand that He is equipping us and building us up to do the things that He's called us to do.

[ 14 : 07 ] So our inheritance is not in things that can be defiled, not in things that can perish or things that can fade, but in the one true living, ever powerful, always strong, victory is His forever God.

And that means our inheritance, we can be sure, will never perish, will never be defiled, will never fade. So all of a sudden, if our hope is in that God, our hope isn't subject to the whims and fortunes of this world.

It is foundational that we understand that our hope, if it's in Christ, is rock solid.

It's an inheritance that is imperishable. And it's in the future, and it's kept for us to enjoy now in part, but it's kept in the future for when Christ returns.

It says this in verses 5 and 6. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

[ 15 : 30 ] We have a true and future inheritance, for we have Christ Jesus, and He gives us His indwelling Holy Spirit and the ongoing gift of active faith in our lives.

And that's the bit we see in verse 5 here. So that our inheritance is guarded through faith. That is, God gives us strength to believe in Him and to trust in Him so that we will endure.

So it's not that God just saves us so that we can trip up and fail and lose our salvation and constantly try to get it back and lose it and get it back and lose it.

But God, if we are truly His, if we are truly in Christ, He empowers us with His Holy Spirit and with the gift of faith to trust in Him that we will inherit the things that are kept for us in the future.

And this faith, how does He help us? How does He grow our faith? How does He bolster our faith? All too often, it is through trials and suffering. And it seems more bleak than hopeful, but believe me, this suffering and the trials that God uses to strengthen our faith, it doesn't lead to despair but to true joy.

[ 16 : 50 ] And this brings us to our next point, a joyful suffering. Verses 6 to 9. Look with me.

Starting in verse 6. 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 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 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.

If being in Christ is so great and our inheritance of heaven can be experienced in part now, here on earth, why are we subject to such suffering?

Why? How is this coherent with an unshakable hope? let alone a joy that is inexpressible. If you have suffered in a real way, whether it's a loss of somebody, whether it is persecution for doing something that God has called you to do, if you have suffered, it is hard to feel joyful.

It is hard to be excited, to think about, man, this is a really hopeful situation. often times we try to avoid and forget or move on as quickly as possible from our suffering and our trials and yet, Peter here is saying, listen, with the trials comes joy, comes inexpressible joy and it is something that is a part of this unbreakable hope that is yours in Jesus.

[18:46] Jesus. Our faith is in Christ. He is our Savior. He is our Lord. We are saved by Him, through Him, and for Him. He is the object of our faith.

But how do we know that we are really trusting Him? How do we know if our faith isn't really in something else? You see, adversities have a very profound way of making our faith known as legitimate or illegitimate.

For it shakes all that can be shaken so that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. This is the end of Hebrews 12, the wonderful chapter in Hebrews on faith.

Trials and sufferings are ways of testing the sturdiness and the trustworthiness of things. An earthquake shakes the very foundation of a structure, but if that structure is integral and strong, it will hold.

Some of you who have been with us from the very beginning of the church plan, you'll remember Sean and Amy Turner. They were with us for a season. Sean was a padre in the armed forces and also a pastor.

[19:58] They left to pastor a church in West Guilford, which is in the Muskokas. Lovely couple. But one of the things, Sean, who is a padre, he did a tour, a humanitarian tour in Haiti after the earthquake.

And he saw how the buildings were essentially, he described them as paper mache. They had no foundation. They were rickety.

They were made with very, very poor quality materials. And when the earthquake hit, everything crumbled. And people died. A lot of people died.

And that really shook Sean up. He struggled with seeing the lack of care for human life. I mean, part of it is Haiti's absolutely dirt poor.

But nevertheless, these paper mache homes just crumbled as soon as adversity came and as soon as these earthquakes shook them up.

[21:04] You see, if we put our faith in fragile things, even though they appear sturdy, soon as trials come, the things that we have put our hope in will fail us and we will be left wanting.

We will be searching and grasping for something that will give us stability. And we might find stability in something that might be just a degree or two stronger than the thing that just crumbled, but is bound to crumble with the next trial and temptation.

The question that Peter asks us is, what is your hope in? What is your hope in? What is my hope in? But really, the question is, who is your hope in?

Christ wants to purify your faith because it is the gift that he has given you so that you will trust in him, that you will endure so that you will receive your inheritance that is imperishable.

So what does he do? He allows trials and sufferings and temptations to happen in your lives, not to punish you or to hurt you, but to purify you, to show you that this area is weak.

[22:28] so come to me. You're trusting in your money, so we're going to have you struggle with finances for a season, so you can trust in me.

You are putting all of your hope in your family, this is your prized possession, even over Christ.

Tragedy hits or a struggle happens, and you realize that my faith is not in Christ, so he helps us.

And it's not some sadistic God who is trying to punish you, but he wants to purify you and help you.

Why? So that you will have joy.

Because even the best gifts in this life, if they are treated as if they are the gift giver themselves, will not bring us complete and ultimate and godly joy.

And they will not stand up under the trials and the adversity of life. Our suffering is turned to joy because our faith is put in the rock-solid truth of the Savior who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross.

[ 23 : 40 ] We read in Philippians chapter 2, for our salvation he endured the cross. Why? Because he loves us. He took upon himself our punishment so that we wouldn't have to taste it.

