

## WHERE DO WE FIND HOPE?

SERIES: PAUSE | WEEK 3 | 4.26.2020

Hey church, thanks for joining us this morning. We are continuing our series called PAUSE and we're going to be in the book of 1st Peter, so if you'd like where you're watching this, if you want to turn your Bible to 1st Peter Chapter 1 we're gonna be looking at 13 through 25, but will you join me in prayer as we step into the Word.

*Father,*



*We thank You for your Word. We thank You for your joy and your hope that is abounding even in this time. So Lord, I pray for those that receive this teaching that wherever they are, that Lord, You would edify them, You would encourage them, You would convict their spirit, stir their hearts and love towards You, Lord. And we pray that your Word would just meditate on our hearts and that we would take it and not just be hearers but to do it and be active in what You are calling us to do. Thank You for Peter and his leadership in the church. And Lord, we pray that we would learn as well from his experience of meeting You and living with You.*

*In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*

So the question I'm going to ask this morning as I'm kind of thinking through this teaching is: How do we as a church find eternal hope in really an age of hopelessness? As we look around in our world there's often this degree of hopelessness that comes through circumstances, and right now as a world you look around and we have been in a season of lack of control, of fear of the future, and really a season of hopelessness. But really, since Genesis Chapter 3 human beings have been addicted to putting their hope in things that just aren't where you should place your hope; really, things that will let you down. And so we can go on and on from sexual pleasures where people place their hope in sexual pleasures thinking that it will deliver them from a dull life. Or maybe alcohol to escape the constant stress maybe they're under from work or family or future worries. Maybe it's prescription drugs to help us bear this life that maybe some of us hate. Or isolating ourselves not just because maybe society and government says so but maybe we isolate ourselves from relationships because we're afraid of being hurt again. Or maybe some of us we place our hope in money thinking that if we just obtain a certain level of comfort then we will have this type of hope. But even in the church at times – right? – we place our hope in church leaders or in a church building and we think that people in the church, religious leaders are gonna be where our hope is found. And Paul even says listen, don't think about me and focus on me, focus on Christ. And so all these things that we tend to hope for in the world I would argue are hopeless things; things that at best would maybe give you temporary hope in this world, but really let you down.

<sup>3</sup> Don't put your trust in human leaders;  
no human being can save you.  
<sup>4</sup> When they die, they return to the dust;  
on that day all their plans come to an end.

Psalm 146:3-4 (Good News Translation)

And so we're looking at this passage in 1st Peter and we're seeing Peter talk to a church that is in suffering, in persecution. And really, they're entering into kind of the last season of Nero's reign, and Nero was a great persecutor of Christians and so they're anticipating suffering while they're in suffering. And as we know Peter himself is just a few short days away from being killed and martyred for his faith, and so Peter as he's talking about this is living it. But I want to stop and just give you a little story as I was reflecting on this idea of how do you find hope in maybe the midst of suffering in your life, or hopeless situations in your life.

I had an opportunity to go on many mission trips over the years as a pastor, and one that stands out in

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particular I was able to go into an orphanage and really just be the hands of Jesus, just kind of help the nurses as they saw fit, and this place was just filled with children that were deformed and in pain. And I remember this one specific situation, I kind of rounded the corner down this hallway and the nurse called me over to kind of hold this little baby boy, he was no more than seven years old, and she asked me to hold him as she fed him. You see, this boy was deformed and she kind of had to hold him upright in order to feed. And so as I was doing that this boy was kind of crying out in pain. And church, I remember in that moment there was a wrestling in my heart of what do I do in this situation? I certainly can't say anything, this boy doesn't understand me, this nurse doesn't really understand the Gospel, and so what do I say in this situation? And I remember just seeing it as really hopeless. The boy was crying out in pain and I remember looking to God and saying, "God, what is your purpose in this? Why is this happening?" Anybody of you ever had that feeling of Lord, why is this happening? What is your plan in this suffering of this young boy? And I just remember it hitting me so much that man, I have to look beyond the circumstance in order to find hope. I have to look beyond just the physical world in order to see hope in the situation.

And so Peter, he is understanding that the church that he's writing to and even himself, he's going to have to be able to see beyond the circumstances of this world to find a greater hope than what the world offers because they're stepping into persecution. So how do we find eternal hope in an age of hopelessness? We're gonna see it in 1st Peter, so look with me in verse 13, here's what Peter says to the church:

***13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

**– 1 PETER 1:13 (ESV)**

And I love that he says the first thing we need to do to find this hope is to be of sober mind. And I love his phrase here when he says, "*set your hope fully*," because he's arguing, listen, be of sober mind and place your hope not temporarily but fully on the return of Jesus, which means everything in our lives, church, needs to be focused on the fact that Jesus will return; all of our thoughts, all of our desires, all of our actions need to be on that truth. And so he's arguing that God's grace and mercy brought to us by the coronation of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is where we find our hope. That Jesus is coming back and that we are to fully embrace that in all areas of our lives; as we wake up, as we look at our future, we are to recognize and place ALL of our hope – not part of our hope, not kind of a secondary thing, he says all of our hope should be placed on that.



