

I Peter 1:3-9 "Enduring Hope"

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[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

All right, if you have Bibles with you or on devices or wherever, open them to 1 Peter chapter 1. We're taking a brief break again from Luke. We're going to look at a few verses here in 1 Peter, and I also have to say this. I know that there's a congregational meeting next week, and it's about me, but this is not a campaign appearance. It has nothing to do with that.

1 Peter 3. I'm going to read verses 3 through 9. 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. 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, though you have not seen Him, though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Let's pray together as we approach the study of this portion of God's Word.

Father, what words, what richness, what... Your Word is just beyond comprehension in so many ways, but yet it is simple enough that we can understand and our hearts be set aflame. And so I pray that you would do that in this time together, that by your Spirit that you would set our hearts aflame, that you would cause the realities of what is said here to be planted deep in our souls, and there have it bear fruit and transform us. Father, use my weakness and the weakness of my words.

[3 : 27] Use them by the power of your Spirit in such a way that when all is said and done, we know that we've heard from you, not from just another man.

So would you meet us now in this study, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Some of our men have been studying a book these last few weeks. We're in the midst of it.

It's called The Benedict Option, and it's a book written by a guy named Rod Dreher. It was on the New York Times bestselling list, and in the beginning of the book, he makes this statement.

He said, American Christians are going to have to come to terms with the brute fact that we live in a culture, one in which our beliefs make increasingly little sense.

We speak a language that the world more and more either cannot hear or finds offensive in its ears.

[4 : 41] You know, I think in a lot of ways, this is a reality in so much of the world. In so much of our country, in many ways, we here in the South have been shielded from this because church still plays such a strong role in our culture.

But the reality of what he said is coming. It's not a matter of if. It's a matter of when.

And so the question, when that day comes, is how are we going to stand up against this rushing tide of secularism or antagonism that is directed towards not just the church, but towards God and all things of him?

How are we going to stand firm? How are we going to stand firm in our faith when our jobs are put at risk?

Because we will not, cannot affirm the values that your company now celebrates. How are we going to stand firm in our faith when our jobs are put at risk?

[6 : 07] How are we going to stand firm as a student when in order to pass a required class, you are expected to profess certain beliefs and you are expected to reject others and those others may

be very dear to you.

How are we going to stand firm? How are we going to stand firm when social media, where you become famous or infamous, either on YouTube or whatever, because you have said something that now everybody else is ridiculing because it's so yesterday and is so out of place in now our modern culture.

How are we going to stand firm? This is the question that Peter is dealing with here in 1 Peter. and what he's going to tell us is that instead of us just becoming more determined and maybe more committed to certain things he's telling us that there has to be another reason there's something else has to be out there that we're living for or that we're looking to that's going to keep our feet firmly fixed on the foundation we need a greater hope than what is offered to us in the here and now a promise of something that is worth so much more that is so attractive and so glorious that we will joyfully give up anything now in order to gain what is promised in the days to come we need a hope that endures and this is what Peter is doing here in this letter Peter's writing to a bunch of people believers who are scattered he calls them exiles exiles through this area of what is now central Turkey but these believers are facing these kind of trials they have been pushed out of society they are losing their place in their professional guilds because of their new faith they are even they are losing their property they are being imprisoned and even put to death and so Peter is trying to encourage them under this kind of almost unimaginable pressure to not just to stand firm where they are but to stand firm with joy to rejoice be glad we are those who can rejoice with joy that's inexpressible and so he's trying to give them the fuel to stay firm through the moment until the day comes when their hope will be realized he said hold on now don't give up because another day is coming and so as he does this in this passage there's far far more in these not these few verses that we can deal with but as of course we're going to look at three um but there are some very critical things here that Peter is going to encourage these believers to remember and to focus on as they hope and work to stand firm the first point is that enduring love flows from worship look at the way he starts this passage he said blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ these first few verses are not about their situation they're not about anything else but God himself it is all about God it's not about me my standing firm cannot be about me it cannot be about my determination it has to be and will always be about Him