And that love to us, expressed in the joy of laying down his life, will result in our joy as we then suffer for him. That he has bought our lives at the expense of his very life, at the expense of his spilt blood.

So then we are his, and when we suffer rightly for Christ, this is not to get in his good graces, but it's of course to purify our faith, but it's also, also in addition to that, a tribute to him.

What gift can we give God that he doesn't already have? The answer is nothing, but what do we give him? We give him ourselves. We say thank you Lord for what you have done.

I am your servant, I am here. I am here. Our faith is proven true, and it is refined as we suffer rightly for Christ, resulting in our love of him, and the eternal joy that he gives us, even though we have yet to see him.

[ 24 : 59 ] And that's the bit here in verses 8 and 9. 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, we can be sure that we will obtain the outcome of our faith, especially as it is God who gives us the faith, and God who is refining us in that faith, and the promise is salvation of our souls.

That is the goal of our faith, that we would trust in the one who laid down his life for us and kept our unshakable inheritance for us to the end of the age. And that does something remarkable, something that is not found in our best thought leaders, our best gurus, our best philosophies, that takes our suffering and makes it not suffering so that the end of suffering is suffering and death, but rather that it transforms suffering into glory.

It means that suffering is no longer vain if we suffer for Christ. It will result in something incredible, the salvation of our souls. So how will that come to be?

Through the suffering of Christ himself that would lead to his eternal glory. This is the final point. Look with me at our unshakable hope in verses 10 to 12. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves, but you, that is us, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

[ 27 : 05 ] this passage tells us that the entirety of scripture points to Christ, all of it. All of scripture points to Jesus, the Old Testament, the writings, the law, the prophets, all find their promise in the fulfillment in the gospel of Christ, which is God's glory.

But if you notice that here in verse 10 and 11, suffering has to precede glory, that there is no glory without suffering.

There is no other way. In a few months, most of us, I think, will tune in to the Olympics in Paris, and we will see unbelievable athletes that have given their lives to their craft, and some will stand upon the podium, hopefully they're singing O Canada with the gold around their neck, and they will receive glory, but none of them that receive that glory will be on the podium without going through suffering beforehand, inflicting upon their body pain two a days, maybe three a days, a hardcore diet, aching muscles, treatments, all for what?

For glory. Regardless of what it is, glory does not precede suffering. Suffering precedes glory. This is a very good corrective for us. We live in an instant gratification culture. It demands glory without sacrifice and pain. We don't want to wait.

[ 29 : 04 ] We don't want to work super hard, or if we work super hard, we better get what we deserve. But by and large, we avoid sacrifice and pain.

And yet, the scripture tells us that the entirety of the Old Testament points to Jesus and his glory, glory, but that there is no possible way for him to enjoy his glory without sacrifice.

That means there is no possible way for us to be made right with God, to have the curse of Eden reversed, except for Jesus to be sacrificed upon the cross.

There is no other way. There is no other possible scenario where God, the Son of God, could achieve our salvation apart from him taking on human flesh and living a sinless life yet being tempted fully in every way that we are tempted yet without sin to die on a cross as a criminal even though he committed no crime, to die in our place, to be buried, to rise again after three days, to appear to many, to ascend into heaven, to be glorified, the name above all names, at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that he is Lord of all.

There is no other scenario that that could have happened apart from Jesus' suffering. And all of a sudden we begin to see that our hope that is unshakable, that we experience is rooted in suffering. [ 30 : 53 ] And we experience a bit of that, of course, and it's the trials that make our faith strong, it's our tribute given to God, but ultimately, ultimately, our unshakable hope is in the suffering and death and then resurrection of Christ.

and it is done. Jesus did it all. The way he suffered, the way he died, he defeated death once and for all.

So we put our faith in that, we can be sure that there wasn't a corner of the legions upon the armies, the battalions of sin and evil and death, some corner in some part of the world or the galaxy that wasn't conquered, that wasn't destroyed, that wasn't defeated.

That there's no part of our lives that is just too much for Jesus to fix. That there's no part in this church, no sin that we have committed, no problem too great that Christ hasn't overcome.

when we talk about an unshakable hope, we are talking about a person and that person is Jesus Christ.

[ 32 : 23 ] Our suffering, therefore, is nothing compared to his suffering. He has taken suffering, he has taken death, he has taken evil and he has turned it upside down so that the end isn't death or the complete utter blackness, but rather life and life to its full.

Friends, our hope is unshakable because it's in Christ, for he promises an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfaded.

Our hope is unshakable because Christ allows trials to purify our faith so that we can trust in him resulting in true joy. our hope is unshakable because Christ suffered so that he would be eternally glorified, opening up the door for us to enjoy eternal glory.

Friends, as we journey through 1 Peter, but also journey as resident aliens, as exiles, as sojourners here in Ottawa, let us never forget where our hope is.

The trials, temptations, the fury of hell can come at us, but because our hope is in Christ, it is unshakable. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for your son.

[ 33 : 50 ] Thank you that his gospel is 100% good news, that his victory was 100% of victory over everything that was evil and sinful and that would cause death and that we can put our hope in him and that he won't let us down, he won't prove false, he won't perish again.

Lord, help us to be people that walk in that reality. Lord, we will undoubtedly falter, our faith will get shaky, but we look to you to strengthen our weak knees, so to speak, so that we can walk out this life and eventually enjoy the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.