And he also goes on to say that we are to prepare our minds. He talks about being of a sober mind and I'm reminded of the Exodus narrative where we see in Exodus this kind of call out of the Israelites as the Passover night was happening; kind of there's this ransom out of Egypt and there's this mindset that we read in Exodus Chapter 12. I want to see it here, it says in Exodus Chapter 12, verse 11:

***11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.***

**– EXODUS 12:11 (ESV)**

And so God's calling them – right? – in the midst of Passover, in the midst of leaving Egypt, to be of a certain mindset, to be of a certain way. As you live this life, live understanding that Jesus is coming back, that Christ will return, and it's this posture of putting everything in perspective of that truth.

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And so I remember talking to a bunch of high school boys about how is it that you would kind of hear from God, what does it look like to be in the presence of God and to be part of that relationship so that when mercy and grace and peace is needed in your life you are in a place of receiving that through the Spirit? And we talked about this analogy of kind of being under the faucet and this kind of beautiful illustration of as you read the Word and as you study the Word of God and as you seek His face and you are in community with other people—and I would just encourage you, we are praying that in the midst of isolation that you would find community and connections still through our online groups. And so a lot of our groups are meeting digitally, we're asking you to connect, but there's this beautiful illustration as you do these things of God, as you fix your mind on those things you are posturing yourself under the faucet so that when God's presence and power comes into your life you are ready.

And so it's this mindset that I'm gonna wake up every day meditating on the fact that Christ is victorious. I'm gonna pursue the Lord and in the midst of that I'm going to find my hope. I am gonna find my joy. So it's not just simply this mindset that okay, God is the future hope, Christ is the future hope. It's no, no, no, this is not my home. I'm gonna wake up every day and think, okay, there is something in every human being that recognizes that this is not our home. That we are longing for our home and this is not it and so I'm going to acknowledge it every day. Okay, there is going to be uncomfortable things that are happening around me, there are going to be circumstances that I'm not in control of, but I'm going to set my mind on the fact that this is not my home and I have a purpose in this and a promise to come. And so that is what Peter is talking about.

Listen, when we talk about every area of your life, let's get real. That means your marriage, that means don't you dare place all of your hope on your spouse because they will disappoint you and you will put pressure on them that they cannot bear. During this time don't place all your hope on your children because you are going to put them in a position to fail you. That even in our lives we look at every aspect of our life and we fully put our hope in Christ alone. It makes me think of Colossians Chapter 1 where he says all things:

*<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

– COLOSSIANS 1:16-17 (ESV)

Paul says all things were made for Jesus. That means your spouse was not made for you but made for Christ. Your children were not made for you, they were made for Christ. Your job, your future, your circumstances, as a believer is not meant to glorify you – it is meant to give God a platform for His glory and His kingdom. So we are to meditate on these things. We are to think of these things. This is why in a practical state, listen, when you get drunk, when you go after temporary numbness, you are actually trying to cope with the pain that God is gonna use in your life to allow you to know Him more; to embrace a dependency on Him that's going to bless you in a tremendous way.

And so right now, listen, our jobs, man, what a lesson that we've learned in the last few weeks that we can't place our hope in a job or in somebody else's job that we want, man, just in a second [*he snaps his fingers*] we can lose those things, they're so fragile. And Peter's just reminding us that the ultimate fulfillment comes from the revelation of Jesus Christ, and so think of those things, church, meditate on those things; think of yourself as exiles in this world just passing through it looking for opportunities to remind people of where the hope really is found—in Jesus. So, man, in the midst of an imperfect world we are to be screaming about Who is our hope and it's not the things of this world.

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I think about my daughters, just so often they teach me amazing truths about the Gospel and they really reveal what the Scripture talks about, this childlike faith. The other day I was praying with my daughter now my oldest, she's hearing my wife and I talk about the corona, talk about the culture and society and government and some of the encounters that we're having with people, and so she's understanding kind of the weight of the circumstances. And one of the things my wife and I do often when we hear bad news, you might even do it as well as a family, is we say, "Jesus come back." Man, we cannot wait for Jesus to come back. And we kind of say it jokingly but we really mean that. Man, all these things in our world that we're seeing, Lord, if You'd just come back. Christ, if You'd just return and make all things new.

