

God will never over promise and under deliver

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[0 : 0 0] If you would this morning turn to 1 Peter. So it's 1 Peter chapter 1 and we will continue with their thoughts as it were on what it means for Jesus Christ to have risen from the dead. So we saw a few weeks ago that the resurrection means that we have a message to tell. The good news is good news because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. And then last week we saw that the harvest is plentiful and the labors are few. And depending on how you read the text would depend on how you understand what that means, I would understand it to mean that the harvest is plentiful and therefore given the size of the harvest more workers are needed. It could be read that Jesus is saying that the church are not really doing what it ought to be doing and that's why the labors are few. That could be a possible understanding of the text. It is more likely or at least it is equally likely that because the harvest is so great throughout every generation that

God is forever calling people to himself. Now what happens when God calls people to himself is they don't know what is happening until after the event. When they actually come to him and they are actually saved and they actually experience the grace of God, they're then able to look back and realize that all this time they thought they were looking for God when actually God was leading them to himself. That's just how God works. And so here in 1 Peter we see the blessings that we have in light of the resurrection. So we're going to read the first nine verses concentrating on verses three through to nine in particular. So now hear God's word.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, according to the full knowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit for the obedience to Jesus Christ and for the 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 and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation, 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 the 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.

Well, may God bless his word to us this morning. It may be hard for you to imagine this morning what a resurrected life looks like, especially given the fact that you're a living one, and you're not quite used to understanding what God is doing with your life both now and what he's going to be doing with it as he leads you towards the future that he has already prepared for you. And therefore, it's always good when Christians ask questions of the text, because the reason we ask questions is because we want to know answers. Anyone who asks a question, I guess their end desire is to get an answer to their question. The trouble is, is not everyone is asking questions of God. Not everyone is sitting and reading his word and asking questions in light of what God has actually spoken. But if you were to do that, you would find that God has spoken on many issues that you think that perhaps he hasn't spoken on. And I'm always cautious and afraid when I hear the amount of decisions so many

[5 : 18] Christians make when they haven't even read all of God's word. It's a bit like making a decision with like 20% of the information. I mean, it seems foolish that anyone would do that. But that is exactly what we do when we live in a way where we're not really paying attention to God's word. We want to make decisions. And then to cover up our shortfall, we want God to bless our decisions. We want to step out in faith, but our faith is not grounded in the word of God. It's just grounded in our own hopefulness of what we want to happen, perhaps in the future. But the faith that God has given us is a particular type of life. It has a particular direction. It has a particular content. And therefore, as you live the life that God has given you, you have to understand what life God has actually given you to live. It's no good to fall back into an atheistic mindset and realizing that you have a life and then think to yourself, what am

I to do with it? A Christian does not think like that because he recognizes the life that he has been given to him or to her. And then they turn to God and say, well, what am I supposed to do with what you have given me? You have given me a great life. You have given me a brand new life. What am I to do with what you have given me? Now, if you're not asking those type of questions, the sense of feeling lost or purposeless or just allowing time to pass you by, where you're simply thinking of the future with no earthly benefit in the present means that some of the songs that you have sung, you cannot be really committed to. You cannot be really committed to almost anything that we have sung this morning in the present if you're simply thinking about what you're going to get at the end of your life or when Christ returns. What Peter wants to make clear here, abundantly clear here, is what God has given you and why

God has given it to you in light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, do you fully appreciate the difference that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has made? Not just that we have a message to tell, not just because the harvest is plentiful and therefore God is bringing people to himself, but because of the resurrection, we are able to live a life to the praise and to the glory of God and that strengthens us. We are a stable people that are able to praise God or let me reverse that.

A people who are able to praise God and know why are stable. They have the rock solid beneath their feet.

