

A Living Hope for Hopeful Living

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[0 : 00] You're talking about what kind of sermons does God's people like most? Well, I think if you're like me, the sermons that you like most are the ones that just lay things out, maybe even step by step.

How to have a great marriage. How to overcome a particular sin. How to think about and approach a sticky situation in life. The more practical, hands-on stuff, that's the kind of stuff that people typically come up and say, Boy, that was great. I really did it, and I resonated, and that spoke to my heart.

All right. Why am I saying all that? Because this ain't that sermon. All right. This is a sermon that deals more with the basis of the nature of what it is that makes us who we are in Christ.

So it's extremely important. It's not a step-by-step thing. It's Peter coming before us, coming before his readers, and rehearsing good, wonderful, high, God-glorifying theology.

Now, you want that to happen every single time you come to God's word or you hear a sermon. You want it to be based in good theology. Sound biblical truth is what we're talking about.

[1 : 10] Some of you may remember that when we talk about theology, here's what we mean. Theos means God. It's like in Latin, Deo does, right? Theos is God.

And then ology, or logos, is word, or it can mean speak, or to say. So if we take to say and God, theology means what we can say about God.

It's what we can say about God. So when we talk about theology, we're talking about what the scripture teaches us that we can know and rehearse, declare, speak about God.

That's where Peter is, especially in these opening lines of his letter. What can we know and say about God, and why should that make a difference in how we approach life?

Life. Life. So this is critical, critical stuff. The title of my message for this morning is A Living Hope for Hopeful Living. A Living Hope for Hopeful Living.

[2 : 21] It's 1 Peter 1, and we're only going to get through verse 3 today. So we did two verses last time, one verse this time. I'll probably be in 1 Peter till about 2025.

That's okay. All right, let's read this together. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood.

May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. Now, even though we'll just deal with verse 3, let's look at 3 through 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Now, let me ask you before we move on. Why wouldn't we want to talk about that? Why wouldn't God's people want to rejoice in and rehearse that? That's the heartbeat of the Christian faith, right?

Now, look at verse 4. To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

[3 : 51] How about that? It's not like all the stuff you're going to inherit on this earth from your family members or maybe even a friend who leaves you something. That's all going to rust or burn or dissolve or break or tear up or go to someone else.

That's not this kind of inheritance. This is a very different kind. And then in verse 5, who are protected. These are the people now, speaking of the people who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

My goodness, that's just power packed. What a bunch of wonderful, wonderful theology. What we can know and say about God and how that relates to our lives.

How it helps define who we are and how we should live. Now, let me give you a couple of quick facts here that help us ground ourselves in this passage and kind of get into the flavor of what the original audience was probably thinking and how they were being impacted.

Peter is most likely at this time in his life in Rome. And he's writing to fearful fellow Christians.

[5 : 10] And these Christians are scattered across a large area that we today know as modern Turkey. So some of us in here may have been to parts of Turkey or regions around Turkey.

Most commentators felt like it was an area between 700,000 to 750,000 square miles. So it's a big area. And Peter's letter is being sent to these different churches, locales, groups of Christians, and it would be copied.

It would be circulated. It would be passed around. So it isn't one single church. These people are on the front end of what will be the Neronian, the Neronian persecution.

In other words, Nero. Nero will soon burn Rome and blame it on Christians, and that will launch his campaign against God's people. Now, these are historical facts that you can read in different Jewish historians and secular historians of the day.

Greek historians all write about this Neronian persecution. It's sometime now, as Peter writes, in early A.D. 64. A.D. 64.

[6 : 23] Jesus was crucified sometime around A.D. 30, 30 to 33. Scholars are different positions about that. All I'm saying is it's been about 30 years or more since Jesus was crucified and raised again when Peter is now writing this.

So he's an older man, most likely in his 60s at least. And he knows that his own life is about to end. In fact, history tells us Nero does have Peter crucified.

Now, the part about him being crucified upside down, we don't know. Possibly. I don't. For me, it's a little bit unlikely. But nevertheless, that's what history tells us.

So at this particular point, he writes to these people who are very, very precious to him. And he is committed to follow through on his master's final instructions given to him some 30 years prior.

And here is one of the final things Jesus said to Peter before Jesus ascended to heaven. Peter, tend my lambs, feed my sheep, care for my people.