And so recently I was putting her to bed and we were praying and she turns to me and she says, "Daddy, is it ok if I beg for Christ to come back? Is it okay if I beg for Him?" And I just thought, *Sweetheart, of course you can beg for Him.* Like, what a childlike faith. What a great reminder of what our mindset should be as we look at this world is we ought to be beggars of Christ to come back, that we know that's where our true hope is found. And so yes, we are to hope for a better tomorrow, but man, we have promise for a better eternity and that is what our longing should ultimately be about. And so I just love that reminder.

Another thing he says in verse 13 about being so reminded is he says oftentimes when we don't focus on those things we tend to focus on ourselves, we become filled with anxiety, filled with worry when we forget that Christ is coming back and that He is victorious, and we think that we have to somehow be victorious in this world because that causes us to look inside, it causes us to say, "I have to help myself and my family and my future. I have to be the one who fixes all these things." And it allows us to really be controlled by the enemy's lies. And so oftentimes if we're not sober minded we're self-centered, we're self-minded and that leads to destruction. For those who don't know Jesus, man, Jesus calls us every day to take up our cross – to die to self – and so to be sober-minded is to think about God and godly things, and it's so cool. Prepare our minds so that we can dwell on the promises of God.

Peter goes on in verses 14 and 16, he says here's another thing we can do to find hope in a society, in a world that tends to be hopeless, he says this in 14:

*<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,  
<sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

– 1 PETER 1:14-16 (ESV)

So how does it look to have eternal hope? We are called to be of sober mind, and then Peter says we are to walk in holiness. I just heard it said by another pastor online, he says, "What does it look like to walk in holiness?" He says, "It is living, loving, and looking like Jesus." And I said I love that, it's memorable and it's right. It's if you want to walk in holiness you are to meditate on how Christ lived, how He acted, what He focused on, what He did. Christ continually calls us to put off sin and put on righteousness. Paul says and he highlights this in Colossians Chapter 3, I'm gonna read a few verses starting in verse 5, he says:

*<sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*

— he says:

*<sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked,*

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— he says this is your former self —

*when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.*

*<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

– COLOSSIANS 3:5-13 (ESV)

And so here's what Paul is saying about living in righteousness is you wake up every day and you say, "Okay, Lord, I'm gonna think about You. I'm gonna think about your promises. I'm gonna think about the things that are happening in the future, the Christ coming back is where I find my hope, and I'm to meditate and dwell on the fact that my former self needs to be put to death every day." And so to live in righteousness is to die to self everyday, to say, "I'm no longer gonna be of the flesh, but I'm gonna be of the Spirit. I'm gonna ask the Lord to lead my life." And so, yes, my flesh will fear, but man, my spirit is resting in the hope I have in Jesus. Yes, my flesh would fear the future, but my spirit is comforted by the promises of God. And so it's dying to self every day and enjoying this pursuit of holiness.

You know, I think oftentimes in our culture we think that the pursuit of holiness is marked by some sort of legalism and so we fear it. We say, okay, we shouldn't impose these actions on others. But no, no, Paul says no, to pursue holiness is not to cast judgment on how others live, it is to desire to live according to God's standard and we are to find pleasure in those things. That's why Paul says in Romans 6 when they say shouldn't we continue to sin so that grace abounds, he says by no means.

*<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace*

*<sup>15</sup> What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*

– ROMANS 6:12-15 (ESV)

As believers we are to pursue holiness for Christ's sake. Like, I'll give you a great example right now of how we are to, really, measure our desires as we do things that sometimes are marked by godly things but really are not godly desires. I'll give an example. Right now our social media community is really where we find connection and so for some of us we are challenged to represent Christ in those areas, whether it's to share content that the church creates, whether it's to Like things, whether it's to share hope, but oftentimes we measure the success of those things by how many Likes we have, how many people Share it, and then it is in those moments where we actually see the reason of why we're doing what we're doing. Is it for self-glorification? Is it for us? Or is it for the Lord? Is our motivation of God or is it for self? And so what a great indicator right now of where our heart is that as we're doing these things is it for His glory or is it for our own? To walk in



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the holiness is to say Lord, I lay down my personal desires for your desires. I lay down my personal preferences, Lord, for your preferences. And so we are to live as servants of God. And so Peter is saying you ought to dwell on those things. Again, Peter's talking to a church heading to persecution and he's saying be of sober mind, walk in holiness, this is where you find your hope.

And church, I just want to take a moment to say all of our medical personnel, all of our missionary work, all our military work, they are all motivated – right? – by something greater than just a paycheck right now. We are to celebrate our first responders. Thank you for your sacrifice, for your families stepping into fear for the person. And many of them have said to me as I sought out to them just to say thank you, that man, some of them as believers they're motivated to go because they know that the people in the hospital are eternal beings, that their motivation is greater than just physical health but they want to be comfort and hope to people in hopeless situations. And so thank you for representing the church, for walking in holiness, for looking at situations in your lives and saying listen, God is greater than those circumstances. I know for a lot of our medical personnel and our military and our missionaries, this is what gets you up in the morning. This is what motivates you to go into the hospitals, and so thank you for that courage. Thank you for modeling what Peter is calling the church to be about.

