

Hope

Osaka International Church

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1 Peter 1:3-9

Good morning. My prayer this morning is that each person here will walk away closer to God.

"In 1927 the S-4 submarine was rammed by another ship and quickly sank. The entire crew was trapped in its prison house of death. Ships rushed to the scene of disaster off the coast of Massachusetts. We don't know what took place down in the sunken submarine, but we can be sure that the men clung bravely to life as the oxygen slowly gave out. A diver placed his helmeted ear to the side of the vessel and listened. He heard a tapping noise. Someone, he learned, was tapping out a question in the dots and dashes of the Morse Code. The question came slowly: "Is ... there ... any ... hope?"

That is a great question "Is there any hope?" I think most people here today would agree with me when I say that I believe there is hope. I think most people hope in some way or another. I wondered hope is expressed in real life. How do we communicate hope in our daily lives?

Wanting to know the answer to this question I did some reading. In my reading I read something by Pastor John Piper. He says there are at least 3 main ways people communicate hope. He said that,

1. "Hope is the desire for something good in the future.
2. Hope is the good thing in the future that we desire.
3. And hope is the reason why our desire may come true."

Now let me give you some examples of how these statements look in real life.

1. Hope is the desire for something good in the future. Let's say that you have a family trip planned to go to Disneyland. The kids are all excited, your bags are all packed, and you have made your hotel reservations. Then you say to your wife, I hope it doesn't rain. Your trip to Disneyland combined with good weather is your desire for something good.
2. Hope is the good thing in the future that we desire. Imagine you have had a friend over for dinner and you had a really good time. Such a good time that you say to your friend, "I hope we can do this again someday." Having dinner together was good and you desire to do it again in the future.
3. Hope is the reason why our desire may come true. Imagine your favorite baseball team is in the World Series or the Japan Series. It is the bottom of the ninth inning of the final game. Your team is down by 1 run with the bases loaded. There are 2 outs and your team's best hitter comes up to bat. He is the last chance or only hope for your team to win the game. You and the team hope that he is able to get a hit so the team wins the series. You desire to see

your team win the championship and this batter is the reason your desire may come true.

These are examples of human hope. Did you notice that all three of these of these examples have something in common? They all express uncertainty. Human hope is rooted in uncertainty. You cannot be certain that you will have good weather when you visit Disneyland, you cannot be certain that you will have dinner again with your friend, and the baseball team cannot be certain that the batter will get a hit.

Let's compare that to Biblical hope. I like the way Pastor John Piper defines Biblical hope, he says, "Biblical hope is a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future. Biblical hope not only desires something good for the future; it expects it to happen. And it not only expects it to happen; it is confident it will happen."

I want to take the next few minutes and look at 3 aspects of Biblical hope; using 1 Peter 1:3-9 as our text. You can follow along on the screen or in your Bible as I read this passage.

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 through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 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. 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.

The first aspect of Biblical hope is this.

1. Biblical hope is a hope that transforms your life.

Our life can be transformed through hope. The hope that transforms lives is not ordinary human hope. The hope that transforms comes from God himself. Unfortunately there are times when people put their hope in the wrong place. They put their hope in their spouse, or their doctor or maybe they put their hope in their intelligence or they hope in their job. Or they place their hope in the baseball player. The problem with placing your hope in these types of things is that they can all fail you. They can all let you down. The baseball player strikes out, you lose your job, and your Doctor can't find a cure to your disease. If there is one thing I have learned in life it is this. People and things will let you down, but God will never let you down. He cannot fail, his Word is true and his promises are sure. When God gives us a promise of hope we can be sure in that promise.

Where does this transformational hope come from? Transformational hope comes to us out of God's great mercy, verse 3 of our text says, "according to his **great mercy**, he has caused us to be born again to a **living hope**." Why do we have to be "born

again" to this great hope? Romans 3:23 says, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" The Bible makes it clear that we are all sinners and as such we are not entitled to this living hope that can transform our life. You see sin keeps us from God, but God in his great mercy provided a way for us to become clean, he provided a way for the guilty to become innocent. He sent his son to earth to live among us. The creator became one of the created. Jesus willingly set aside his glory to become a baby who would grow up and die so that we might one day be declared innocent.

Because of the work of Jesus on the cross, our nature is changed. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul says, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**" When we put our faith and trust in Jesus we become a new creation, we are born again into a living hope. We become a child of God.

The hope that comes from God is made sure in the resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus left heaven to come to earth he not only came with the express intent of dying on the cross, but with the express intent of rising again. He came to defeat death and sin through his death AND his resurrection. You see without the resurrection there is no hope of salvation. Verse 3 of our text says, "he has caused us to be born again to a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**"

If Jesus just died on the cross we could not be saved, he had to rise again so that we could be declared innocent. It was his resurrection that defeated death so that we too could be resurrected into a new life. Biblical hope is secure and firm, it is a hope that cannot and will not fail because it is anchored Jesus Christ.

The second aspect is this.

2. Biblical hope is a hope that assures you an inheritance.

How many of you would like to know that you were going to receive an inheritance that would take care of all of your needs? Well, I have some good news for you; if you are a Christian here today you have an inheritance waiting for you. Verse 4 of our text says, "**To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Kept in heaven for you.**" When we add verse 3 to that we see that we are born again to an inheritance that cannot perish or fade.

An inheritance is not something that we can earn. It is something that is usually given to us by a loved one. While we do not have to anything to receive this inheritance, they do. Sadly, someone has to die in order for us to receive our inheritance. In this case it is the death of Jesus that provides us with our inheritance.