[7 : 43] Three different times and three different ways. Jesus laid before Peter this commission to tend my lambs. In Jesus' physical absence, that was Peter's mandate.

You'll find that in John 21, 15 through 17. Now, this letter is one of the final ways that Peter then fulfills that command so faithfully out of his love for Christ.

I want us to realize and remember everything that Peter's writing about in this letter, he has probably personally experienced at some level or another. And it all has to do with Peter showing his love to Jesus.

This letter is a way that Peter is showing love to his Lord and love to the Lord's people. Now, he opens his letter to his readers in verses 1 and 2.

1 and 2. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as your Bible might say elect. It might say sojourners, pilgrims.

[8 : 49] It might have elect sojourners or elect aliens, pilgrims, strangers together. This is who he's writing to scattered in this area. But then he goes in verse 2, According to the foreknowledge of God, those who reside as aliens, those who are living scattered, those who are the elect, the chosen of God, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood, may grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

That sets the tone and foundation for what Peter wants to say throughout this letter. But the introduction is a typical way of introducing a letter for that time.

And he emphasizes God's electing grace in choosing these people for salvation. He also affirms the Trinity's work in their salvation.

Did you notice that? The foreknowledge of the Father, the sanctifying work of the Spirit, and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleansing us from sin.

This is very important to Peter. But then he ends his greeting in verse 2 with this spiritual blessing. May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

[10 : 22] He sounds a lot like Paul in that way. Now, folks, like Peter's readers, this blessing belongs to us as Christians.

This is our blessing in Christ. This is our blessing because we belong to Jesus. Just like it was for them all through the ages now, all through these years, this blessing comes to us.

And I think it's really sweet at this particular time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. And Peter is going to be talking about being born again, born again in the Lord.

So this is a living reality for us. And it is a this pledge of peace and mercy and grace from God.

It is a living reality for us based in God's electing grace. This may grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure comes into our life through God's electing grace.

[11 : 38] It is a saving grace that is based in several things, Peter tells us. So I'm rehearsing. Josiah, if we can put that up here for him. This first slide. This is something of what we talked about last time we were together.

Now, my last message is saving grace is based in God knowing us beforehand. God knowing us in a saving way and purposing to save us in a moment in time.

That is his fatherly foreknowledge. Now, here's what we said it isn't. God's foreknowledge is not God looking into eternity future from eternity past and seeing, oh, I see that character, Jeff Jackson.

He's going to choose me. He's going to decide that he wants to follow me. Great. So based on Jeff's decision to follow me and now that I can see that and know that, I choose Jeff.

That is not God's foreknowledge. That is an aberration of what scripture teaches. What scripture teaches about God's foreknowledge is that in eternity past in the counsel of the Trinity, the counsel of the Godhead, God the Father decided in a foreknowing, in a foreknowing, purposed way that he would mark out some for salvation.

- [13 : 00] And so his foreknowledge is God's ability to look into eternity future and purpose in his own heart and mind to intimately know Jeff, Rob, whomever.
- So this is a very deliberate, cemented reality in the heart and mind of the Trinity and of our Father.
- God purposing to know us, he foreknew, he purposed in his mind beforehand to mark out for salvation certain ones, to choose certain ones.
- That's where it all starts, in the mind of God, in the heart of our Lord. All right, number two, this saving grace is based in God working to set us apart from sin and to himself by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- So this is God sanctifying us. Sanctification means to set apart to, to make holy. That's what's going on here.
- [14 : 19] And then number three, God creating in us the obedience of faith as we follow Jesus. This is God creating us for good works, pleasing to him.
- And then number four, God cleansing us from all our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is, God forgiving us and causing us to be born again, to be rebirth, to be recreated.
- This is just marvelous. Now I want you to zero in on God knowing, God working, God creating, God cleansing.
- You see, God had to take the initiative in acting in these ways toward us for one special, primary, foundational reason.
- We are dead in our trespasses and sins. We have no spiritual life to reach out or up to God.
- [15 : 33] And so God has to know. This is what we said. God has to know. God has to work. God has to create. God has to cleanse. God has to cause.
- Why? Because I don't have any life to do that for myself. I need God to put that life in me. Now we haven't gone over all of the deadness aspect at this particular point because Peter's not emphasizing that.
- He's emphasizing the life part. But the life part means that we were dead in our trespasses and sins and God had to animate us.
- He had to breathe into us spiritual life that we might know him. So Peter stresses the fact that we can live in God's grace and peace to the fullest measure only by God's power working through his electing grace.
- Here's another way to say it. Election is God's initiating love in action. It's how God takes that initiative and actually puts it into working in your life.
- [16 : 49] It's one thing if I say I love you. All right. I can say that. But now how do I show it? It's another thing when I love you turns into action that backs up what I'm saying and gives demonstration to what I'm saying.
- So in eternity past God said I love you and you and you in a saving way and he marked us out for that and that foreknowledge that I know you I want you I love you came into your life in a moment in time when you were saved.
- So the initiative that God took in eternity past was brought into that moment and made personal to you. And it is personal isn't it? When God forgives you for your sin it's personal.
- When Jesus comes to live inside of your physical self and occupy this this soul and own this soul I don't understand all of that I just glory in it and I know it's real.
- No election no salvation no salvation no grace and no peace in the fullest measure. Now here here's how I ended my sermon last week when we were dealing with these first two verses of chapter one.

