

Series: 1 Peter

Sermon #1: A Living Hope for This Life

1 Peter 1:1-12

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- April 11, 2021

In 2020, we did a survey of the whole Bible. It started in January and ended in December, during a pandemic. And thank God, honestly, that He gave us the insight to be going through the Bible during that difficult time. It worked out awesome.

Then when we started 2021, we were thinking that people were missing out on some really beautiful moments in life. And so, we studied Ecclesiastes to teach us to not miss a moment, but to enjoy every bit of it.

The Context of 1 Peter Has Everything to Do with Nero

And so, now we're looking at 1 Peter, and I'll tell you why in just a few minutes. But to understand 1 Peter—as a matter of fact, you can't understand 1 Peter unless you understand the context of 1 Peter. Context is everything in this book. And the context of 1 Peter is a single word: Nero, a man. A single man. A puppet of Satan himself. He was lust-driven for power. And he would do anything to anyone to get power and to maintain power. He killed his mother for power, he killed his wife. He killed his second wife. Who would marry that guy the second time?

He wanted to rebuild Rome in his image and leave a mark forever, and the Senate wouldn't let him. So, he burned Rome to the ground. In July of 64 A.D., Rome was set ablaze for six days. And then the fire was quenched, and then it wasn't. It burned another three days. And by the time the fire cleared, there wasn't a lot to show. And the people were revolting against Nero and his power. And so, Nero and his media machine blamed a group of people that were somewhat a bit of a minority, obscure, and not all that popular anyway. They were followers of Jesus the Christ—Christians. He blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome.

And so, the context of 1 Peter is the persecution of the Church. When we say “persecution,” Nero would take old animal skins, like a lion skin, and he would sew a human being into that lion skin and then release them into an amphitheater. And then wild dogs would

be turned on that person. And the person would be devoured and torn apart for those people's entertainment. That's the context of 1 Peter.

That church in Rome was like here: there were husbands and wives and boys and girls. And Nero didn't care. He would tie men and women and boys and girls to these posts outside of his palace and cover them with tar, and then have celebrations at night and light those tar poles on fire. The Christians would die in agony as people sipped their wine. That's the context of 1 Peter. It's a book that's written in persecution. When they talk about trials, they're talking about losing their lives, their families, to evil.

How Does That Compare to America Today?

Now, what about us? I mean, it's not quite there. We're not in that context of persecution. But people will do anything to get power and to keep power these days. And the days of logical and intelligent conversing—boy, I can't remember those days.

There have been a very few times in American history where actual practicing Christians were in a minority. We're in a minority—the real Christians. And even in those various times in history, even in recent history, there's been a little bit of tolerance or grace given to people that have different views or values. No—now there's just rising hostility. If you practice a biblical faith, you will most likely be shamed and even condemned. It might very well cost you a lot. And maybe this could be the easiest time to practice real biblical faith for the next seventy years. I don't know, but I know that anyone that believes in moral absolutes, Jew or Christian, anyone who believes that the Bible is from God—I think we've got some hard times coming. We're going to be mocked or shamed or punished for those values. And so, what we need is a book. We need a book to help us thrive in times of trial. And the book needs to be written by a pastor who cares or a shepherd.

Peter, shepherd my sheep.

I will.

It needs to be written by a coach that can encourage us. That's 1 Peter. And Peter is going to bring us hope. That hope is going to be the means by which we can live and thrive.

1 Peter—how do you thrive in difficult times? How do you thrive during trials? He says this right out of the blocks: it's who you are, and it's what you have.

1 Peter: Identity

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are God's elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Peter starts so aggressively. He just comes out with a cannon in verses 1 and 2 and says, *This is who you are*. Read with me. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are God’s elect exiles of the dispersion”—these are areas—“in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia”—Austin—“according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: may grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

Look at that. Wow! Before he says his greeting, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you,” he wrote a dissertation in theology. Look at all that he’s rolling out here. Look who he says that we are. He says we’re an elect exile. Some translations say “God’s elect exile.” Another translation says “chosen foreigners.” So, Peter is saying this: God has chosen you to be here now.

