



Saving the Best for Last

1 Peter #1 • May 24, 2026

1 Peter 1:1-12

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are 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.

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. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 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. 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 salvation of your souls.

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, 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.” (1 Peter 1:1–12, ESV)

[PAUSE]

Hope when Life is Hard



What is hard about your life right now?

As I wrote that question, it felt a little bit like launching into a lecture for my kids! (“*Oh, you think you have it so bad...*,” I might say sarcastically). But I’m not. I don’t mean that question sarcastically for you.

It’s sincere.

What is hard about your life right now?

We’re among friends (or at least people who are pursuing the same goal of following Jesus), so we can be honest about the struggle. **What is hard about your life right now?**

- Is it **work**? Raise a hand if your work is a challenge right now. Hard. Frustrating. Busy.
- Is it **money**? Raise a hand if your wallet feels beat up and mugged by the economy and the gas pump and taxes.
- Is it **parenting**? (Kids, close your eyes). Raise a hand if your kids are sapping your energy and causing you unending worry and stress.
- Is it your **home life**? (Parents, close your eyes). Raise a hand if your parents are always on your case and doing stuff you don’t understand.
- Is it **internal**? Raise a hand if your mind is fighting a war within, whether depression or addiction or anxiety or fear.
- Is it a **spiritual battle**? Raise a hand if you are facing pressure to ignore your faith, abandon your faith, or keep your faith quiet so you don’t rock the boat. Raise a hand if the will to follow God is under assault by temptations from others or from yourself.
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- **Or are you good?** Raise a hand if none of this applies, and your life is just smooth sailing on all fronts. (Keep your hand up if you expect that it will stay that way forever)

*****Side Note:** You see all the hands that went up around you? Pray for those people. Encourage and comfort those people. We might not share all the details with everyone, but you see that we are a church in over our own heads! We need Jesus, and we need each other. Pray for those needs!***

Life is hard. We could all join in and sing with Annie, “[*Instead*] of treated, we get tricked

’Stead of kisses, we get kicked. It’s the hard-knock life.”

Right?

When life is hard, we need hope.

Our version of “hard” might be different than others’ in places around the world. In Asia and Africa, Christians are arrested. In Iran, pastors are beaten. In China, churches are burned. In Nigeria, the faithful are killed. Their struggles should matter to us (and maybe their present is going to be our future). But the truth remains. We need hope when life is hard!

A Letter in Hard Times

For a church gathered in central Asia Minor, looking out of the windows at a city where followers of Christ were the vast minority, life was hard. The church here in the central plateau was one of several in the region, but it was dwarfed by the temples and pagan worship all around them. Low numbers weren’t the main concern, though.

“Many people in the ancient world regarded Christians as strange, superstitious, and disloyal to Roman society. They gathered in secret, practiced strange rituals (such as the Lord’s Supper, widely misunderstood as involving bloody sacrifice), and practiced a countercultural lifestyle. They often refused to serve in the Roman army because they would not take an oath to the emperor. This refusal to go along with the prevailing culture created tensions.... Christians were often discriminated against and accused of misbehavior and were even brought into court on trumped-up charges.”¹

If the preacher at this church asked believers to raise their hands asking, “*What is hard right now?*,” they might not respond quickly...because their arms were broken from getting beat up at the marketplace! Life was hard!

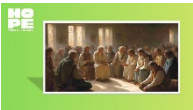
On that particular Sunday, though, a messenger had arrived. He was carrying a scroll and asked if he could read it as part of the day’s message.

“*Who’s it from?*”

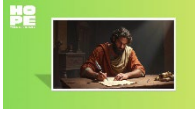
¹ [New Living Translation Study Bible](#) (1 Pe). (2008). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

When life is hard,
we need hope.

HOPE



“Peter. The Rock.”



There would be quite a bit of murmuring. Peter? THE Peter? One of the original followers of Jesus? The one who first acknowledged Jesus as the Christ? The one who led the church in Jerusalem? The one who spoke on the Day of Pentecost? He was an apostle – one sent by Jesus Himself to build the church.

“And he wrote to us?!”

In the midst of hard times, Peter was a man who could share hope. Not because he was a superstar...but because this guy *knew* Jesus. His words (led by the Holy Spirit) could carry spiritual power!