[18 : 23] Peter wanted God's highest best for them and here's what we said we're going to put this up here as a slide as well. The remainder of Peter's letter needs to be understood as Peter's exposition his exposing of his unpacking of God's promises to give them his grace and peace in fullest measure.

That's what his letter is about. So that even in the lowest worst of their experiences even as they struggle and suffer in the uncertainties the unfairness of life as God's elect sojourners they can know the wonders of God's saving grace.

And that doesn't mean that everything will end well. Remember how did Peter die? He was crucified. Peter was a faithful servant of the Lord and yet he was brutally tortured to death in the same vein that Jesus was.

But God promises to be with us and he promises that all of our suffering is for his purposes. So to focus then and embolden our faith Peter gives these people and us hope.

Hope. That's where we're going to focus. He gives us hope to live a life pleasing to God. He praises God for giving his elect embattled dispersed sojourners his gift of a living hope for a hopeful living.

[20 : 05] So Peter worships God by outlining and I'll put this up here for you for realities of God's gift of hope. hope. Okay. Four realities of God's gift of hope.

This is something that only Christians have. Nobody else in the world has this except Christians. We're going to deal with just two of these from verse three this morning.

So here we go. Peter's answer to hardship and sagging hope is worshipping God. We'll put that up there. Is that up there for him? There it is.

Peter's answer to hardship and sagging hope is worshipping God. And the question then is how? How? He offers these series of declarations this wonderful recounting of sound truth about the nature of God and how God has chosen to relate to us and bring us to himself.

That's what he's rehearsing. Now it's interesting to me that in the lives of these fearful people, people who are suffering, people who are on the front end of this great wave of persecution that's about to spread around the known world by the emperor Nero, particularly to Christians.

[21 : 34] It's interesting to me that Peter doesn't open his letter with all of these different stages and steps about how to deal with that or how to address the fact that maybe you're suffering in certain ways or this happened to certain people.

I'm sure that the word was getting around that people were being tortured to death and harm. I mean, Nero's going to get to the point where he's going to take Christians and he's going to dip them in this special resin and cover them with resin and then he's going to impale them on giant pikes and plant them in the ground and they're going to be human torches to light his games and his orgies around his empire.

That's just one thing he's going to do to them. That's history. That's written down in secular history. He's going to do that to entire families. He's going to gather these people up and put them in the Coliseum and they're going to die horrible deaths by wild beasts and all for the bloodlust of this crazy moron.

That's what's going to happen and they're on the front end of all of this and Peter starts his letter and it's wonderful to me. It's strange to me but wonderfully strange that what he wants to emphasize is who they are in the Lord.

He wants to tell them about God. He wants to remind them this is who God is and this is what he's done in your life and nobody can take that away from you.

[23 : 23] That can never change about you. God's made a change in your nature. Nothing in the world can change that reality. So I want you to think about where you're headed.

I want you to think about where you're going and how God has secured that for you. So the first thing that we deal with here then is the source, the source of your living hope.

Peter wants them to rehearse and to declare this wonderful reality that God is the source of their living hope.

