

Praise God



1 Peter 1:3–7

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I want you to think about the last time you had to send a text message to a friend who was going through a trial in their life. I don't know what exactly the situation was, but you had a friend and you just knew they had a bad day bad, a bad week, bad month, or bad year, whatever it is. Maybe they're going through some suffering, maybe that the stomach bug, and their whole family had it all week and you just need to give them some encouragement that they're going to make it through. Maybe they lost a loved one. Maybe they lost a job. Maybe they were wanting something and it didn't happen. You just knew it's been a rough day or a rough week, and in the midst of their suffering, you decided to send them a text. I want you think back to what you said. How did you start that conversation? You were thinking about that person because you love them and wanted to help them and give them some hope, so you got your phone out. You started to type out the message, but perhaps there was a moment where you weren't exactly sure what to write because maybe it's something that you haven't been through, something you couldn't even imagine going through, and you were just not sure what to say. It probably took you a little bit to find the words. What exactly do you say to give hope to

someone who's going through suffering? Maybe you've been on the other side of that text message. Maybe you've been going through some stuff and someone reached out to you, and they had trouble finding the words to say to you because, man, it's just really hard to know what to do in difficult situations.

Well, we're going to read a letter from Peter, and he's writing this letter probably around 62 AD, scholars will say. This was probably during the time of Nero, so things aren't going super well for Christians in this part of the world. These people are exiles; they're not in their homeland where everything is great. Later on, we will see they are going to be under some persecution and things are not going to be great. More than likely, the great fire hasn't happened yet where Nero systematically goes after the Christians, but there's definitely not a love towards Christians from government and culture. When I got spent some time in Rome, we got to visit Nero's house. They had actually excavated the floor until they got to the actual floor that he would have stood on. We stood there, just being in that moment and thinking we were in the midst of pure evil because Nero was a terrible, evil man. He would throw these parties at his house, and history will tell us that instead of setting up lanterns, he would line these fields by putting Christians on poles and setting them on fire. That was how he would use for lanterns for these parties he would have for his friends. Not really at the point of this letter, but just in a little bit Nero is really going to go after the Christians. Things are going to really, really hard.

So you have Christians who are living in a place and time where persecution is it's happening pretty vividly, what do you say in a letter to people who are going through some really difficult times? Well, what Peter is going to start off with is probably not the place we would start if we were texting a friend. We would probably start off with "I am praying for you. How can help you? What do I need to do?" Peter doesn't start with that. He starts out with—worship God, praise God. He wants these people, in suffering, in the midst of what's happening, he wants them to praise God. The reason he wants them to praise God is because of what God has done, what God will do, and what God is doing. That is what we are going

to see as we open up this letter. We want to be people that praise God for what He has done, for what He will do, and for what He is doing right now in the midst of our suffering, our good days or bad days. And we're going to be called to worship, because in the middle of suffering, do you know what we really need? We need the Savior, and it's worship that leads us to the Savior.

Scripture

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The first set of verses is going to talk about what God has done, and what God has done is He has given us new life. That is this first step—we're going to praise God for our new life. It says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" We are blessing God. What exactly does it mean to bless God? Some translations will say "Praise be to God..." It's a worship term, we're blessing God, we're giving Him credit, we're giving Him worth, we're exalting, we're eulogizing, we're saying how great God is. We want to bless Him, we want to worship Him, we want to praise Him, and the first thing we're going to praise God for is for what He has done. So let's just think about what God has done for us. If you are a believer, God has done something great in your life. Primarily, He has given you life. Peter qualifies it—what God is about to do is "According to His great mercy." So God is going to be giving you new life, and it's according to His great mercy.

Now, we often think about salvation is by grace and that is true, meaning it's unmerited favor. It's something you don't deserve but it's something He gives you, you didn't earn it but He gave it to you. Mercy is a little bit different; mercy is about compassion and pity. It's about doing for someone what they can't do for themselves. If you think about mercy ministries, let's say a mercy ministry towards the homeless, well, the homeless can't help themselves. They don't have a home, they don't have means, so a mercy ministry might set up a tent with cots and feed homeless people because there's a compassion element, there is a pity element. They can't help themselves so we're going to help them. We're going to give them mercy. So here, we see that God's salvation to us, this

new life, comes to us by mercy. We were people who couldn't help ourselves. We were people who couldn't give ourselves life. We couldn't redeem ourselves. We couldn't save ourselves. We were in a helpless place, so the God who can, did for those who can't. That's the good news of the gospel. God showed compassion to a people who couldn't help ourselves and He is going to give us new life.

