

Hope in Exile (1:3-12)

What's up fam. How are we doing this morning? My name is Marcus and I'm one of the pastors here at City Church. If I haven't met you yet I would love to meet you sometime after the gathering. We are in a series where we are going through the book of 1 Peter. We are early in so if this is your first time, you haven't missed much. Last week Kent kicked us off with verses 1 and 2. Yes, he did an entire sermon on just two verses. He said some really good stuff and unpacked the word exile, which we will be using throughout the series. He said an exile is *a person who lives in a certain place, but doesn't truly fit in or feel at home in that place*. And to summarize a bit, he said that you and I are exiles in this world because we follow after Jesus. If you haven't listened to last week's teaching let me encourage you to do that because I think it sets us up beautifully. **So today we will be looking at how everything else in 1 Peter—how successful or unsuccessful, faithful or unfaithful we are as exiles—depends entirely on what our hope is in. And Peter is going to make the case for why it should be in the resurrection of Jesus.**

Let's pray before we get started.

So let's kick it off with verse 3,

[3] 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 [somebody say hope] through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

So Peter starts out saying how blessed we are to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And for these early Christians that Peter is writing to, they are in need of this reminder. They are in need of hope. These early Christians were in a ton of hardship. And not your everyday run-of-the-mill hardship. For them, they were persecuted much like Jesus was because they followed after Jesus. And who better than to write them a letter than the guy who has been in the game for a while. At this time Peter has probably been following Jesus for some 30 years or so. He's seen it all. He's like one of the OGs of Christianity at this point. He's been beaten. He's been ridiculed. He's seen his friends killed. He's been locked up. And countless other things, all for following Jesus. So he gets what they are going through. And what Peter is going to remind his brothers and sisters of is how to hope in the midst of these trying times.

The Meaning of Hope

Now when the word hope comes up, I think a lot of times, especially as Americans, it's easy to think of hope as some sort of vague positive feeling about the future. So like, I hope it stops raining so we can finally send our kids to school for a full week. Any parents in the room today. Do we have any Survivor fans here? What about I hope Boston Rob doesn't win Survivor again. Like he can't right?!? And lastly, because we live in Tennessee, I hope the Vols win the National Championship? Feels like '98, amirite?? So usually when we use the word hope, we actually mean 'I wish.' But in the Bible, hope is not that at all. In the Bible, we might describe hope as something like an eager expectation for what's to come. So it's not wishful thinking, but rather a certainty on the horizon. So when Peter says we should hope in something, he's saying we should expect it, or anticipate it.

And when you put it in those terms, then we all instinctively know how to hope. For some of us it might be we hope to get that raise or promotion. Maybe you're looking for the perfect job and still haven't really found it yet. Maybe it's financial security, which for some of my older brothers or sisters in the room, it might mean retirement. For others it might be to be in a romantic relationship. It can be a number of things, and we may not know exactly how or when these things will happen, but we all expect that they will at some point. Whatever that looks like, we all hope in something.

And one of the best ways to find out what you hope in is to look and see what happens in your soul when those things don't come about in the way you thought they would or on your timeline. Proverbs would say "hope deferred makes the heart sick." Some of the most devastating and heartbreaking moments in our lives is that the thing or things we were hoping in didn't come to fruition at all. The thing we were putting all our hope in somehow didn't live up. Or at least not in the way we imagined them.

Let me give you an example, you see this when a young woman has spent her entire childhood and adolescence dreaming about the day that she would meet the perfect man to marry. And then college comes and goes, young adulthood comes and goes, and that perfect man still hasn't come along. Or maybe even, she thinks he comes along, and turns out that man is not who she thought he was. For some reason he wasn't Prince Charming. And eventually the marriage starts to crumble. The defeat sets in. The sadness sets in. There's a deep frustration she feels—that's the feeling of a 'deferred hope.'

I'll give you another one, you see this when someone puts their hope in the perfect job. A job that will fulfill them, that allows them to do the thing they're most passionate about in the whole world, and pays them the perfect amount of money to do it. And then they don't ever find that job. So they switch jobs, thinking that the next job will do it. And it doesn't. Then guess what, they take another job, and another job—and turns out some jobs are actually better than others, but none of them bring the ultimate fulfillment they were wanting. That's the feeling of a deferred hope.