Here's the way he says it. blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's how he opens it in verse three.

The source of your living hope is the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, it isn't a small thing for Peter to say, I'm calling you to remember who your father is.

[24 : 26] I'm calling you to remember who the great captain of your souls is. The God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the word that we use typically for eulogy. It's a Greek word that translates into our word for eulogy.

Now, you know what it means. To eulogize is to praise highly or to speak highly of someone. That's typically you want to find someone who will do the eulogy at a service who's going to recount these wonderful things about the deceased, right?

You don't want somebody to stand up there and talk about what a mean, rotten, stinking, selfish person they were. You want the eulogy to be this declaration of praise.

So Peter is in a sense eulogizing in that he's praising God now here by declaring. By declaring these wonderful, wonderful, merciful blessings of salvation.

[25 : 35] So this is how we bless God. Have you heard that before? Have you heard us, maybe Greg or myself or someone say, well, bless the Lord. Well, bless God. Well, what does that mean?

How do you do that? Let me ask you this. Does God need anything from you? He doesn't need anything from us, right? No. So how do we bless God?

How in the world can we bless the Lord? He blesses us. How can we bless him back? He doesn't need anything. He doesn't need us.

So what's Peter? Well, he tells us. The word itself gives us the answer. We bless God as we declare his praiseworthy attributes and his acts of mercy as we love, worship, and obey him.

Our actions and the attitudes of our hearts give way to this declaration of praise, not only in what we say, but in how we live. So let me ask you, Christian, do you live in a manner where it's clear that your life is expressing praise to God?

[26 : 52] Do you want your life to be a blessing to God? That's how we're called to live. That we would be a blessing to God in the way that we speak and live because we are reflecting and declaring the attributes of our father.

As children, we're reflecting who our dad is. Do our lives look like that? I didn't mean to suggest to you there were no practical realities to this message today.

I just wanted to let you know that we're going to be rehearsing some sound, wonderful, and deep theology from the hand of the apostle Peter. Peter says, Now listen, as a humble man or a human man, as a human man, Jesus humbled himself before God.

He obeyed perfectly. He obeyed God sinlessly as his father in heaven. Jesus always spoke and served his father's agenda in all things in perfect obedience.

Now we know this. He served God as God's only son. So the second member of the Trinity is God's only son, making God, the first person of the Trinity, the father of the son.

[28 : 27] So it's perfectly right to have Peter speak of this as blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We get to where we say that so often that we really don't reflect on how marvelous and deep and wonderful that reality is, that truth is.

Jesus, now listen to this, Jesus was never divested or emptied of his full deity. He was always never less than fully God, the son in his life as a human being.

I want to take you to Colossians and remind you of this. This is something that's very important. Now, why would this be important to me to rehearse this with you as Peter says it? Here's why.

Because there are several cults out there who walk around knocking on people's doors and asking if they can come in and talk to you. And they're going to tell you something very different than what I'm going to tell you now.

[29 : 33] But I want you to see it in the Bible. All right. So look at Colossians 1, 19. Colossians 1, 19 is Paul rehearsing the incomparable Lord Jesus Christ.

And he comes to verse 19 and he says, for it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him.

That is in Jesus Christ. All the fullness to dwell in him. Now, what's he talking about? Well, if you go over to chapter two, verse nine, you'll see it again.

For in him, that is Christ, all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.

Jesus is fully God. He is not half human and half God. He is fully human and fully God. It's wonderful because we can't conceive of something being full of one thing and then full of another.

[30 : 47] If I take a glass and I pour it half full of milk, I still have half the glass left to pour in something else if I want to so that I have two different things in one glass.

Half milk, half orange juice, and I can see the difference, right? Jesus, take the glass, Jesus is both fully up to the brim human and fully up to the brim God in one container.

that's the person walking around on the earth for all those years till they crucified him. That's the Bible. That's not what Jehovah's Witnesses teach.

That's not what Mormons teach. But that's what the Bible teaches. All right? So he was never divested to say that he is God's son does not in any way depreciate or deny or diminish the fact that he is fully God.

It's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Three persons in one. That's what we're dealing with. This is what Peter's rehearsing. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 09] Notice then too in Colossians 2 verse 10 why this is so important for us as Christians. Colossians 2 verse 10 and in him Christ this one who is full deity fully God in him you have been made what?