So, according to God's great mercy, "He has caused us to be born again." I mean, notice that statement—God has caused us to be born again. Notice who Peter puts in the driver's seat of this new birth. It's not you and it's not me. The same is true in your physical birth. Were you in the driver's seat of your physical birth? You didn't just show up to your parents and decide what day you were going to be born. You weren't in control of it, you weren't in the driver's seat; it's something that happened to you. You didn't even know about it until probably a year or two later. You just woke up to the idea that you are a human being and this is nothing that you did. Your parents caused you to be born. And here, Peter is saying God caused you to be born again. Peter is saying I know you're exiles, I know you're wondering, I know that not everybody loves you, but God loves you. He elected you, He chose you, He caused you to be born again, He initiated your salvation. This is something that He did for you; you didn't do it for yourself.

Think about that term, "born again." Peter is a disciple of Jesus so I can imagine Peter got this from Jesus. Do you remember that encounter in John 3 when Nicodemus basically wants to know how he can get to Heaven? And Jesus said if you want to get to Heaven, you have to be born again. Nicodemus kind of flips out, like, how does that work? Do I go back in my mother's womb? How does this happen? Jesus says no, this is a Spirit thing, through faith in me—all who believe in me (John 3:16) will have eternal life—they will receive that new birth. New birth implies a new family. When you are born of God, you're born into a new family. You're in the family of God. You get new brothers and sisters. You get a new identity. Other metaphors in the Bible would speak about that we are made new, according to Paul in Corinthians. The Old Testament talked about we get a new heart and a new spirit. The stone heart is gone; flesh heart

comes in. We are actually made new. Peter is bringing that imagery up that you have been born again by God. It is something that God did to you but it had a dramatic change in you. That's why salvation is not a little thing; salvation is a supernatural thing. Salvation is something that God does to you and it changes you, it gives you new birth, new heart, new life, a new family. So Peter is trying to remind people who are suffering that though they are exiles they are also part of the family of God. Because of God, they have a Father who loved them, adopted them, and birthed them into His kingdom family, so in the midst of being exiles, rejoice in your identity of the family of God.

Notice, your new birth, it leads to some things. The first thing it leads to is "a living hope." Just think about those words, a living hope. It doesn't say it leads to hope—I mean, hope would be good. If it led to hope that would be great, but hope is only good in what it hopes in. At the end of the day, if you're hoping in anything other than Jesus, eventually that hope is going to wear out, eventually that hope is going to die, eventually that hope is going to be a dead hope because all things have an expiration date. All things have a grave appointment, all things are going to perish and pass away, and so whatever you hope in other than Jesus is a dead hope when you think about eternity. But if you're hoping in Jesus, it's a living hope because Christ is alive, Christ is living, Christ lives forever, so we are reborn to a living hope. That idea of living is the opposite of dead. It's living, it's active, it moves, it pulls you, it propels you. This is a hope that's not just stagnant, it's Dynamic; it is a living hope. We are people not just with hope but living hope, forever living hope because we've been reborn into a new Kingdom.

Notice what this living hope comes through. It's "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." How is it a living hope? Because there's been a resurrection, and we know the resurrection killed death. The reason our hope is living is because death has been defeated. When Christ rose from the dead, that means that our salvation is alive. It is resurrected; it is going to be a forever life with God. Peter is talking about our new birth, our living hope that is brought to us through the resurrection of Christ, and I want you to think for a moment how the resurrection changed Peter's

life. Peter is a guy who understood the resurrection because Peter was a follower of Jesus. He's one of the inner three who were really close to Jesus. He's been walking with Him and he said things like...*I'm never going to leave you. I'm never going to forsake you. I'll be there right to the end if you die, and if you die, I'm dying.* Jesus said...nope...you're going to deny me three times. When Jesus is put on trial, Peter starts thinking this is getting a little real...*I think He's really about to die and I don't know that I want to die. I mean I said that, but I'm not sure now.* Peter was standing close enough where he can see Jesus but far enough away where is not associated with Jesus. He's warming himself by a fire like...*I'm just going to keep my eye out, and I'm going to jump in whenever the time comes.* Then, this little girl comes up to him, tugs on his britches, and is like...*Aren't you a friend of His?* Peter denies Jesus in front of a little girl...*No, I don't know Him.* Those standing around him press him about it, and he says no again and actually starts cursing and he walks away. That's Peter, bold Peter, who when a little girl comes up to him, he can't even stand for Jesus in Jesus's darkest hour. Then of course, you know the story, the rooster crows three times and Peter realizes he failed. He's walking away and Jesus goes to cross, He dies and He's put in a tomb. Can you imagine those three days of Peter, just in agony?...*I didn't do it. I lost I'm not courageous. I'm a coward!* Then all of a sudden, some girls run and grab Peter and say Jesus is not in the grave anymore, He's risen from the dead! Peter runs and sees the tomb, and then eventually meets with the risen Jesus face to face. He sees Christ risen from the dead. He sees Him and he's with Him for forty days, just teaching about the Kingdom of God.