And so, the fundamental issue, the question is “Do you know who you are and do you know what it took to make you that, to get you here now?” Because I think it’s very easy for any one of us to kind of drift off and think, *I feel like I’m in the wrong place at the wrong time. I’d love to live some other time or some other place*. And Peter is saying, *Are you kidding?*

Look at this powerful blast of theology. He’s says that you’re here, now, as a chosen exile, by the foreknowledge of God the Father, who saw all this coming; by the power of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; because of the obedience of the Son who sprinkled you with blood. So, he’s saying this in a single sentence. He’s bringing the whole Trinity in. He says that the Trinity itself has conspired to get you here now, as an exile, a chosen exile. Listen, this is thick vocabulary that we’re using. And the reason is because Peter says who you are will

determine what you do. That's why he's spending this time here. Who you are determines what you do.

The primary import of the three clauses is to open up clearly at the outset of the Epistle the transcendent origin, nature, and purpose of the Church and its life.

--Selwyn

Look how exalted the Christian is. Here's a great quote. "The primary import of these three clauses is to open up clearly at the outset of this Epistle the transcendent origin, nature, and purpose of the Church and its life." Boom. The transcendent nature, purpose, and origin of you, here, now, according to God's Holy Writ. That's what he's saying. According to his declaration we are exiled, sojourners, aliens, strangers, foreigners. And it's always been that way for the Church. There's been some exceptions when it was easy to be in the Church, or Christians were the majority. That's happened maybe in your lifetime here in the States.

But listen—when you're a minority and you're persecuted, the Bible is written to you, and now you can kind of understand what we're talking about, like in 1 Peter here. It's written for people that are in exile and they know they are.

Who You Are Determines What You Do

Who are you? Who you are determines what you do. And you're a God-chosen exile. And here's what is tempting for Christians to do. He's choosing his words carefully, like "exile." Because what Christians do sometimes in times of difficulty, because they want to fit in, they don't want to feel different, is they think, *I'm going to imitate the culture. I'm not going to be an exile; I'll be an immigrant. Yeah, I'll be an immigrant.* The immigrants over here are from another place—that's their home—they come over and they say, *This is our new home. We're going to learn the language, we're going to buy a house like the Joneses, I'm going to maybe spend more money than I ought to because everybody in our culture spends more money than they ought to, and I'll be compulsively obsessed about my reputation and what other people think about me. I'm going to try to fit in as much as I can.* That's what an immigrant does. *I'm just going to blend in eventually.*

And Christians do that too. They're trying to be the cool kids. And Peter says, *Nah. You're an exile, not an immigrant.*

Now there's another extreme over here, and that's when Peter is saying, *Look, you're a foreigner, not a tourist.* You know how when you tour, you're not even trying to be like the people. American tourists are most famous for this, right? You go over there and you stay together and you're visiting that country, *A nice place to visit, wouldn't want to live here, I'll be out of here soon enough.* And so, they don't make connections with the people who live there. They don't even try to learn the language. I mean, Americans—I love this, because we'll go to Italy and then try to stay in an American hotel and eat American food in Italy, and just expect everyone to do what we want them to do. If there's something socially or politically out of kilter or some injustice taking place in that place, what do we care? It's not our town, it's not our country.

And Christians sometimes do that too. They're just going to be tourists. *I'm in and out of here, waiting for Jesus to come back. Until he does, we're going to find a group of people and we're all going to speak our "Christian-ese" and have our little Christian community, and that's it.*

Peter is saying, *No, that's not who you are.* Peter says that who you are determines what you do. You are exiles. You are aliens. You are foreigners. Heaven is home—got it. But this place? You're going to live here for a while. Don't make it home, but in all means, invest in the community. Get involved in relationships. Learn the customs. Enjoy the customs as much as ethically possible. But listen—you're going to feel different. You're supposed to feel different. You're supposed to not fit in. You're going to want to fit in, but don't be the cool kid. You're not going to fit in.