And this letter does not disappoint!

Peter’s written message might have been directed to some of this and other ancient churches in modern-day Turkey, but there is nothing ancient about the hope he shares. His message is just as relevant today as it was then.

If we read Peter’s letter now, he will talk about hard times. He’ll talk about harsh words. He’ll discuss retaliation and compromise. He’ll share lifestyle lessons...godly lifestyles. He’ll talk about joy. Most importantly, he’ll talk about Jesus.

I am excited to hear what he says. I hope you are, too. Over the next several weeks we’ll read and be blessed by this letter. We’re start with the opening of his letter today, and take other sections later.

If your life is hard, let Peter give you some hope!

Let me read today’s passage to you again...now that you know a little of its context.

1 Peter 1:1-12 (Again)



“This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to God’s chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

May God give you more and more grace and peace.

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

So be truly glad.

There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward. They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.” (1 Peter 1:1–12, NLT)

[Pause]

When life is hard, we need hope. And this is the hope Peter shares:
God is saving the best for last.

God is saving the
best for last!

PHO



The Bad is Build-Up

I was studying this passage and my brain kept thinking about it in terms of music.

Some notes just sound terrible when played together.

At its core, every musical note is a sound wave vibrating at a specific frequency. When you play two or more notes together, their sound waves interact. The secret to whether they sound like they fit or like they clash lies in the mathematical relationship between their frequencies.

- **Consonance (Harmony):** Notes that sound good together have frequencies that form simple, whole-number ratios. Our brains perceive these simple relationships as orderly and pleasing.
 - **The Octave:** The most consonant interval. A note and its octave (e.g., middle C and the next C up) have a perfect 2:1 frequency ratio. For every one vibration of the lower note, the higher one vibrates exactly twice.
 - **The Perfect Fifth:** The next most consonant interval (e.g., C and G). This has a clean 3:2 ratio.
- **Dissonance (Clash):** Notes that clash have complex, messy frequency ratios. When these sound waves combine, they interfere with each other in a chaotic way, creating a rough, wavering sound. Our brains interpret this acoustic roughness as tension or instability. For example, two notes right next to each other, like a **C** and a **C-sharp**, create a very complex ratio and a harsh, jarring sound.

Think of it like two gears. Consonant notes are like perfectly sized gears meshing smoothly. Dissonant notes are like mismatched gears grinding against each other. This physical reality of sound waves is the fundamental building block of harmony.²

But here's a musical truth. "Good" notes and "bad" notes work together to make beautiful music! When a "clash" resolves into a "harmony," that is

² [Why do some musical notes sound good together while others clash? | UsefulBS](#)

where some of the best moments in music happen! The resolution at the end of dissonance is transcendent!

Now bring it back to spiritual terms. “**Dissonance**” we experience **spiritually** relates to those things we listed earlier **that make life hard**.

- We want **work** to be **productive**, yet we **toil** in the midst of thorns and thistles (Gen 3:17-18)
- We want **money** to be **abundant**, yet our bank accounts **drain**
- We want **kids** to **thrive** and be a source of **joy**, yet we **fight** daily
- We want **marriage** to be **rewarding**, yet it is **dreary**...or worse, **defeating**
- We want our **thoughts** to be **joyful**, yet we battle our **demons**

None of those fit! The conflict between our ideal and our reality is **hard!** And it sounds bad!

Activity: Sing the phrase “*It’s hard*” with me.

**** Different sections sing different note – hold the note
(use the chord notes from ‘N Sync “It’s Gonna Be Me”*

_____)

How does that sound?

*That sounds dissonant together. (Do it again – on your note). It’s **bad**.*

But in 1 Peter, Peter tells us that “**bad**” is **build-up**.

This “bad” functions as a test, like gold going through a fire. The fire burns away impurities and brings out the best! That’s not just Peter’s view; it is a consistent metaphor in the Bible.

*“You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver.”
(Psalm 66:10, NLT)*

Why melt a precious metal? To get rid of the lesser items – to eliminate anything that reduces its value. And God does the same for us. The “bad” burning is build-up, preparing to reveal in us something better! The hard times cause us to practice humility, and kindness, and forgiveness; they cause us to trust God instead of self or wealth or fame. The eternal qualities that reflect God’s image are purified as greed and lust and wrath and jealousy are consumed and prove themselves to be worth nothing.