And then, Peter, the guy who was afraid of a little girl, stands up at the day of Pentecost and preaches to thousands of people, three thousand people come to faith in Christ because Peter says here I stand and Christ is King. In the midst of knowing death is coming to him because they just crucified Jesus, and they're going to crucify him because he stands with Jesus, Peter says I don't care. Peter would get beat up and he would say keep beating me up, keep me in prison, all I can say is I'm going to keep talking about Jesus. The Bible doesn't tell us on how Peter died, but history would tell us that Peter was martyred and they were going to crucify him.

Peter actually requested to be crucified upside down, which would have been even more horrific, but he felt he was not worthy to be crucified like his Lord. So how in the world do you get Peter, a grown man who's afraid of a little girl before the crucifixion, to then after the resurrection stand before all the powers that be and say Jesus is King, do it with me with what you want? It's the resurrection event. The resurrection changed Peter's life, and he's writing to us saying the resurrection changes things. The resurrection moves things, it breaks things, it does things; it creates things in you and me.

So Peter is writing to a people to say you have a living hope, you have a new birth, and it's brought to you by the resurrection of Christ. Christ has risen from the dead and that changes everything. I know you're suffering, I know it's hard, but Christ has risen from the dead, think about what He has done and praise God, bless God. I love what N.T. Wright says about the resurrection. He says, "New life has come to birth within us because a new life has come to birth in the world in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus the Messiah. Becoming a Christian means that what God did for Jesus at Easter He does for you in the very depth of your being." What God did to Christ at Easter, raised Him from the dead, that's what God has done for you in the depth of your being—He has raised you from your death and sin to new life. You've been born again. You have a living hope. You've been raised from the dead. What does Peter want us to do? He wants us to praise God for that. Praise God for what He's done.

Now Peter is going to switch our praise, not to what God has done. I mean—new birth, new life, resurrection, living hope—those cause worship in your heart, they cause explosions in your heart for how good God is. But it's not just what God has done; it's what He will do in the future. He has saved us and we praise Him for the life He's given us, but now we're going to praise Him for what is happening in the future. We're going to praise Him for the inheritance that is coming to us. Verse 4 says, "...to an inheritance." So, we've been born again to a living hope, and now we've been born again to an inheritance. The first was what God has done, and this is what God will do in the future. He is going to tell us what the inheritance is, but we're not going to get into it quite yet, I just want to

think about that idea of an inheritance. When I hear the word, inheritance, I automatically think about National Treasure. Now, the reason I do so is because for the past two weeks we watched both movies and I also watch a little TV show called National Treasure. So my whole house is into treasure hunting and finding gold, and I think my kids are looking for clues in our attic in case we have hidden gold anywhere. So this idea of inheritance, that's what I conjure in my mind—gold, money. That's inheritance to me. I hope one day I just get a bunch of gold and inheritance. That would be really cool, right? So when I think about an inheritance, I think God is going to give us a bunch of gold or money one day and it's going to set us up for life. That's what most of us in the West probably think about inheritance—how much money are my parents or grandparents going to leave me? That's my inheritance.

Peter chose that word, inheritance, and if you look at the Greek version of the Old Testament, he uses that same word that's always pointing to the inheritance of land, the inheritance of Canaan. To the Old Testament people, their inheritance from God is land; it's Canaan. God promised them an inheritance; He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. They were going to be in this land and they were going to be His people. So for Peter, he's choosing a word that seems to imply and point to Canaan, and a lot of the exiled believers would have been Gentiles but a lot of them would have been Jews too, so they would have caught the imagery of this inheritance that God is giving us, that we're reborn for, is a place. It's a land. It's that inheritance that their forefathers had; it's Canaan.