Full complete in Jesus you have also been made full or complete.

that is the fullness of Christ becomes your fullness. The treasures of Jesus become your treasures. The riches and blessings of God the Father on the Son become yours.

God showers all that on you in him. Christ you get all that. You say now Jeff does that mean I'm a little God? God. No.

It means you're the beneficiary of knowing the big God. Christ God the Father through the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us in him you have been made full complete.

[33 : 28] Jesus being both fully God and fully human is why you can be made full or complete. It's why you lack nothing. you lack nothing.

God didn't gyp you when he made you a Christian. All right? So verses three through nine back to first Peter. Verses three through nine in Peter's letter that's all one sentence in the Greek.

That's a long sentence. So this is one power packed doxology. Let's throw that one up there for him, Josiah. The next slide.

This is one power packed doxology. Doxa refers to glory. And logos refers to word or to speaking. So this is what we can say to the glory of God or about the glory of God.

We speak of and to God's glory when we offer a doxology. Praise Father. Right? This is what Peter is doing now.

[34 : 38] It's kind of a this three through nine is kind of a hymn for Peter. That's where Peter wants us to begin and to ground our hope.

We share in the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ as God's son so that all that is his is ours. Now listen, according to his great mercy shown to us in Christ.

So blessed be God who is our father through Jesus Christ. Peter wants to so carefully help them rehearse in their hearts this tremendous reality that they are who they are and have the hope that they have because of God the father giving to us the treasure of Jesus the son and in that treasure of Jesus the son we lack nothing and have everything and so Peter is it's just like saying now does that change anything knowing that in your circumstances does that change anything for you knowing that God's given you everything and withheld from you nothing and that one day he'll bring all of that to fruition in his time and according to his purpose for your life even if your circumstances don't change does that help this is almost Peter's almost saying how can that not help this is a man who knew great failure in his life this is a man who let down his

Lord in a huge way when Jesus was at his most vulnerable when Jesus was at his most vulnerable as it were Peter cowardly ducked out with all the other disciples now here's a man rehearsing the glorious riches of who Jesus is it's just a wonderful way for Peter to remind us that all of this comes to us according to the mercy of God and so that's point number two we'll throw up here this is the final one the means we've done the source the means of your living hope Christians have a living hope now what are we talking about blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead what is the means of your living hope

God's great mercy Peter is calling God's people to praise and worship by rehearsing the truths of their salvation according to his great mercy to us mercy is Elies it can be understood as compassion applied to offenders this is God's special compassion applied to those who have rebelled against him and offended him and that's why Peter says this is a great mercy this is a great mercy I know I feel that about God mercy me it's great because my sin is great the great mercy great has the idea of this it's a compassion which is remarkable in magnitude that's great isn't it a great mercy it's remarkable in its magnitude so building on the wonder of the blessings of

[38 : 42] God's electing grace and great mercy to us we are called on to declare the worthiness of this God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ that's simply what Peter's doing because God elected you and because God shown you such mercy now I'm calling on you to live a life declaring his worthiness and the rest of his letter is going to be all about what that looks like and it's going to be what it looks like when these people are suffering greatly for the cause of Christ that's how we bless God folks we bless God by declaring his worthiness in how we speak in the attitudes of our hearts in how we live and function in life and how we relate to each other we offer blessing to God by being a blessing

I'm loving that that's the way it is he is our Lord Jesus Christ because God credits us with Jesus perfect life of obedience Peter spoke about that look up in the verse two to obey Jesus Christ God has elected us according to the foreknowledge that he has by the sanctifying work of the spirit to obey Jesus Christ Jesus is our Lord because God credits us with Jesus perfect life of obedience and he does this when God causes us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead these are the words he's using now here's what this means by electing grace based in the foreknowledge of

God the sanctifying work of the spirit and by the sprinkling of Jesus blood God causes us to be born anew as new creatures in Christ man we just can't pass over that we just can't say that flippantly we need to let that sink into us that God causes us to be born anew isn't it a marvelous miracle that in the midst of your sin and filthiness and rebellion before God God mercied you to the point where he recreated you in an instant he rebirthed you in an instant he reanimated you so that you were made an entirely new creature in the sight of almighty God heaven and angels bore witness to that spiritual transformation that took place in you in an instant you have a whole host of witnesses

