

A Hope That Does Not Fail

(Scripture: 1st Peter 1:3-12)

Introduction:

A. **What gets you excited?** For some people it might be hunting, vacations, shopping, family reunions or special occasions. Those are all things that can create a feeling of excitement, but they are, at best, temporary feelings. **What gets your soul excited?**

B. I can get **excited in worship to God**. I know that it is about praise to him, but I am so blessed to be a part of that praise that I can get excited in collective worship. Peter tells us that God should be praised for what he has done for us. **That praise is not limited to just this time of collective worship, but through every part our life.**

C. Remember the original readers of this letter. Peter was writing to people who were scattered. Why were they scattered? While it does not explicitly state the reason, as we read the letter it appears it is because of their faith in Jesus. If you were facing trials and persecutions because of your faith, not breaking laws, what Peter has to say would excite you. I hope, you can experience some of what Peter's first readers experienced when they heard these words.

I. I Am Born Again! (Verse 3)

A. Listen to verse 3. Because of God's great mercy our life and our eternal life have changed. **Knowing that we are saved should get us excited.** The story of the Ethiopian that is reading Isaiah is a good example. Philip comes up and asked him if he understands what he is reading. As Philip then begins with that scripture he teaches the man about Jesus and somewhere in that teaching the topic of baptism and its meaning must have come up. Acts 8:36-39.

B. Peter says that God's great mercy has given us new birth. **We have been given the ability to start clean and fresh.** What this new birth does gives us a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus. The same way that Jesus died, was buried and rose again, we too follow that in our baptism. Rom. 6:3-4.

C. Our faith that led us to repentance and turn to Jesus as our Savior was culminated in baptism and we become born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that in order to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born of the water and the Spirit. That happens at our baptism. When God gave us a new birth He brought us into a living hope. **You see, salvation is not just about what happens after we die. We live it out by seeing the future that God has for us.** John 3:3-5.

II. My Inheritance (Verses 4-5)

A. Listen to verses 4-5. When things are difficult it is hope that keep a person going. Hope that is seen is not hope. Hope is tied to salvation throughout much of the NT. **Peter tells us to look beyond this life to our inheritance.**

B. The night of His betrayal Jesus spent time teaching His disciples about a new life after He would ascend back to Heaven. He wants them to understand that where He is going, they too will come one day. So He tells them these words: John 14:1-3. Jesus wanted them to know that God's home would one day be theirs also.

C. Paul understood this as is written in 2 Tim. 4:6-8. Heb. 11:10 says that Abraham was looking forward to a spiritual home. **We should get excited knowing that one day we will live beyond the sin of this world and the pain of life and be with God forever.**

III. Stay Strong (Verses 6-9)

A. Verses 6-9. No one likes to suffer. Peter will talk again about the suffering we face because of our faith in chapter 4. But what he starts

with in these verses that **our trials, while they cause us to suffer grief, can also be seen as a way to strengthen our faith.**

B. When a person begins to exercise and lift weights they have no idea what they can really handle. At first they might not be able to lift their own body weight, but with work and good training that often involves some sore muscles, they begin to lift even more. The same is true of our faith. **Until that faith gets tested, and sometimes that testing will endure hardships, ridicule, shame or abandonment, we don't realize how important it is to us.**

C. Peter says that we can be filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. We can have that when we have a living hope.

D. You can't take away my salvation, because that salvation is from you or because of you. The prophets of old desired to have this salvation. The angels in heaven long to look into this salvation. Brethren, what we have is God's gift and it is ours if we accept it.

Conclusion:

A. How does a person who is facing a life-threatening disease find joy and contentment? How does a person who has gone through the loss of a significant relationship because of a person's sinful actions find peace in the pain? How does a person who, through no fault of his own, face financial instability due to downsizing or market problems keep smiling and find the positive around them?

B. There really is a simple answer to having peace that surpasses all understanding. **It is possessing a hope that does not fail. It is knowing that you are saved. It is living with the knowledge that God is protecting you, shielding you, for the day of salvation.**

C. I am not saying, "let the bad times roll." I am saying, that **these Christians who received this letter from Peter faced trials knowing**

that God was with them. For they could see by faith an inheritance that cannot perish, spoil or fade reserved for them. Can you see that same inheritance in your future? As a child of God it is yours, if you are not in Christ, we would be happy to help you learn how to become God's child and experience the joy of your salvation. If we can spiritually serve you today, come as we stand and sing.