Now, we get that, but it's ironic because they're exiles. They're wandering around; they don't have a land that's their own. They're not in the land of Canaan anymore, they are exiles, they're spread out, and they're in modern day Turkey now. They're not in charge of where they're at anymore. So he's writing to a people that don't have a place to say there's an inheritance coming. They can automatically think back to that inheritance and think we once had it but it got taken away, so is there a chance that this new inheritance is going to be taking away too? So Peter modifies it in a few ways. The first way, he says, "...to an inheritance that

is imperishable." It's imperishable. In other words, it's not going to perish, it's not going to die; it's not going to be corrupted. Now for them, if you think about that land that word, imperishable, can also mean invaded by armies and taken over. Of course, that's exactly what happened to the people in the Old Testament. They had Canaan, and then here comes the Assyrians, here comes the Babylonians, and they took them and ravaged their land; they took their inheritance. So with this new inheritance, is there an army that can come and take it away? Peter is saying no because it's imperishable, it's impenetrable, no one can and take this from you.

Not only is it imperishable, it's also "undefiled." Why is that important? You know what happened to Canaan, it got defiled. It wasn't God's fault, it was the people's fault because the people didn't worship the one true God; they worshiped idols. They set up idols. They did child sacrifices in the Promised Land. They would run after other gods, they would break all sorts of commandments, and do what all the rest of the world did. They lived as pagans in light of being God's people, they defiled the land, and they are the ones that caused themselves to become exiles because of God's judgment.

But judgment is also hope. It is this question of can we defile this inheritance? I know we're reborn, but when we get it can we mess this thing up again? I get that question a lot—when we like go to Heaven, can we mess this thing up again? What if we eat another apple and it's the wrong one, can we mess this thing up again? The answer is no, this new inheritance can't be defiled. You are not able to mess it up. I don't know about you, but that's good news to me because you give me something that's really good I'm going to find a way to probably mess it up if you give me long enough. I mean, thanks, God, for this perfect holy thing, why did you give it to me, I'm going to mess this thing up. But God is saying this inheritance is coming to you and it's undefiled, you can't mess it up because I'm keeping it holy. I'm keeping it good. I'm keeping it perfect.

It's not only undefiled; it's also "unfading." Even Canaan, at some point, is going to fade because all things fade, all grass withers, all flowers fade away. Whatever we have on this earth that we hold precious is not going to last forever, eventually, it's going to fade away. Peter says the

inheritance that is coming to you won't fade. It actually just gets better and better the longer you have it. It is unfading.

Not only is it unfading, but it's really safe. I will just give you an example, Peter says it is "kept in Heaven for you." Your inheritance is actually kept in Heaven. Now if you think about having something precious that's coming to you, let's say you have something precious that you want to give to your grandkids when you die, if it's really valuable, where do you keep it? What if people want to break in and steal it, how do you keep it safe? Well, I looked up where's the safest location on planet Earth, and most would agree it's Fort Knox. If you want to keep something safe, put it in Fort Knox. According to the internet, if you are "Planning on breaking into Fort Knox?" (Now, this is not a good idea so you should just plan something else, like a vacation...don't plan this), the first thing you need to do is "Climb the forest-surrounded fences, two of which are electric, and then sneak past the armed guards lining the perimeter. Be sure to avoid the video cameras but don't waste time trying to blast through the granite walls, they are four feet thick and held together by 750 tons of reinforced steel. If you get past the armed guards inside, plus the maze of locked doors, you will probably be stopped by a 22 ton vaulted door. Don't despair; the vault can be opened but only if you find all the staff members who know a small piece of the combination. You will need them all since no one knows the whole thing. Once you get inside the vault, you will have to break into the smaller vaults tucked inside, then you can start to take out the 5000 tons of gold bullion stored in there, and be careful when you leave, because 30,000 soldiers from Fort Knox Military Camp will be anxiously waiting for you outside." So if you got plans for the gold in Fort Knox has gold...No, if it's kept in Fort Knox it's going to stay in Fort Knox. Now, I know what you're thinking...*I have seen Oceans 11, so I know if there's a will there's a way! I might, could possibly, get into Fort Knox.* So, these exiles are thinking we got this inheritance but what if somebody takes it from us. Peter says it's kept in Heaven. Good luck getting there and getting that, right? It's a safe location, let's just say that. It is kept in Heaven; no one is going to get this! It is in a secure location.

Notice, it's not just an inheritance in general; it's a personal inheritance. Notice what it says right after Peter tells us it is kept in Heaven "for you, who..." It's an inheritance that's actually for you. You are to receive this inheritance. It's not just there's a big inheritance somewhere that's coming to some Christians and you get a part of that, it is a personal inheritance that has your name on it. You are the "you" and the "who." It's an inheritance that is kept in Heaven, undefiled, unfading, imperishable, and it's for you. If you're a born-again Christian, your name is on that inheritance and God is keeping it in Heaven, safeguarded for you.