So we all inherently hope as human beings. We really don't know how not to hope. The only questions are 'what are we hoping in,' and 'will that thing come through for us or not. Timothy Keller would say it this way,

Every human being must live for something. Something must capture our imaginations, our heart's most fundamental allegiance and hope. But, the Bible tells us, without intervention of the Holy Spirit, that object will never be God himself.

In case you didn't catch that, he saying that without God you and I will hope in everything but God himself. You and I will hope more in searching for a perfect job than searching to know more about God in the scriptures. You and I will look to romance and focus on romance more than a relationship with God. You and I will hope for all the things more than God.

Now don't get it twisted I'm not saying and Peter is certainly not saying that when it comes to this living hope, that we should all be a little more religious and just start daydreaming about the afterlife. He's wanting us to *shift* our hope from whatever it currently is in, to something that is far more lasting and beautiful. Something worthy to carry the weight of our hope. And for Peter, hope is a strong confidence of God's future.

Peter says that this living hope is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And this is where I want to sort of set up camp a little bit. Now what is hopeful about Jesus' resurrection? Many things right? For starters, him being resurrected means Jesus was who he said he was. That he wasn't first a prophet or a good teacher like many say he was but that he was first God in the flesh. And it also means that what he came to do mattered for you and I. And specifically, the Bible is going to make the point in places like 1 Corinthians 15, that the resurrection mattered because we will be raised too. That his resurrection was a guarantee of our future resurrection, and truly, the resurrection of the entire world.

Revelation 21 describes that day like this..."

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" **Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."***

Now, I want us to try something unconventional. I want us all to close our eyes. Go ahead and close your eyes and imagine a world where God will wipe away every tear. Where death will be no more. No more mourning because of a mass shootings. No more crying because of a miscarriage. No more pain because a friend of ours has told us that they have cancer. I want us to pause and imagine ourselves here. Where God wipes away every tear. And then God speaks and says, gently, and caringly, son, daughter, Melanie, John, Harry, Eni, everything sad has been made untrue. I am making all things new. You can open your eyes. Do you feel that? Do you believe this world is coming? Here's why I care to ask you that; because to **the degree that we believe that this is on the horizon, is the degree that we can live as exiles in this imperfect world.** Let me say that one more time: To the degree that we believe that the resurrection is near, is the degree that we can live as exiles in the here and now. And on the flip side, to the degree that we don't, then the harder it will be for us to live as exiles in this world.

And here's why that matters, if you don't truly believe we are headed this way, then you and I will need the here and now to be perfect. You will need this imperfect world to be perfect. You will need utopia here and now because this is all there is. See, if you don't believe that a perfect world is coming, you will need a perfect job with a perfect salary to create a perfect world for you now. You will need the perfect set up to retire. You will need a romantic relationship to create a perfect world for you now. You will need the perfect set of friends to create that world. Parents in the room, you will need your kids and their achievements to create a perfect world for you. And here's the thing, spoiler alert: none of those things will be able to create that perfect world for you. Because when

they fail you, and they will, you will either grow bitter and or disenfranchised at whatever you are putting all your hope in because it did not deliver what you thought it would...or, or you will spend the rest of your life thinking that the next romance, the next job, the next friendship, the next, the next will deliver what all the others couldn't.

Tell me you haven't seen people do this over and over again. Tell me a lot of us haven't been doing this ourselves for the past 5, 10, 25 years.

But, if you know what's coming. If you have a living hope in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, then those realities, when they don't come to fruition, won't crush you. If you don't get the perfect job it won't crush you. If you don't get the promotion or salary that you wanted then you won't be crushed. If you don't have someone on your arm for Valentines day or breakup, it won't crush you. Because you wont need this world to be perfect right now—because you know a perfect world is coming. With the resurrection we can be freed up to not have to put our hope fully in this imperfect world. And you know what happens, this world starts to become a little more bearable. Not easy, but bearable. And that's why we hope. Because we become aware that the world is not what it should be. And we begin to look to the future for our hope.