They are not driven and tossed from here, there and everywhere. Suddenly the world is not all that difficult to figure out. Suddenly what God is doing isn't a mystery. Suddenly it just makes sense because God provides that conviction and that assurance and that stability that comes with the word properly understood. Now one thing that is important before we go any further is to understand one thing that we can only perhaps understand if we have read a large portion of the Bible and that is that God's acts, that is his mercy, his justice, his salvation, his goodness to us, and his righteousness, that is his character, the reason for which he does what he does in this sense. And his promises are all connected, they are always connected, and they will never be separated. Now the reason why that is so important is so that we can understand that the act of salvation towards us is the effect of God's righteousness.

[9 : 50] that because God is righteous, he therefore saves. That because God is righteous and loving and good, he therefore saves, seals, redeems, assures, and gives you confidence. All of these things, all of the acts of God towards you, even the things that you do not enjoy, are acts of his righteousness because you are his. So when your life takes a turn of events that you are not happy with, you are still having to live your life before a righteous God who knows what he is doing. Whatever we are dealing with in life, we are always dealing with God, and therefore it is so important that we understand that God is righteous and that the acts that he are towards us are effects of his righteousness. God knows what he is doing, and that should encourage us to have faith and trust in him. But for those who have not yet learned the pattern of behavior, which is very different than what we learn simply by learning,

I mean, most of you will understand this, if I can just pause on this point for a moment, that if you were to teach one thing to one individual, which would you rather teach? A subject like mathematics or a behavior? Which would you rather teach? Would you rather teach them art or English or mathematics or even a Bible lesson, a proverb, a song? Or would you teach them how to behave?

Now you automatically know which is the more difficult one to do. Behavior is incredibly difficult to teach.

It's incredibly difficult to teach. And so what happens in most churches is that people teach Bible lessons thinking that by doing that they're able then to teach behavior. It doesn't work like that.

Behavior is set down by commitments and rules like the Ten Commandments. Don't do this. It is a rule. It is to constrain your behavior. And all change is not just change that happens in the mind, but it's what you do with your behavior. Go read Proverbs 30, for instance, and you will understand a man that not only understands his weaknesses, but understands how he is able to behave differently in ways that are not pleasing to God when the circumstances of life changes. And because he understands his behavioral difference, he then prays to God for mercy and goodness that God will provide for him so that his behavior, not his belief in God, not his belief in God or his trust in God, but that his behavior would be righteous and God-honoring.

[13 : 13] So what Peter, sorry, is after here is not just for you to believe the right things.

The assumption is that you do believe the right things. But are you then able to behave in a way that is consistent with your belief? Because behavior is so much harder to teach than it is to teach a lesson, for instance. And therefore, when you're raising children, more things are caught than taught.

Children will follow behavioral patterns that are laid down for them. And sometimes, if they're going off in a direction where they are not meant to be going, you have to put in those bumper rails like you do on 10-pin bowling to stop your ball from going into the gutter and missing the target. Now, I love playing 10-pin bowling with the rails because I don't like the fact of not being able to hit those pins down at the other end. So I love playing 10-pin bowling with the rails up.

But that's a good illustration, if you truly appreciate it, of what some people need to be kept on track. Some people have got to have those bumps to the left and to the right of them to get them where they are meant to be because some people just will not get there in any other way. So God gives us behavioral bumper rails to get us where he wants to get us. And sometimes, we are bumped and bruised all the way down until we get to the place where we are meant to be. You need to understand that as you read a text that contains that you will go through various trials but are guarded through faith, that you need to understand what God is doing. What God is doing. And God, though you may not believe this, works through means. And we've seen this plenty of times every time we take communion. We remember with bread and wine. Okay? And God keeps us on track with other means in the world that he so chooses. So here's the summary of the text, verses 3 through tonight. Peter, you'll notice, begins in verse 3, by praising God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for his great mercy or according to his great mercy. Why? Because the mercy of God is led to us being born again. And this is something which God has caused. God is not dependent on anyone to make this happen. This is something that God does. God blesses you in this way by giving you mercy. Because of this, we have been, excuse me, born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. A living hope is a hope that doesn't die when you die. Okay? The hope doesn't die when you die. Now, many of us have the type of hope throughout life where we may have thought in our 20s, we would have been at a certain place at a certain level by then, and then our 30s, and then our 40s. And all those hopes die off the older we get. It just doesn't seem to happen. But here, the living hope means that you have a hope that doesn't perish or die when you die. Because the hope is not rooted in anything that you bring into this world, but it's actually given to you by God in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this means that all certainty about the future is founded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which happened in the past. The reason we can be absolutely confident about tomorrow and the future is because we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