But it's not just personal, it's not just for you and kept in Heaven, but it's being guarded by God! He says, "...who by God's power are being guarded through faith." Think about treasures like at Fort Knox—there's a lot of guarding there. Think about stories like Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit where Smaug, the dragon is guarding the gold. I mean, if you have gold and a dragon is guarding it, they can breathe fire, so that's a pretty good protection! I'm not going to bother your gold if you have a dragon. But the hobbits get around him and they kill him and get the gold. There's always a loophole, there's this back door, there's a sneaky way you can outsmart the guard. Your inheritance is in Heaven and God is like... *You want through? You gotta go through me.* God is the guard. So is anybody getting your inheritance? The answer is no—it's in Heaven and God's guarding it.

And God is not just guarding the inheritance; He is guarding **you** and the inheritance. Notice what it says, "...who by God's power are being guarded through faith." It's not just you're being guarded and the inheritance is guarded; it's both/and. I love what Spurgeon says about the inheritance, "It's kept for you, and you are kept for the inheritance." It's both of those ways—God is keeping the inheritance for you and He's keeping you for the inheritance. He is guarding you by His power through faith. How does that work? Well, you've put your faith and trust in Christ, you've believed in God, and because of faith, you've put your inheritance into Fort Knox. You've entrusted your life to God and God is saying I've got this now.

Then, notice that this inheritance is "for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." So what does this mean? Peter is linking inheritance to

salvation. So what is inheritance? Is it gold, money? Is it land? Is it Canaan? What is it? Salvation, in the biggest sense..., inheritance, in the biggest sense, is your full and final salvation. That is your inheritance. Your inheritance, dear Christian, is God Himself. When God comes, you get the inheritance, which is life with God, place with God, life under God, in relationship with God. Our inheritance is God, it's protected, and it's kept for you at the last time. When Jesus Christ is revealed, you're full and final salvation will be revealed and the toil and the struggle with sin will be over, and you will be with God forever and ever. That is a sure and done deal because God is guarding the inheritance and He's guarding you. No one's getting past God. It's kept in Heaven. He's a big guard. He's got you. See, Peter is writing to people who are struggling, who are trying to figure out how to live life. And he is saying don't worry, God's got you. What He did for you has caused you to be reborn into a new Kingdom, new life, new hope that's living. Not only does He have you right now, He has you all the way into the future, and when He comes back, you're going to have the full and final salvation. So when you're suffering, think about what God has done and what God will do. That roots us and keeps us. In the midst of right now it is tough, here's what God has done and here's what God is doing, so I can live in this moment thinking about the past and the future. God is a good God and He has me.

But not only do we praise God for the past and for the future, what He has done and what He will do, but we also praise God for what He is doing right now. In the context of the letter, that right now is what's the suffering? We are going to see the next set of verses what God is doing. See, in the midst of our trials and the midst of our struggles, God is working in us and through us to make us more like Christ. Verse 6 says this, "In this you rejoice..." What is "in this?" What "in this" are we to rejoice? It's your salvation. You are to rejoice in your salvation that has happened and that is coming. But then, as you rejoice in that Peter is going to talk about the troubles you're experiencing right now. Notice what he says, "...though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials." He is telling you to rejoice in your salvation, what God has done and what God is going to do, rejoice in that even though right now it might be tough. You might be grieved by various trials.

How many of you love trials? Do you just love when somebody calls and just chews you out? They let you know about this whole situation that you didn't even know about, and now you have to deal with it. Don't you just love when work is going good, and then that thing happens—and now you know about something you have to deal with and it's this huge thing. There's a trial that's happened now. Maybe life is just good, it's just all sunshine, but all of a sudden it's thunderstorms and everything's unraveling. Life is just messy and now you're going through a trial. There's suffering, maybe some persecution by a friend or loved one, or work or wherever it is. There are these things called various trials and we're grieved by them. So Peter is writing to people who are being grieved by trials. There are things that happening to them in life, and they're just tough. Peter is saying we're supposed to rejoice in the midst of our suffering. Well, that doesn't make...When I'm suffering, I don't think about rejoicing I think about just being mad. This is mad time, this is sad time; this is not happy time. I'm in a trial, this is not good! But Peter says rejoice, even though for a little while—it's not going to be forever, it's just for a little while—things are going to maybe get bad.