### **HOLINESS MATTERS**

And listen, church, holiness matters. It affects people, it affects your ability to be impactful to the people around you. Like, what hard conversations in our lives are we holding back on because of fear, because we are not trusting the Lord and walking in holiness? What conveniences are we not willing to give up because we're feeling like there's a constant source of temptation there and we don't want to give it up, we don't want to trust the Lord? Man, what sins are we struggling with that we've never shared but we need to invite others in? What did we shrink away from when we were called to share the Gospel because we were afraid of what people would think? You see, as we choose not to be holy, not to pursue obedience, people suffer, the world suffers. As the church walks in holiness it affects people. It matters.

We need to enjoy the eternal hope that we have as we pursue holiness; to become the person that Christ says we already are. Like, so many times I asked my wife, I said, "Look, help me to remind myself every day that God does not see me the way that I see me." That yes, I will fail at times to be approaching situations with a sober mind and in holiness, but reminding me that that's okay, that I can grow in those things and prepare myself to handle conflict and suffering as I walk in the Spirit, as I learn to see Christ the way He already sees me. Man, if we understood who we are and what is to come, listen church, if we really understood that there would be no fear amongst us.

First Peter verse 17 Peter ends by saying:

***17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 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.***

– 1 PETER 1:17-21 (ESV)



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And it says what is the third thing we are to do? So be of sober mind, to pursue holiness, and he says to fear the Lord. This healthy reverent fear of looking upon the Lord and saying Lord, You are in control. That I do not control my future. I do not control my circumstances but Lord, You do. And You are both a perfect judge that holds the world in your hands and yet You are personal and a sacrificial and a loving pursuing God and You are both; You are just and You are the justifier. And I fear in awe of who You are and I recognize that I am not in control, and that could make me fear unhealthy things, but Lord, because I'm not in control I'm gonna have awe in the fact that You are and that You are good and that You love my family more than I do, and You have a plan for me and I trust in that plan. And so how, church, do we find eternal hope in the age of hopelessness. Peter challenges us and he challenges a church to be of sober mind – and Peter was; to walk in holiness – and Peter did; and to fear God – and Peter gave up his life because he did not pretend to trust in God, he rested in that.



And so as I shared the story at the beginning of this message about holding this young boy, this young crippled boy as he screams out in pain, the rest of the story goes like this. God laid on me a song in that moment and I began to just sing this song to the boy not knowing if he could hear but knowing that God is greater than the physical situations and I know that the Spirit of God – I prayed He did wonder just through my obedience, who knows, but God can be glorified. And here's what I'm saying, it was a song written by one of my favorite artists, he's called Andrew Peterson, he wrote this song called "After the Last Tear Falls," and I won't read the song to all of you but I want to read the bridge of this song because this is the reason I sang it to this young baby boy is I just wanted him to know that there was a love greater than the situation, and in the end there was laughter and love for this boy. And the bridge goes like this:

**And in the end, the end is oceans and oceans of love again**  
**We'll see how the tears that have fallen**  
**Were caught in the palms of the Giver of love and the Lover of all**  
**And we'll look back on these tears as old tales**

Writers: Andrew Peterson & Andrew David Osenga<sup>1</sup>

And I just love the hope of that song, that in the midst of the tears we will look back ultimately as just old tales as we are in the presence of the Lord rejoicing without suffering, without pain. There was not a loss in this world that God is not greater than and that the cross cannot redeem. And so listen, I know right now there are tears being fallen. I know right now there are marriages on the rocks. And in this quarantine it's not helping – right? But listen, I want you to know that there's a God greater than your circumstances and I want to encourage you to lean into Him, lean into Him in your marriage. I know there are tears falling right now. There are abusive relationships in your life. It's hard to find hope in the midst of your circumstances. I know that there's sickness and there's isolation and there's loneliness and there's future fears of finances, but listen, in the end all the tears will dry up. And church, I just want to remind you – look towards Jesus, walk in His promise, rest in His faithfulness, so I pray this as a blessing to you as Peter reminds us that our hope is nothing that we can lose – but we can forget. So don't let us forget it, church, let's walk in it. Amen?

Pray with me.

<sup>1</sup> "After the Last Tear Falls Lyrics." Lyrics.com. STANDS4 LLC, 2020. Web. 29 Apr. 2020. Accessed from <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/6206665/Andrew+Peterson>

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*Father,*

*We thank You for the Word. We thank You for this passage as Peter again repeats how are we to find hope in a world of hopelessness. And I pray for us as a church, Lord, that we would be bold and we would be witnesses to others as we live in this hope.*

*In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*



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