I don't even know how many millions of witnesses throughout heaven when that spiritual transformation happened in you how do I know that what does the word tell us what happens in heaven when even one sinner comes to Christ they rejoice man they rejoice you know why because they know what a big deal that is to take something filthy and wash it so clean that it reflects ultimate perfection flawless blameless spotless that's how the Bible describes us that's in him that's you that's you Christian now you need to say to me right now oh boy Jeff I don't feel like that sometimes I don't feel spotless and blameless and I don't know why the angels are rejoicing over me well they're not they're rejoicing over the fact that Jesus lives in you they're rejoicing over the fact that heaven now owns another son or daughter there's going to be one more soul in heaven standing around the throne offering declaring praise to this worthy

God that's what they're rejoicing over friend do you see why Peter is using this to speak into these fearful fellow Christians do you see why this is infusing for them this wonderful hope where else are we going to go for hope what if the circumstances don't change and they didn't they got worse then where's the hope Peter's saying I'll tell you where the hope is the hope is in what God has done in you and what what he's done in you means for your future it means heaven it means no more tears or sin or persecution no more heartache and hardship this is your future this is what God is doing and has done and what he promises God causes us to be born anew as new creatures in Christ now look we change realms we change realities God causes us to be transformed in our nature from being children of wrath children of

[44 : 17] Satan to being spiritually adopted children of God the Father in heaven we are now rightly related to the God who made all of this and holds it in his hands that's that's our father that's daddy and daddy says I love you and one day I'll bring you I'll bring you to my paradise it's wonderful well two passages suffice to kind of capture this merciful new reality that now defines us as God's born again children can I show those to you real quickly Ephesians 2 I'm rehearsing this with you because this is what Peter is rehearsing for us Ephesians 2 I'm going to begin in verse 1 now why am

I reading this remember I am reading this to us because this is one of two passages I chose to go to that kind of captures and expresses this merciful new reality that defines us as God's born again children okay so what does he say to us here in Ephesians chapter two and you were dead what was the condition of us being dead you were dead in or according to your trespasses and sins in which you formerly lived or walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience now turn back over to first Peter hold your finger there and look at another according to in verse two you are chosen of

God you are elect of God you are marked out of God according to the foreknowledge of God the father not by the spirit of this world but by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit not to obey your lust but to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood now may God's grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure now go back to Ephesians chapter two and look at verse three among all of this disobedience then we too formally lived in the lusts of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of our minds and hearts and we were by nature children of wrath even as the rest but God here is where the

God causes comes in friends but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions God made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved he raised us up with Christ and seated us with Christ in the heavenly places in Christ so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not as a result of works so that no one may boast and then in verse 10 for we then are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works workmanship of

God created in we could even say recreated rebirthed born again in Christ for good works which God prepared when beforehand so that we would walk in them so that we would be given the gift of living a life pleasing to God God is pleased with us ultimately because we're in Christ because God has applied Jesus sinless life to ours so that God sees us in that sinlessness now in this time and era that we live in prior to heaven we sin we have the promise of God by the guarantee of the Holy Spirit that he will forgive us for those sins in Christ by the washing of the blood of Jesus we have the guarantee that all sins past present and future are atoned for so that there is now no condemnation for those who are in

[49 : 40] Christ Jesus win win win win i in It's all win, Christian.

I know what it feels like right now. It feels like defeat. It feels sad and grievous and hurtful and deep. So look to your living hope.

It's not here. If you look here, it'll drag you into a dark hole and shake you like a bad dog. So don't go there.

Your living hope is a heavenly hope. But it's a living hope now. It's a hope you can live in now.

This is what Peter is trying to tell these people as he rehearses all this. God, here's the word that you want. God regenerates us spiritually.

[51 : 11] This is the doctrine of regeneration. This is why we preach doctrine. Everything I've been describing to you in the last 10 minutes has been about the doctrine of regeneration.

God gives each of us a new nature, saving us from sin and death. He doesn't do this because of anything we have or haven't done, but according to his mercy.

It's not mercy and grace if I've earned it. Regeneration is what Peter is referring to by saying that God causes us to be born again.