that's why. We are, we have a guarantee of the future because of what happened in the past. Verse 4. God then is guarding us in this reality through faith. Verse 5. So we can rejoice, and we can rejoice even when we experience various trials. But notice what is being tested. You are not the one being tested in the various trials. The various trials are not there to test you. The various trials are sent in order to test God's faith that he has given you.

[18:10] The various trials are sent to test the genuineness of the gift that God has given you. So that you can understand why trusting God is much better than faith in anything else. You need to be able to know whether or not the faith that God has given you is going to be able to get you through what you go through.

And so what God does is, in order to convince you of this, is that he sends trials not to test you, but to test the genuineness of your faith. You are guarded through faith for a salvation which you are yet to receive in the future. And I'll return to this point because it is one that most people frequently do not get.

They do not understand why God is testing the genuineness of the faith that he has already given to you in the first place. When this happens, we are able to give thanks to God not because we got ourselves through it, but because God got us through it by guarding us in faith.

How did I get through that? I have no idea. Faith got me through it. How did faith get me through it? Well, because God gave you something to get you through the various trials that he sends you so that you would be convinced what God can actually do.

And then, verse 9, in the end, the outcome of that faith that we have in God, that God has already given to us, is our salvation. So the Christian knows that we have been saved, we are being saved, and we are about to be saved in the future.

[19 : 59] When we think about the judgment of God, we always think about the judgment of God to come, but we should also think about the judgment of God which has already happened and therefore cannot happen to us again.

Innocent people cannot be judged. And in Christ, I cannot be more innocent. Okay? In Christ, because I belong to Christ, I cannot be more innocent because the judgment is already taking place in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I can look forward to the future without any fear, without any worry, without any burden, without any heavy heart, knowing that when I meet God, I have nothing to fear.

That's the outcome of my faith. That's why I can be so certain now about the future. I have nothing to fear. So I don't know which is worse when it comes to explaining this to those who are not saved, to those who are unbelievers, because the tricky part is, which bit are you afraid of the most?

Death or what comes after death? And what often happens when you speak to people is you begin to realize that death is so frightening and it needs to be more frightening because they could not bear the thought of facing a judgment after death, which is even more frightening.

[21 : 28] So people pick their fear and they hold on to that like a hope that death, I hope, I hope that death is the end of everything.

It sounds terrible, doesn't it? But imagine someone with that type of hope, that I hope that death is the end of everything.

That's not a living hope, that's a hope that death brings an end to everything, which it doesn't. Well, Peter, as you will understand, calls these Christians elect exiles, which is another way of saying that you, because you belong to God, belong somewhere different than where you live.

Though you live in this world, you are God's possession and actually belong to God, but for the present time, you're in exile. You have to live in a place here until the time is ready for God to bring about his full kingdom, his full plan.

And so an exile lives in a land that's not their own, but they live there in the meantime until what happens in the future actually happens. But this is often where an error is introduced within the Christian church, and that is that your commitments, if you forget that you're in exile, if you forget that you don't actually belong here and start thinking that you do actually belong here, what begins to happen is your commitments are shaped by the present world rather than by the word of God.

[23 : 10] So the moment you forget that you're in exile, you begin to think, I can make a life for myself down here. Look at what I can save for, look at what I can have, look at where I can go.

And the thing is with money, is that money tends to afford or lends itself to that type of thinking even more because you've got the means to do it. The question that people should ask who have money who could then make those type of decisions is money is a blessing that God gives to people.

The question is why has he given it? And if you forget that you're living in exile, you will think that he has given it to you to enjoy as much as you can while you're here.

But you don't actually belong here. Your whole life should be set up in such a way where not only are you ready to leave, but that you are as committed as you possibly can to this present time because you're leaving.