He's setting expectations. That's what he's doing. He's saying, *As an exile, you understand that you're living for a different kingdom. So, you're going to have different values and you're going to have a different authority to submit to. You're going to have different goals, a different calling, a different reason to live. You're going to have a different perspective, you're going to have a different paradigm. You're supposed to.*

Who you are determines what you do. You are chosen as an exile. And you are chosen by the wisdom of the Father's foreknowledge. We are being continually sanctified by the Holy Spirit—the power of the Holy Spirit. We are chosen by God's foreknowledge—the Father's

foreknowledge, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and we are—because of the obedience of the Son who gave himself and bled for us.

So, he uses in just these two sentences here three parts of the holy Trinity to tell us who we are and who we belong to. Now, that just gets us to the greeting. Now he's going to talk about what we have—who you are and what you have. That's how we thrive. And in this context, Peter is going to show himself to be what some people call “the apostle of hope.” I love that. They say that Paul is the apostle of faith, John is the apostle of love—that what they write the most about. Peter is the apostle of hope, because Peter is going to come to us and bring us this hope to live for, because in the context of what he's talking about, we need hope.

**A Living Hope
Salvation: Past, Present, and Future**

I want you to know this is going to be so thick, so dense with meaning. I want to tell you what you're about to hear. He's going to talk about what we have; it is a living hope. And that living hope is salvation, but it's the thoroughness of all that salvation is, past, present, and future. And he's going to say that that salvation is the envy of the Old Testament saints and even angels in heaven. He's going to say that what you take for granted, angels wish they had.

1 Peter 1:3

**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.**

Watch—verses 3 through 5. “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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and

unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

He's talking about this living hope. I can't say another word about hope until I tell you what hope means. Because when we use the word "hope," commonly, we use "hope" towards something that could or could not happen in the future. When I was in high school, I hoped that I could get into college. No one really knew. My parents sure didn't think I could. So, I was hoping for that.

That's not this hope. In the Bible, when it talks about hope, it's a longing for something that is certain to happen. So, a groom on his wedding day is in the back where the groom and the groomsmen are. He's in his tuxedo, the music starts, he's fidgety.

What's the matter, groom?

I hope to be married.

It's going to happen. He's just really looking forward to it. That's what he's talking about with the word "hope" here.

And the reason that hope is so important here, especially in times of trials and suffering, but also in times of persecution, is that hope is the blood that our soul lives on. And you better be careful about what you choose to be the object of that hope. And so, Peter is saying, *Look, your hope as a follower of Christ is a living hope*. He's saying that because it's hope beyond death. He's saying that it's a hope that goes into the next life, and that's why he's appealing to the hope based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus continued on past the grave. That's a good thing to have hope in. Hope is the blood that your soul runs on. You must be careful what the object of that hope is. Often, you don't know until that hope is dashed.

There's a wonderful study of hope by Dr. Viktor Frankl. You might know that name. He was an Austrian Jew that was taken by the Nazis, and he spent quite a bit of time in Auschwitz. As a doctor, he reflected later on those times in a book called *Man's Search for Meaning*. In that book, he reflects back and tells stories about how people lived in those death camps in times of absolute despair, and how they chose to wake up the next day. He said that some people would give into evil, and it was like Darwin, the survival of the fittest. And they would become angry and ugly and abuse their fellow prisoners. Other people, he said, more commonly, would just give up. And it was sad and unpredictable. He writes this in his book: "Usually this happened quite suddenly, the symptoms of which were pretty familiar to us who had been in Auschwitz for

a while. We all feared for this moment in our friends. Usually it happened like this. It began in the morning when a prisoner would simply refuse to get dressed or wash or go out to the parade grounds for inspection. And no entreaties, no blows, no threats had any effect on them. They just lay there. They had given up. Nothing bothered them anymore because they had no hope.”