He regenerates us. He reanimates us. He rebirths us. He recreates us. Regenerate. To generate again.

Regeneration. That's what this doctrine means. It's foundational to how we understand God's mercy and compassion to us as his enemies.

[52 : 19] As his enemies, we received mercy. As rebellious wrath. Under the wrath of God people, we received mercy.

Let's put this slide up there for him, Josiah. Since our sin nature renders us spiritually dead to God as children of his wrath, we do not desire nor are we able to reach out to God for his forgiveness and mercy.

So God must cause. What? Back to 1 Peter. What does God say here for us? In 1 Peter, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again.

Look with me real quickly at Titus chapter 3. These are wonderful passages you'll want to teach your kids and rehearse with each other around the family table.

Titus 3, 3 through 7. For we also once were.

[53 : 31] So this is the same language Paul was using in Ephesians. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

My goodness. But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us.

Not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to. You see all these according to's? To his mercy. By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace, we would be made heirs according to the what of eternal life?

The hope. The hope of eternal life. Boy, that's just so good. So rich. Again, since our sin nature renders us spiritually dead to God as children of his wrath, we do not desire nor are we able to reach out to God for his forgiveness.

All right. Let me give you a quote by R.C. Sproul to just really nail this thing to the wall for us. Okay. Here's what R.C. said. We'll throw that up there for you. The sovereign God from all eternity decrees those to whom he will give the gift of faith, which is the fruit of regeneration.

[55 : 13] So faith is the fruit of God regenerating you. It's not the cause of it. We tend to get that backwards and think that our faith is what causes us to be reborn.

No, regeneration is what provokes and plants faith in our souls. I told you this was deep theology.

This is good. This is where we stake our lives. R.C. goes on to say this. You are absolutely powerless to effect your spiritual rebirth.

Only God in his supernatural power can cause you to be born again. We believe this. You did not generate it. You did not seek after God.

He sought after you. In his mercy and grace, the spirit of God invaded your soul, changed that heart of stone to a heart of flesh. He gave you the desire for Christ and brought you to Christ as a gift to Christ.

[56 : 18] Isn't that great? He gave you a desire for Jesus. He brought you to Jesus as a gift to Jesus.

You're a gift to Jesus, Christian, from God the Father, who foreknew you and marched you out for salvation and in a moment in time gave you to his son.

And all of that was guaranteed in the heart and mind of Almighty God. And I look up into heaven, Greg, and I say, Why did you do that for me?

Why would you do that for me? Why would you do that for me? The question came, and I asked it when I began to learn about these doctrines.

Why doesn't God just mark everybody out for salvation then? Why did he only mark out some? Wrong question. That's what I was told.

[57 : 19] Now let me help you with this. When you ask the question, Why doesn't God elect or choose everybody for salvation?

Wouldn't that be loving? Wouldn't that be kind? Wouldn't that be good? Wrong question. I'm going to tell you why. When you ask that question, it takes you to that dark hole that I described a minute ago.

It's a dark place. You know why? Because scripture doesn't throw any light on it for you. The scripture doesn't answer, Why didn't God mark out, choose, elect everybody for salvation?

Wrong question. You're not going to get your answer. That's going to take you into darkness. Here's the question we should ask. This is the right question, because this question takes us to the light.

Why did God choose to save anybody? Not why did he not choose to save everybody. Why did he choose to save even one? Nobody deserves it.

[58 : 26] Now the Bible is going to help you with that. If you ask the question, Why did God save anybody? You're going to find light and hope.

Because I didn't deserve it. You didn't deserve it. The Bible tells us the reason that God did this is because he's a loving God, and it was the kind intention of his will to do it this way.

And Paul said, Who are you, piece of clay, to ask the potter, Why do you make us thus? The Bible says that he made all of us for the same purpose.

For his glory. Now I've taken you to the light. I can't do better than that. Martin Luther couldn't do better than that.

John Calvin couldn't do better than that. R.C. Sproul can't do better than that. John MacArthur can't do better than that. That's what the Bible says. That's where we live.

[59 : 31] And it's a glorious reality. God brought you from spiritual death to spiritual life. He animated you by his grace. That is, by his power and favor on your life.