There's two errors, right? The first error is to be overly committed to the present as though the future doesn't exist. And the second error is to be overly committed to the future and be no earthly good in the present.

[24 : 27] In both cases, the gospel's not being proclaimed. You're trying to live your best life now. And that's problematic because no one can really then sing build your kingdom here.

There's no real commitment behind that kind of song. So if you forget you're in exile, two errors.

You can be over committed to the present, forgetting about the future. Or if you remember you're in exile in a way where you misunderstand it, you can be overly committed to the future in such a way where you know earthly good in the present.

And what Peter is trying to say is that you are here in order to proclaim the gospel of God and you're here to demonstrate to the praise and glory of God his greatness.

And so as we read, as we have read, we begin to understand what God is doing to us and what God is doing with us in the present world. Okay? What God is doing with us is one thing and what God is doing to us is a different thing.

[25 : 37] But he's using this current world to do both. What God does with us is to proclaim the gospel of God. What God does to us is send various trials to prove to us the gift that he has given to us in light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So this is what it means then to be guarded through faith. Christians are guarded by God in this present world so that they do not fall away from God in this present world.

They are guarded through faith and the faith that they have is a gift that God has given to them. Therefore, when the various trials come, you are not the one being tested by those various trials as it says here in Peter.

What is actually being tested verse 7 is the genuineness of your faith. What is being tested is the genuineness of your faith.

God is testing you so that you would know whether or not you just believe or that you have a living faith where you are actually living in accordance to faith.

[26 : 52] Faithfully. That you are full of faith. Living for God. And yet, too many Christians will read this passage and think that what's being tested is me.

That I'm being tested. I'm being tested so that I would become stronger. That's not what Peter is saying. What Peter is saying is that how can you be assured that you will get through the trial ahead of you in the future or even in the present?

Well, you will get through it because God is guarding you through faith. Well, how will I know that that faith will get me through? Well, let's test the faith.

Let's test the genuineness of the faith so that you can know and understand that what God has given you will get you through anything. And so, when you come out of the trial the other end and you think how on earth did I get through this?

It is because you have been guarded through faith. When you come through the trial and you are still holding on to Christ and you have not fallen away that is to the praise and glory of Christ.

[28 : 03] Why? Because it is to the praise and glory of Christ who gave you the gift of faith that guarded you through the trial. God sends trials to you so that you would truly appreciate the value and the gift of faith that God has actually given to you.

We can often forget that what salvation means is that we have been purchased with the blood of Christ. And what that means is the value of your life before God was the death of his son.

that's how much value God places on you. And then God protects the value of his investment you by giving you faith to get you through the trials so that you don't fall away.

God is protecting what he has bought. God is protecting you because you are valuable to him. And if you're wondering how valuable you are to God then look back to the death of Christ.

And as you look at the death of Christ and realize how valuable you are then ask the question how does God protect what he has bought? Well he protects what he has bought by giving us faith so that we are guarded by faith whatever we go through so that we do not fall away from God in this present world.

[29 : 49] The grace of God in Titus 2 does exactly the same thing. The grace of God teaches us to say yes to God and no to sin. Paraphrased.

So God has given us gifts that actually calls us to live for him without any teaching. They're currently in our very being.

Faith and grace we cannot help but turn to God. So note please note what is being tested here according to Peter is not you.

What is being tested by the various trial is not the genuineness of your salvation. That's not being tested. What's being tested is what God has given you.

And the reason it needs to be tested is so that you would understand that you are being guarded by God. And then when you understand that you have been guarded by God, you're then able to give God praise rather than believe that you have got through the trial in your own strength.

[30 : 56] faith, the reason you come out of things the other end, the reason you will step into glory wondering how on earth you manage to get through a world full of various trials is because God protects the value of his purchase.

God protects what he has bought and he does it with grace and here he does it with faith.

And so the God who saved us by grace through faith then guards us by faith so that we would not fall away from God in the present or in the future.

what is being proved here is not the genuineness of you but the genuineness of the faith that God has given you which gives you assurance that you are his.