standing firm begins perseveres and ends with worship I love this definition that John Piper gives about worship a sermon that he preached back in '93 he said worship is when the mind apprehends great truth about God and the heart kicks in with deep feelings of brokenness or wonder and gladness and admiration and gratitude and the mouth says something like blessed be God oh blessed and praised and honored and glorified be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ he said worship is coming to this realization that we stand before someone glorious worship here it really in this context is about two things the first thing worship is about coming to grips with His beauty beauty and the treasure that He is it is about just the glory that comes from Him the benefit the blessing it is to be one of His own coming becoming so overwhelmed and captured by His glory and beauty to the point that it elicits this response from us a response of love joy gratitude and trust and when we are in a hard place waiting and persevering we need these kind of reminders

[13 : 01] I don't know if you can see on my phone there's a picture a picture of someone very precious to me and I and she's on that my phone for a very good reason it is every time I open pull up my phone I remember I remember this lovely lady that I'm married to that 36 years ago I fell in love with and she reminds me this picture reminds me of all that I have in relationship to her all the just the joy and the benefit the good things she has been for me and I know a lot of you probably have pictures on your phone better not be hers but see in life there are all kinds of things that are clamoring for my affections and we're not just talking about relational things here but it could be work it could be career it could be prestige it could be status it could be how you're going to vote next week it could be all kinds of things and so to remember her is vital for me in my devotion to her to remain fixed especially if there's a long separation if there's a long time when we're not together

I need that remembrance this in a lot of ways is what worship does worship is just coming back seeing the portrait of our true love and remembering remembering all that we have in Him and Peter is calling us to something to remember all of these blessings but there's something else that worship does worship is not just about what we are enamored with what we love worship is also about what we fear and Peter kind of alludes to this as he goes through here that we would obtain the salvation of our souls and so forth you know what has the power to change your behavior what

has the power to keep you up at night what has the power to manipulate you to direct you you know if my greatest fear fear is to become infamous on

YouTube or if my greatest fear is to be ridiculed on social media I'm going to be ruled by that I'm going to change my behavior according to that so that this group of people that I think I desperately need acceptance from I'm going to serve them and give them what they want so that they will give me what I want that is worship that is what we fear see Peter is calling us to a fear that's far beyond that he's calling us to a fear that's far beyond the moment this is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who caused us to be born again to a living hope this is the God that doesn't just have the power of making you popular or ridiculed is the power of life itself life for eternity and Peter is saying don't worry about these others worship and remember who holds the stars in his hands remember who holds all leadership all kings and nations and remember who is

God and who isn't and so worship is all about whatever I want the most whatever I look to the most whatever I'm willing to serve the most is remembering that life is bigger than me it is bigger than my situation it is bigger than my temporary suffering it is bigger than my world and the one who holds the power of life itself is more beautiful and more glorious and more desirable than anything this world will ever offer to me worship will enable us to endure but Peter also makes another thing another point here and it's that enduring hope waits for the promise he reminds these exiles here that you're in a hard place you are waiting and what you're waiting for you can't taste and feel at the moment it's promised and it's coming another day but he's telling them but wait it is promised and the promise is an inheritance he's talking about this inheritance that is coming this is inheritance that's way beyond anything that you'd ever experience in this life it's way beyond anything that publishers clearinghouse could offer you it is an inheritance that can't be taken from you it'll never fade it will never be corrupted it's guarded in heaven for you it's a done deal it is not it cannot be stolen it will not fluctuate with the market but it is not now it is still to come and so we wait but it is a promise that is so sweet so promising so desirable so rich that it's worth waiting for and saying no to any other competitors one of my favorite movies things that I can watch pretty much daily is Princess Bride amen yeah Princess Bride is a fairy tale but there's something about and I've probably said this before there's something about fairy tales that ring true in these fairy tales elicit from us hope and this one in particular does this this is you know it's a story about a farm boy named Wesley he meets Buttercup and they have true love you know it's not just something that happens every day it's true love well Wesley leaves to go make his way in the world and he promises to come back he says well how will I know you come back and he says it's true love so he leaves and time lapses then she