Then Dr. Frankl writes about the people that lived through Auschwitz and then got home. They had put their hope to survive that persecution in maybe seeing their family or returning to a community or getting their profession back and starting life over again. And when they got back and they were freed and they returned home, their family wasn't there. Their professions were irrelevant. Their community had dispersed. And many of those people fell in a great depression. Many of those committed suicide.

And so, Dr. Frankl writes this, that the ones who truly overcame Auschwitz had their hope fixed on something beyond this world. That's the power of hope. Hope is the blood that our soul runs on.

Dr. Frankl says this: “Life in a concentration camp tears open a soul and exposes its depths and its foundations.” Peter would say persecutions and trials tear open the human soul and exposes its hope. And Peter is saying that you need to have your hope in this God-given salvation—all of this salvation.

And that's why, again, it's so thick with meaning here. Because in just these few verses, Peter has already talked about the fullness of salvation, past, present, and future. All of salvation and all that it includes.

Salvation Past: Justification

He talks about justification. This is kind of in chronological order if you think that way. Salvation talks about the past—the word is “justification.” Justification means a moment in time when you trust Jesus Christ for the payment in full of your sins and His resurrection proves that. You are made what is called “positionally righteous.” You are declared—it's a judicial word—that you are declared righteous in the eyes of God. That's about your past. And Peter is saying here that that is freedom from the penalty of sin. That's justification. He's talking about the past when he says that the Father caused you to be born again; in the past tense--you *were* born again.

Salvation Present: Sanctification

Then he goes to the present and he talks about sanctification through the Spirit. Sanctification is kind of a fancy theology word that means “becoming like Christ in all of life.” That’s the phrase we use here. But it’s talking about the present. It’s talking about the day-in and day-out of trusting God to overcome the power of sin. That is the penalty of sin, this is the power of sin. And it’s through the Holy Spirit that we become more like Christ.

Salvation Future: Glorification

And in the same passage he talks about the future of salvation. That’s called glorification. And he’ll use two words in this section here about the second coming of Christ, or the apocalypse, or the final judgment. The glorification of sin is about the absence of the very presence of sin. In other words, our spirit makes it to heaven and it’s already been cleaned. But our soul is still contaminated. And in the context of glorification, we don’t have to deal with our pride or our vanity, our insecurities, our fears. That’s the future salvation.

So, when Peter says, *Who are you, and what do you have?* he’s saying that you’re an exile that’s been chosen by the Trinity. And he’s saying, *What do you have? Salvation. That salvation is past, present, and future, and it’s your inheritance.* And look what he says about that inheritance: “...an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”

Imperishable: it cannot be destroyed. Undefiled: it will not be spoiled. Unfading: it will last forever, it never grows old, it never gets weak, it never gets boring. It says it’s protected by God’s own power. God’s own power is protecting you.

Summary

So, who you are determines what you do. Who are you? You’re a God-chosen exile. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all conspired to make that happen. What do you have? You have salvation—the fullness of salvation: justification, sanctification, glorification. The past is dealt with, the present, the future is awaiting you. In five sentences—I mean, I’m exhausted, I don’t know about you. I mean, we’re in this thing five sentences and he’s talked about our life where we got to know Christ, where we are now becoming like Christ, and how we will see Christ—we

will be with Christ. And when we keep that in mind, if that's our north star, then we can thrive in the context of persecution and enduring trials. That's what he's saying.

Joy in the Midst of Trials

Now he's going to bring up trials. Now he's going to talk about what they can be used for. Now he's going to say, *Rejoice in trials. Here's why.* Because they can perfect this very faith that we are talking about. Don't look at them as something bad; look at them as something you can use to make you more like Christ in all of life.