The fact that you keep believing, I don't mean worldly belief, but the fact that you keep living for God is testimony to the fact of the gift that God has actually given you.

[32 : 09] So let's remember the connection once more before we close. God's acts, that is his righteousness, sorry, that is his mercy, his grace, the faith, the salvation, the goodness towards us and his righteousness, that is why he does those things, those things are effects of his righteousness.

Salvation is an effect of God's righteousness because God is love, because God so is love and therefore so loved the world that he gave his only son.

And his promises, all of these are connected, which means one thing that you should never, ever forget, and that is that God can never, ever over promise and under deliver.

deliver. God cannot promise something that he then cannot deliver on. God will never over promise and under deliver.

Whatever he has promised, he is able to make good on. And therefore, if it says here that you will see the outcome of your faith, that you will step into glory, that you will be before God in the future, those promises will not be under delivered.

[33 : 36] As though you have some reason to believe that they will not happen because they have not been proven to be true yet. They have been proven to be true in grace and in faith. The tested genuineness of your faith is proof positive that God does not over promise and under deliver.

God is proving to you over and over and over again so that you who are weak-minded people and weak-willed people and people who struggle to learn behaviors would understand what you have because God has given it to you.

Because of this, we're able to live confidently, not presumptuously, but confidently in God.

My life is guarded. My life is guarded by the faith that God has given me. I will not fall away because of the gift that God has given to me.

I will keep following Christ and I will keep living for Christ not because I can do it but rather because the faith that God has given me enables me to do what God requires of me.

[34 : 57] And that's what you need to understand that the gifts that God has given to you are given to you so that you would be enabled to do what God requires of you.

And that just, that doesn't stop at grace and faith. That goes all the way down to what you do for a living, what you're good at, the money you have, the skills you have, whatever it may be, God has given those things to you to enable you to do what God requires of you.

Because God is not the type of father to require something of his children that they could not do. He does not exasperate us. He's not the type of father who gives a child something to do just to prove to the child that he can't do it.

God doesn't do that. Earthly fathers shouldn't do that either. Yes, there should be a testing. Of course. But what God has given to us is to enable us to do what God requires of us.

And therefore, if we are to live by faith, what does God have to give us in order for us to be able to do that? Faith. Well, here's the exhortation as we close.

[36 : 20] What does a resurrected life look like? Well, it looks like someone who has been born again into a living hope. That trials and death cannot destroy that hope. Viktor Frankl once said, survive the Holocaust.

He was a clinical psychologist. And he said that no one knows for sure whether or not he ever came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but he came up with probably one of the best phrases in the world to explain why you should.

And he said this, having gone through Auschwitz and counselling people who hadn't gone through Auschwitz, and he was trying to work out why these young people wanted to end their life.

and he realised that it had nothing to do with what happened in their past. It was their lack of hope for the future. They just couldn't see a way forward.

So they just gave up. I want to end it. And then he began to realise that what man needs is a hope that even suffering and death cannot destroy.

[37 : 31] that's what people need. You need a hope that suffering and death cannot destroy. Well you, in Christ Jesus, have been born again into a living hope that the various trials that God sends you cannot destroy.

And neither can death when you die. That's what a resurrected life looks like. It looks like a living hope. faith.

Well the faith that God has given to us means that we live a different type of life. We are not just believing but we are living by faith. And therefore when pressure increases in this world, our commitment increases.

It doesn't decrease. It increases because we are guarded through faith. Because God does not over promise and under deliver.

And therefore the challenge to us this morning is simple. Are we living by faith? Is our behavior consistent with what we believe?

[38 : 47] Are we living by faith? I'm not asking if you believe what I have said. I hope you believe what has been spoken this morning. But I'm asking do you behave in this way?

Why? Because without faith it is impossible to please God. And we do not want to be a people who cannot please God. So remember God has never and never will over promise and under deliver.

And God protects the value of his purchase. he protects you by guarding you through faith which you are called to live. Amen.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. To the only God our saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time now and forevermore.

And all God's people said Amen.