[21 : 41] Buttercup hears that his ship was attacked by the dread pirate Roberts and and everybody knew that the dread pirate Roberts never left survivors and so she assumed Wesley was dead she gave up hope got engaged to Prince Humperdinck well as we know through various events Wesley comes back they are reunited and his question to her is why did you not wait she said well I thought you were dead and he said well death can't stop true love it can only delay it for a little while then she says I will never doubt again the love that she found was so valuable that it was worth denying all other rivals and waiting as long as she had to for her true love now this is a fairy tale pretty darn good one it's a fairy tale and we know that human you know it's based on romance human romance and we think that that is the most powerful thing in the world and we know that's not true but we're not talking about the promise made by some farm boy we're talking about a promise that is made to us by the God man

Jesus himself and I like the way Peter puts it here in verse 8 he says though you have not seen him you love him the promise is not just a bunch of stuff we're not waiting for a time when all that we ever eat will be dark chocolate and every golf shot will be straight actually I don't think golf will be in heaven I think it comes from hell but that's not what we wait for we wait for true love the love of God demonstrated to us in his son and he says

I'm coming this relationship it's like being in a Christian is like the engagement period though so much more than just engagement so we've been betrothed to our true love and he has gone to make things ready and he says I'm coming wait for me and now we're in the interim we're in the waiting and it's hard and we'll be ridiculed for it we'll be pressured to reject it we'll remember the things that he told us and the thing while he's not coming is the promise really true but it is our true love he has promised and he will come and we can wait because the fulfillment of that promise is far beyond anything we'll ever know or be offered or could experience in this life the third thing that

Peter says he says right up front how do we know the promise is true how do we know because of the resurrection enduring hope stands firmly on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead how do we know the promise will be fulfilled because we've seen it fulfilled

Christ went to his death and everybody thought hope was gone it was lost but that was Friday Sunday he was not there he was seen he was embraced they spoke to him he came up from the dead and if Christ was raised from the dead in time and space if it is a historical event a fact of history then every promise that he has made to us is good I like the way Tim Keller put it just this last week he said if Jesus rose from the dead then you have to accept all that he said if he didn't then why worry about any of what he said if Christ didn't rise from the dead then you can go do whatever you want you can go find your pleasure wherever you want give in to the culture give in to the movement of our society just follow along everybody else and hope in what they hope and do what they do because that's all there is but if the resurrection is true everything

Jesus promised is sure when he says that the meek will inherit the earth the meek are going to inherit the earth the meek are going to struggle now and it seems like the strong are winning but Jesus has promised in a promise based on the resurrection from the dead when Jesus says that your father in heaven knows every hair that falls from your head he's that intimately acquainted with you he knows that promise is sure because he was raised from the dead our hope stands and falls it won't fall it will always stand on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead everything hinges on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead if he is raised then every power on earth every kingdom every dominion every government every country every voice out there on the internet every blogger everybody serves in submission to one king the king who sits on his throne and who rules with a firm grip and who will one day balance the scales that's his promise and that promise is good because that king came out of the tomb came to new life and validated everything that was said every promise so the question for us what are you waiting for

[30 : 51] I don't mean just waiting in a temporal sense but what are we waiting for just another momentary pleasure you know more material comfort the popularity with all your friends what are we waiting for remember we have hope in a risen savior we have hope because the savior went to his death was judged by the judge of all things and came to life to vindicate all things we wait on a risen savior who has promised and he's worth waiting for to remember this is why we celebrate this table this is why we do it in worship because it helps us remember it helps us to see the beauty of this

God for whom we wait because he showed true love in that he laid down his life it was not just a presumption of being dead he actually died a death that no other human could die so that we wouldn't have to he paid the penalty that we could be made clean and spotless for the wedding and now we wait for our bridegroom this is a foretaste of the wedding feast for which we wait you're going to get a little taste of bread a little taste of juice but know this this is a feast this is the down payment of the feast that's to come so that you can have hope for more information visit us online at southwood.org