



+ **YOU**

Spring 2023  
My Encounter with Jesus

**Sermon Title: Hope When Life Hurts**

**To be used with Session 6:** Jesus Rose Again to Give Me Life

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:1-9

**Connection with the Study:** To complement the Bible study “Jesus Rose Again to Give Me Life,” this sermon supports the session in the Bible study group by showing how the resurrection of Jesus Christ offers us hope when life hurts—hope for now and for eternity.

**Introduction:** Scripture is clear that we will face problems in this life. Knowing this reality, Peter wrote to fellow believers to give them hope and encouragement during persecution and pain. Many had lost their homes, jobs, and families because of their steadfast faith in Jesus Christ. They felt alone and disconnected from their faith, family, and friends. During those troubled times, Peter reminded Christians of the hope they have through their resurrected Lord.

**1. Find affirmation in our faith** (1 Pet. 1:1-2).

What is the basis for our security in a secularized society? Peter no longer identified as Simon, the fisherman from Galilee, but as Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ. His identity was not based on his family heritage but his relationship with Christ.

During World War II, Dr. Victor Frankl was imprisoned by the Nazis because he was a Jew. His wife, children, and parents were killed in the Holocaust. At one point, the prison guards cut his wedding band off his finger. At this time, Frankl said to himself, “You can take away my family, you can strip me of my clothes and my freedom, but there is one thing no person can ever take away from me—my freedom to choose how I will react to what happens to me.”

Frankl understood who he was. Who we are is not based on how we feel, what our culture says, or what others do to us. Instead, we are whom God says we are in His Son. Christ has made us free and forgiven through His saving grace.

We must remember that this world is not our home, and we are just passing through. No matter how challenging our times and circumstances are, Peter encouraged the people of God to remember who they are as the King's royal adopted sons and daughters.

**2. Focus on God's provision** (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Peter reminded us of living hope because we have a living Savior. No matter what happens, we can praise God. I heard someone say, “Hope in things will distract you. Hope in people will disappoint you. Hope in yourself will devastate you. But hope in Christ will deliver you.” Our hope is not in our health (2 Cor 4:16), possessions (Luke 12:15), or circumstances (Ps. 39:7), but in the Savior. When life is hard, it's easy to focus on our problems instead of the Problem Solver.

When things get tough, we tend to forget how much God has freely given us in His Son. Yet, Peter speaks about a “living hope.” We have a living hope because of our Savior who lived, died, and was raised from the grave. Our hope is in a powerful, faithful, loving, and sovereign God. Peter lists many benefits of our living hope in verses 3-5.

- We have received God's mercy.
- We have been given new birth and new life.
- We need not be afraid of death because Jesus conquered death.
- We have an eternal inheritance that can never be destroyed.
- We are protected by God's power forever.

Every day we are bombarded with bad news. How might our lives, church, and communities change if God's people daily reminded themselves of the countless undeserved benefits we have through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? As believers and chosen children of God, we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ! We have a share in Christ's inheritance. “Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir” (Gal. 4:5-7).

### **3. God is changing us (1 Pet. 1:6-9).**

Peter reminds us to rejoice in the promise of salvation, even though life is hard. Remember, God never promised life was easy (John 16:33). Trials come to prove our faith in God is genuine, to purify us, and can bring glory to God. When God's people go through a difficult season filled with faith and joy, they give a powerful witness to the gospel. What evidence do you see when someone trusts God despite their tough times, be it a difficult marriage, a fractured friendship, or an unwanted report from the doctor?

Sometimes when we fail to trust God, we turn to things that do not sustain or satisfy us in the long run. We can get grumpy and complain. We can lose confidence in God and grow impatient with the Lord and others. Anxiety and worry can weigh us down and make us think about all the things that can go wrong. Often, people turn to food, Netflix, drugs, alcohol, or inappropriate relationships that wreak havoc and only invite more problems and sorrows. As a young student in seminary, I almost gave up on serving the Lord and others. I was trying to do everything from taking a full class load, working part-time at a shoe store, and serving as a youth pastor in a local church. With all those plates in the air, I experienced a crash, was stressed out, and felt like such a failure because I could not do everything just right.

I am so thankful to God that he had a few special people in my life at that time to help me get my priorities in order and remember God's promises during my problems. Through their faithful witness, prayers, and encouragement, I made it through that fiery trial. My faith in the Lord grew, as did my desire to serve, study, and live for Christ.

How did my faithful friend's minister to me? Primarily, in the same way, Peter ministered to God's dearly loved flock. Through the love of Christ, they affirmed my faith and reminded me of God's faithfulness. They helped me get my eyes back on the Word of God and the promises of God that we enjoy daily in Christ. They reminded me of how God had brought them through troubled times and strengthened them to live for His glory, not their own.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your precious promises and loving, servant-hearted people!

**Conclusion:** Our temporary problems do not need to rob us of our joy in Christ. What God has given us can never be taken away. Our problems are temporary, and God's promises are eternal. God loves us more than we can imagine. Our love for and faith in Jesus leads to an inexpressible and glorious joy far more significant than anything this world can offer.

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