1 Peter 1:6-7

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 praised and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Here we are, here's what we have; let's see how trials fit into this. Verse 6 and 7: "In this you need to rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials." *Yeah, right, I lost my family.* "So that the tested genuineness of your faith—and your faith is more precious than gold that perishes even though it's tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation"—there's the apocalypse—"at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Peter is saying what Jesus said. When Jesus was here, especially towards the end of His ministry, He was saying, *Look, I'm not going to save you from persecution; I'm going to save you for persecution. I'm not going to save you away from trials; I'm going to save you for trials, because those trials will make you stronger.*

Jesus said in John 16:20, "Truly, truly, you will weep and mourn while other people rejoice." Let me say it another way—Jesus didn't promise a rose garden; He promised us a gold refinery. He said, "In this world you will have trouble." And He said, "Take heart, because I have overthrown this world."

Authenticate Faith by Fire

Peter is saying this as a metaphor. As gold is refined by a fire—constantly turning it up and making it purer—genuine faith is refined by trials. You don't know the purity of gold. You think it's looking great until you turn up the heat. And then you see what's real and you see what's ugly. And now you can continue to purify that gold.

When I look back over the last one to three years of my sin, it's almost always in the context of some kind of setback or in a place of deep sorrow or when I was afraid. And I can look back at those times and hate myself or sulk about it or whatever it might be. But this is the coach in Peter saying, *No, no, no, don't look at those times. You have genuine faith. Don't look at those times as anything but an opportunity to see what needs to be redone.*

Those are areas where you didn't trust in who you are or what you have. You were sulking because you want to be like everybody else and they got ahead of you and so you made real dumb choices. *Right, I forgot who I was. Or I didn't appreciate the fullness of my salvation and made bad choices.*

I love good coaches, because good coaches tell you that there's no losing. There's winning, there's learning, but there's no quitting. You come off the field and they scored more points; let's learn something from this. Coach Peter is saying, *Hey, my brothers and sisters, those of you with a genuine faith, there's no losing. There's winning and there's learning. And there's no quitting.*

So, when business struggles are showing the worst of you, it's just someone turning up the heat, saying, *Do you not know who you are? Or do you not know what you have?* When marriage difficulties show up and you are showing yourself to be—what? You tell me. Selfish, usually. There we go. *Do you not know who you are? Do you not know what you have?* Peter is coming back and saying, *That's how you endure hardship.*

And your health is not getting better, but it is getting worse, and you find yourself expressing it in ways that you should not. Peter is saying, *Okay, there you go. Let's talk about that, how it applies to your genuine faith.*

What I love about Peter here in the next two sentences is that Peter is this classic coach who's cheering his guys on, holding a sign up. Because he's just going to state what they know

to be true. He's just reminding them of what they know to be true so that they can persevere under persecution.

1 Peter 1:8-9

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.

Look what he says in verses 8 and 9: “Look, 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, obtaining the outcome of your faith. The outcome of your faith is the salvation of your souls—the full salvation of your souls.”

So, just to review, how do you thrive in times of difficulty and times of trial? It's who you are and what you have. And what you have is a past that's been declared righteous, this present joy, he says, and a future inheritance that is stored away and is protected by God and His power.

Our Salvation Is the Envy of Men and Angels

This salvation that we already have—Peter is now going to say that it has always been the envy of the Old Testament saints and even the angels in heaven. What you and I often even don't understand but certainly don't appreciate is what tens of millions of people longed to have, and even the angelic world.

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophet who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Look what it says: “Now concerning this salvation”—what we have—“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you.” Those Old Testament prophets were serving us by telling us what Jesus was going to be like and what He needed to do. “. . . in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

Peter, of all people now, is relishing in this sacrifice and the sufferings of Jesus. Here’s a great quote: “Peter, who wanted nothing to do with Christ’s sufferings during the lifetime of Jesus, has made Jesus’ suffering and His death the very center of his explanation of Jesus’ earthly work.”

Peter, the one who was saying, *You’re not going to the cross* is now saying, *Yeah, let’s talk about the cross. That’s why He came here.*

He’s saying that the Old Testament saints didn’t completely understand a suffering Savior. But we get to see that His suffering led to glory. Our suffering will lead to glory. What I love is that last little phrase that he drops in there. He says, “and things into which angels long to look.” Can you imagine what’s it like to be an angel and see some of things that they’ve seen? And they’re longing to look into our salvation. They were there at creation. They’ve seen a lot of miracles, maybe all of them. I mean, a private first-class angel has seen more than we can ever imagine.