The inheritance Peter is talking about is not an earthly inheritance. No, this inheritance is far greater than anything we could receive here on earth. Earthly inheritances do not last forever they will fade away. They do not last forever. Let me give you an example. My grandfather died a few years ago and while he was not a wealthy man he did leave something behind for each of his grandchildren. As the only

grandson I inherited his pocketknife. I remember that my grandfather always had this pocketknife with him. Every time I went to see him there was that pocketknife. So when my dad and uncles told me that my grandpa wanted me to have his pocketknife, I was surprised and honored at the same time. Guess what? As special as that pocketknife was to me and to me grandpa, I have no idea where it is today. Somewhere along the way I lost track of it. The inheritance my grandpa left me faded away.

Other times people inherit money and you know what people can make all kinds of financial mistakes when they inherit money. I read a story while I was working on this message of a young man who received an inheritance of 100,000 dollars when he turned 18. This young man had no idea what to do with the money so he started to spend it. If he saw something he liked he bought it. He did not give any thought to his future. He spent and spent and spent. Before three years had passed the money was all gone. He had nothing to show for his inheritance except a pile of bills.

You see, unlike earthly inheritances the inheritance God promises us will last forever. The inheritance God gives us is secure. We cannot misplace or lose it like I did with my inheritance, and we cannot waste it on material things. It cannot decay or perish - it is imperishable. Our inheritance from God cannot be defiled or diluted - it is undefiled. This inheritance cannot fade away, like money can - it is unfading.

Earthly inheritances are not guaranteed. It is possible for the inheritance to be spent or wasted before one receives it. Our inheritance from God on the other hand is one that is guaranteed. In verse 4 we read that our inheritance is being "kept for us in heaven." God is holding onto our inheritance for us. We can trust that he will keep it for us.

Our inheritance is salvation. Let's read verse 5 again. **"who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."** As believers in Christ our inheritance is salvation. While we are already saved through our faith in Christ we are still waiting for the completion of our inheritance. Our salvation will be complete at the return of Jesus. When Jesus returns we will receive our new bodies and enter into our new home in heaven, then we will receive our full inheritance.

The third aspect is this.

3. Biblical hope is a hope that will keep you going through every trial.

James 1:2 says, **"Count it all joy my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds."** Notice James said when, not if you meet trials, but when you meet trials. As Christians we were never promised an easy life. Life can be difficult, it can be painful and it can bring us sorrow. Too many times Christians think that because they believe in Jesus that they should escape the difficult things in life. They falsely believe that their life should be easy; they think they should have a life without pain or suffering. They have bought into this idea that Christianity is a bubble of protection from the suffering found in this world, but it isn't. The Bible makes it clear that we will go through trials.

As Christians we have face the same problems that the world faces. We have financial problems; we can lose our job just like anyone else. We have people who lie to us or break their promises. We have people talk badly about us behind our backs. We have kids who make bad decisions. We face sickness and death just like everyone else. As Christians we are not exempt from the trials of life.

So what is a Christians to do then when they face trials? Are we supposed to sit there and say "Woe is me. My life is hard." Is that what we are supposed to do? No, we are supposed "count it all joy." Peter echoes this idea here in 1 Peter 1:6, "**In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.**" That does not mean that we are to pretend to be happy when we are going through a rough time in life. I don't think we are to put on a brave face and pretend that life is great when we are hurting. What we need to do is realize that the trial is there to serve a purpose. God has a plan for that trial.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Be patient, God isn't finished with me yet." Most of the time this saying is used to remind others that we still have flaws and will make mistakes. I want us to look at it a little differently today. Instead of saying it to others, I want us to say this to ourselves. When we are facing a trial we need to remind ourselves to be patient because God is not finished with us yet.

Why is God not finished with us yet? What is the purpose of our facing trials? Verse 7 of our text tells us, ", 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.**" Peter likens our trials to that of the gold refining process. We are tested so that our faith will be refined just like gold.

The reason that gold dealers subject gold to fire is to get rid of impurities. Gold does not come out of the earth 100% pure. It is mixed with other substances, impurities that make the gold less valuable. So the goldsmith has to smelt the gold. This means he subjects to the gold to intense heat. He places the gold in a fire that is around 1100 degrees Celsius in order to purify the gold. When the gold is melted into a liquid he processes the gold and removes the impurities. That is what trials do for our faith, they remove the impurities. The next time you are faced with a trial, I want you to step back and ask yourself what God is trying to teach you. When you are having difficulties with a co-worker stop and ask God to show you what part of your life needs to be refined. When your children are driving you crazy, ask God what is it is he want you to learn. When the trials come know that God is using them to mold and shape you so that your life will result in the praise and honor of Jesus.

4. Conclusion.

In conclusion I want to tell you a little story.

"A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, "Eighteen to nothing--we're behind."

"Boy," said the spectator, "I'll bet you're discouraged."

"Why should I be discouraged?" replied the little boy. "We haven't even gotten up to bat yet!"

That little boy was full of hope, so full of hope that the score of the game didn't matter to him. If you are a believer here today I want to challenge you to be like that little boy and be full of Biblical hope, hope in God. Live your life in such a way that people stop you and ask why you are so hopeful and then you can share the good news of hope with them.

Maybe you are here today and you don't have the kind of hope I have talked about today. Maybe the idea of having a hope that can change your life sounds good to you. If that is true for you then I have good news for you. If you put your faith and trust in Jesus this hope and all of its benefits are yours.

Let's pray.