So, why do we rejoice? It is "...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire..." There is a trial, "so that" the tested genuineness of your faith—so somehow a trial leads to tested genuineness of faith. How does our trial and suffering lead to a genuine faith that's been tested? He gives us this imagery of gold that's tested by fire, so how exactly is gold tested by fire? Well, when you dig up gold, it's not ever pure gold. It's always mixed with other materials, metals, dirt, sediment, and sand. So if you're a goldsmith, you have to take the gold that you found and you have to put it into a crucible. A crucible is an container that holds the gold that is able to withstand a lot of fire, a lot of heat. You put the crucible in the fire for a long time and you heat it up really, really hot. As the gold gets hot it begins to melt, and as it melts and gets really, really hot, it squeezes the impurities out of that gold and it starts to bubble up to the top, then the goldsmith rakes those impurities out. What you're left with at the end of the process is pure gold, not fool's gold, but pure gold, gold that is pure, undefiled, genuine, and that can be sold. It's precious and has great value.

Peter is trying to say the trials in your life, the suffering in your life, are like crucibles. When the heat turns up in your life, when suffering comes, it squeezes those impurities out of you, just like it does with gold. It's squeezes out of those things that are still in there that you don't even know about that should be out of there. Because what God wants is a genuine faith that follows and walks with Him, that loves Him, that is true to Him, and it's only through suffering that those impurities come out. So Peter is saying rejoice in the trials, rejoice in the suffering because God is doing something in the midst of those things. It's when the heat turns up that we find out who we are and how we need to deal with who we are so that we can become who God wants us to be.

Saturday, I was a happy person. I was happy because it's my day off and I got to drive to Bowling Green to a basketball game. I got to watch my son play JV basketball. There was no anger in my heart whatsoever—until the ref clearly called fouls on us and not on them. I don't know where this ref went to school, but he did not go to a good ref school. I mean, anybody at that game could testify, if we even breathed on them...FOUL... but they could knock us across the gym and they wouldn't call foul on them! I was a happy guy until about three or four plays in, and then I'm on courtside standing yelling at probably a volunteer ref, just losing my mind at this ref! I'm sure he's like...*Hey, I'm a volunteer JV Christian School ref. if I was any good I would be somewhere else right now.* I was angry! See, it's those little moments of heat. Everything is good until the heat comes, and heat often reveals those things in us that need to get out of us. Then, God can get those things out and start dealing with us. What we need to do is praise God for those moments. Because in those moments, God shows us who we are and who we need to be, and we get to repent, we get to believe, and we get to keep chasing after Jesus because He wants us to get through trials and through tribulation so that we have a genuine faith. That's not fool's gold; it's not false faith.

Even our imperfections lead us back to the cross. We cling to the cross, we hold to the cross, and the cross that is our crucible, we hold to it and that molds and shapes us into the image of Christ so we can rejoice even right now in our suffering—because notice what's coming. So that our tested

faith...“may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” So that...so that at the end, that end coming, we might be found—praise, glory, and honor. It's hard to know which way, is this us or God. Are we getting praise, glory, and honor, or is God getting praise, glory, and honor? I think it's a little bit of both. As God's people, collectively there is praise, glory, and honor. We're here, we made it, we're in the Lord! But also, as God's people we are ultimately praising God because He's the one that kept us there every step of the way. We are praising God, honoring God, and giving glory to God because He is the good God who guarded and kept us every step of the way. See, Peter starts with worship—bless God. Then he ends with—praise be to God. All the way through, what is to be our reaction in every moment of our life? We are to be the people that praise God.

I don't know what you're going through this week, I don't know what you will go through this week, but I promise you there will be moments where the heat will be turned up. There will be moments where you will not get your way and you have to deal with some things, and you have some hurts and some hurt feelings. People will say mean things about you. It is going to happen this week. You are going to feel the heat and the fire, and that's what these people are going through. They are going through suffering and persecution and Peter is writing to these people to say in your suffering, remember what God has done. He has caused you to be reborn into a living hope through the resurrection. And remember what God will do. He's bringing you an inheritance, namely Himself, that's undefiled, unchanging, unfading. It's kept in Heaven, it's going to be delivered to you, and God is the guard. God's got this. He is going to bring you your full and final salvation. And even right now, in the fire and in the heat, know that God is using the crucible to show that your faith is genuine. He's turning up the heat to get those things out of you that shouldn't be there, so that you can be molded more and more into the image of Christ. So even in our suffering, we worship God for what He's done, for what He will do, but even right now today, for what He is doing through the fires.