If you sit down and have lunch with an angel when we get to heaven, you might say, “Of all the things, what do you really want to know?”

And the angel would say, “I want to know about that salvation in you. We don’t get to get that. The past justification, how you worked through your sanctification, the future inheritance of your glorification ...” Angels look down and wish they could be part of that. That’s what we have. That’s who we are.

Conclusion

And so, Peter is saying here, *My brothers and sisters in Christ, would you expect to feel different? To be left out? You should be homesick. It’s good to be homesick and not want to be here, to feel like this place is broken and it’s not for me.*

There is no place like home, and this is not home. “There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home.” You know that line? Yeah. Remember this young lady from Kansas, Dorothy? This is where she lived—Kansas. That was home.

This was not home. She said, “I don’t think we’re in Kansas anymore.” Yeah, you think? And I don’t know, maybe she was surprised, but she shouldn’t have been. But she was persecuted and hunted. She encountered various trials, like those flying monkeys. And why? Why would she get all that? Well, you remember this character in the storyline? Uh-huh. She’s Satan. So, this land is cursed and she is thrown in there as an exile. So, her temptation is to be tourist. *Don’t just get out of here as fast as you possibly can. Why? Because the story needs more to it. There are some people that need help. There are people that are enslaved and entrapped here. Someone needs to find out the truth about how this whole place works. That’s going to be for you, Dorothy. You’ve got to be not-a-tourist. You’re never going to fit in; trying to act like one of the cool kids is not for you either. You need to be an exile, a foreigner, someone who comes in and makes a difference; someone who is an alien who knows their place.* That’s who she was.

What did she have? She had some slippers, right? And the slippers were given to her so that she would remember that she’s not alone and that she could call on the good witch, as the story goes.

“But Oz never gave nothing to the Tin Man that he didn’t already have.” They already had it. They already were. That’s the punch. That’s the point.

Here's a bigger point: you're Dorothy; I'm Dorothy. We're not in Kansas anymore. That's who we are. We're supposed to feel really out of place. We're going to be persecuted. We will probably suffer various trials. And what we have is a salvation that is so wondrous and glorious that the Old Testament saints longed for it and the angels still stare down at us. It's a salvation that includes our past, our present, and our future. The penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the absolute presence of sin is vanquished, finally. *And with all that, who you are, Dorothy, and what you have—you go make God proud.*

That's what Peter is saying to us. You do this right, so you'll enjoy the only life you have a chance to live. Peter is saying, *Buckle up, Church. You're going to have to learn how to smile during difficult times.* So, you didn't get tenure. What did you expect? We're not in Kansas anymore. Because you have a set of values and beliefs, and that's not even coming up on your review, but it's going to be penalizing you anyway—yeah, what did you expect? You're not from here. You serve a different king, you have a different set of values, you're going to experience things that other people don't experience. Dating is different. Life is different. You're going to feel homesick.

And that's why Paul ends one of his letters with this word: maranatha. The word means "Come, Lord Jesus." There's a guy who's homesick. So, Grace, let's be homesick together. Who are we? We're exiles and foreigners. What do we have? Let's investigate that together—the fullness, the richness, the depth of our salvation. Because that will change our lives. That will give us courage. That's a hope that our souls can run on.

Would you pray with me?

Dear Father, You foresaw before the beginning of time, before its creation, You foresaw me and every person here. You foresaw us and You chose us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, You are sanctifying us, because the obedience of the Son who died for us and covered us with His righteousness, and we are grateful for what we have. We have a salvation that includes our past, present, and future. It includes all aspects of who we are and what we do. Lord, I'd ask that that part, that salvation, would saturate our souls and be purified through trials and persecutions, so that we might live a life that is glorious, even for the angels to wonder and watch. Let us be that type of Christian and endure suffering well. We pray this in Jesus' holy name, because we can. And everybody said ... Amen.