That's what Peter means by God caused us to be born again. Salvation. Trusting Christ. Why is Peter making such an effort to say all of this about God's work and will in their salvation?

Why? Because this is where our hope lives and thrives. This is the fertile soil of Christian hope, folks.

It lives in what God has done for us and in who Jesus is in us. Jesus' resurrection is God's way of showing us that our hope can live because Jesus lives.

Let me say it a different way and put that up here for him, Josiah, in the next slide. Our hope is not wishful thinking. That's how so many people use the word hope. Well, I hope this works out.

[60 : 40] Well, I hope I get this for Christmas. No, our hope is not wishful thinking. It's not a level of measured uncertainty that I'm trying to manage. You know, this could happen.

This might happen. I'm just trying. I hope it all works out. It's not that. Here's how Wayne Mack defines hope. True hope is a biblically based expectation of good.

In other words, it's a biblical hope. It's an expectation based on the promises of God. You ground yourself in the truth. You ground yourself in the reality of what God has said and done, what God has promised, what God is making good on.

That's a living hope. That's a biblical hope. That's a heavenly hope. If you look with me at 1 Peter 1, verse 13, you'll get a little bit more idea of this.

1 Peter 1, 13. Therefore, Peter says, and we'll get to this, God willing, prepare your minds for action. Keep sober in spirit.

[61 : 43] Now, look, fix your hope completely on what, folks? On the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He's pointing us to future tense. Why? Because we're living in a current reality of what will take place in the future. It's guaranteed. So he said, let what the guarantee of the future is define you now.

Let it be your hope. Let it ground you in reality and keep you where you need to be. Look at verses 20 and 21 of chapter 1.

For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, that is Christ, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you, 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.

Look, Peter doesn't want these people to hope in a change of circumstance. That's how often we use hope. We use it that way very often.

[62 : 55] Well, I hope this is going to change soon. Boy, I hope things turn around for the better soon. What if they don't? No. Well, this hope, this hope says regardless of circumstances, regardless of circumstances.

Look again at verse 21. Who through him you are a believer in God through Christ, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory so that.

Why did he raise Christ from the dead and give him glory? So that your faith and hope are in God. Hmm.

Jesus himself is our life and hope for hopeful living. We have a living hope because we have a living savior.

And just as he was first to be resurrected from the dead to a new life in heaven, as our Lord and Savior, Jesus stands as God's proof and God's guarantee that we too will one day be raised from the dead to a new life in him in heaven.

[64 : 02] You ever thought about that? Jesus is your guarantee. Jesus is your proof. Since God raised him from the dead, that same power will raise you from the dead because you are in him.

You are in Christ. It's guaranteed. Do you see why Peter's telling them this? It's pretty good, huh? This may not change their circumstances.

Many of them still may die as a result of Nero's persecutions. But Peter is saying death will usher you in to this wonderful reality and glory that God has marked out for you before he ever made the foundations of the planet.

This was always God's plan for you, Christian. So rest in it. Rest in him. That's the only place where a living hope for hopeful living can be found.

It's in the person of the Lord, Jesus Christ. All right. There you go. That's verse three. Verse four next week.

[65 : 14] I don't know. We'll see how we'll see how the Lord works all of this. It's just wonderful to rehearse it all. Let's pray together. Father, we do honor your heart and give you the glory because all we're doing is rehearsing what you have written.

We didn't make any of this up. We're not clever enough to figure it out. I certainly don't take any credit or glory for what I've said today. This is all just a rehearsal of the wonderful and marvelous and deep truths that you bring to our lives through your writing.

Through the life of the apostle Peter all those years ago. And as he wrote to these people to encourage them, they had no idea. That thousands of years later, we would be Grace Church Williamsburg and that we would need to hear this message just like they needed to hear it.

And so we pray that you would help us to take these words to our hearts, to be doers of the word and not hearers only. And that we would go home today and carefully give some contemplation to does does my life and my speech, my actions, my priorities, my values, my plans.

Does all of this offer a declaration of praise to God as my father? Is it clear that you are my father and that I'm living my life to please you?

[66 : 46] God, this is where we want to live. So we ask for your grace and we pray for your mercy and we thank you for the way that you lead us both individually in our families and in our church family.

May Grace Church Williamsburg be a glory to you in this community. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.