Let's pick back up at v. 4:"

[4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The Certainty of Hope

As followers of Jesus during this time, many were displaced from their homeland. And what that meant was that they would have lost their inheritance; which in that day would have probably meant some form of land or property. So when Peter drops this, he's saying I understand that many of you may have lost seemingly everything. Your world is probably in disarray. You lost your inheritance, but let me tell you about this new inheritance that you now have. Let me tell you about this new inheritance that won't be taken away from you. This new inheritance that won't spoil. Brothers and sisters, this new inheritance won't fade. And to top it all off, you are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation, **someone say the word salvation**, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now when he says salvation, don't think "becoming a Christian." Sometimes that's what the Bible means when it says "salvation," but here it's referring to something a little different. He's saying that one day on the horizon, we will all *ultimately* be saved from the sin and brokenness of the world once and for all, because God will make it all new. And our inheritance points to that day.

Let's keep reading, verse 6

6] In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, [7] 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. [8] 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, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

So here, Peter pulls all of this directly into their present situation as exiles. He says "everything I just told you—the hope that is ours, the inheritance that is ours, the salvation that is ours—in all of that you can rejoice, even if right now life is far from what you want it to be. Even though you are suffering currently, remember what's coming."

And let me say this, I know suffering is an emotionally charged, complex subject when it comes to God's involvement in it all. And we've done entire teachings on it that I won't revisit here today. I know when it comes to suffering, some people think God *causes* it, some people think God *allows* it, and some people think God has nothing to do with it at all for better or for worse. And we could go back and forth on that for a hot minute I'm sure, and like five of you would be on the edge of your seat waiting to hear anything juicy that you can tweet, and the rest of you could care less.

But here is **what is abundantly clear from the Scriptures. Here's what we know beyond a shadow of a doubt: God can use suffering. He can use it in the lives of followers of Jesus, to help melt away hope that we've put in things that aren't worthy of it, and to help us place our hope more fully in the one person worthy of it. Jesus. That's what this whole metaphor with the gold being refined by fire is trying to communicate to us.**

So your suffering might be difficult, it might be heartbreaking, it might be crushing, and any number of other things. **But if you are in Jesus, hear me when I say this, if you are in Jesus, one thing your suffering is not is purposeless. One thing it is not is useless, or pointless. Because God can and does use it for your good and his**

glory. And I know a lot of us, for a variety of reasons, life is far from what we expected it to be too. Many in this room probably didn't plan how their lives would look right now. And so to us, I think Peter would say to us two things: 1. Don't miss what God might be doing in it, and 2. There's an end coming that we can look forward to.

Verse 10

[10] Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, [11] inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. [12] It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Even the angels are peeking in fam. They are wanting to see what's happening down here. How the good news of the gospel impacts us. They are drawn to the incredible relationship that is in place between us and God. Peter is also saying that this salvation, that the early Christians have enjoyed and are putting their full hope in, is the very salvation that the prophets sought after. Peter wants them and us to fully appreciate the relationship with God we get to enjoy, something the prophets and angels stand in awe of. Do you think of your relationship with God like this? Do you see how incredible it is? We should stand in awe of this.

Ever since Adam and Eve first sinned, God has been making a way for us to be in his midst again. And that way, is through Jesus. He's made all this possible through his life, death, and resurrection.

Ending

As we close, band you can come on up.

If you're following along with us in our Bible reading plan for this year, God has been doing wonder after wonder to save the Israelites out of oppression. All so that they would know that he was their hope. And over and over again after he showed them who he was, his character, his love; they still find ways to find their hope in everything but Him. Like the Israelites, our gaze can and does often drift away from Christ from time to time.

So the question is, what are you hoping in? Do you know? Is it fully in Christ? Or is it in something else? Is it in a romantic relationship or for friendship? Is it for a better job, a

promotion, retirement? Is it for a family? Or is it something else entirely different? During the next few songs, I want us to give the Holy Spirit space to work. If you're here and you feel like the Lord is working and stirring you to think through this question, we want you to take this time to pray through this. Maybe you should talk to your LifeGroup leader or a pastor about this or set up a time to talk after. Whatever that looks like, don't let this slip into a distant thing you know. If the Spirit is knocking, open that door right now fam.

The communion tables are in the back—if you're a follower of Jesus, you're invited to participate in that as a reminder of the gospel: that Jesus, through his life, death and resurrection, has reconciled you to himself and to others. Offering baskets are also going to be passed around and if you consider this your church home then you know this is another way we worship. Let's continue to worship.