In music, the dissonance builds up to the big resolve.

Activity: Play the chord (use the chord notes from ‘N Sync “It’s Gonna Be Me”), then the resolved chord. “It’s hard... It’s hard... It’s hard... It’s hard... It’s hard”...but then, “It’s solved in Jesus Christ!”

The salvation we find in Jesus resolves all the bad and the tension and the dissonance that we experienced!

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,” (1 Peter 1:6, ESV)



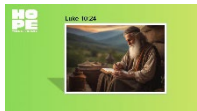
The Good is Golden!

Here’s what Peter emphasizes throughout chapter one: the good is *really* good, and it is worth the wait. In other words, **God is saving the best for last!**



Past

Peter talks about old school prophets in 1 Peter 1:10-12. These men and women studied and researched and examined, waiting for the resolution that their dissonance predicted.



“For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”” (Luke 10:24, ESV)

Those prophets (Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel) never saw the fulfillment of prophecy; but that didn’t stop them from hoping! They investigated the fog of the future, trying to get a glimpse of who and when and how it would happen. They knew that suffering and glory would be bound together – that dissonance would resolve – into the sweet, sweet music of the coming Christ.

They just didn’t know how it would resolve.

God saved the best for last, though, because in these end times we DO know how it resolves! You know how it turns out. We have the answer to what the prophets, nay all of heaven, waited to hear. We know that **God saved the best for last** when it came to Jesus’ actions of salvation - his sufferings and subsequent glory:



- Jesus **came in the flesh**.
- Jesus **died on the cross** for our sins.
- Jesus was **buried**...but...
- Jesus **arose!** He conquered death. He conquered sin. He bridged the separation that had kept us apart from God!
- Jesus offered that **gift of salvation** freely, to anyone who would humbly accept it
- Jesus will **return in glory and power**. Soon, He will come back and finish the work that He started.

Future

That resolution is a big part of what Peter shares with his church followers in terms of encouragement.

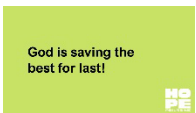
This is the “living hope” we have. This is the “imperishable, undefiled, unfading” inheritance we have in Christ!

Our hope is not just in the past fulfillment of prophecies; it is in the future consummation! It is in the end, when our present clashes will resolve in one glorious appearing!



“... So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” (1 Peter 1:7, NLT)

- **Past predictions** power us through our present problems!
- **Future fulfillment** focuses our faith on the forever to come.



God is saving the best for last...and that gives us something to hold onto during difficulty. That is what gives us hope when life is hard.

Conclusion

If you are trying to make it through the hard times (the dissonance) with no hope of it resolving...you will always be disappointed.

There is only One who resolves it all.

Do you know Jesus? Do you trust Him?

Peter could encourage the church in Asia Minor because he knew their faith. That's why he says:

“You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” (1 Peter 1:8, NLT)

In other words, they were living in the dissonance, but they trusted the resolution to come in Christ.

Right now...It's hard. It's hard. It's hard!

But someday...it will be resolved in Jesus!

God is saving the best for last.

That is the only hope you and I have. Don't miss out on it.



Prayer

Invitation

If are tired of a hard life that never satisfies, turn to Jesus.

- For those who have lost sight of that truth, I invite you to repent. To turn back to Him and find the hope that only comes through Jesus.
- For those who are just now discovering that truth, I invite you to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, to allow Him to begin the work of purifying you, and to gain hope that one day everything will resolve in Him!

Will you make that decision? If so, I invite you to come forward and make it known.

Sermon Notes

Hope when Life is Hard

1 Peter 1:1-12

The Bad is Build-Up

(Psalm 66:10)

The Good is Golden!

(Luke 10:24)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- What is hard about your life right now? What are the biggest challenges you face right now?
- When life gets hard, what is your natural response? (Ex: Trust God? Withdraw? Complain? Try to control everything? Distract yourself?) What does that reveal about your faith?
- What qualities do you think God may be trying to develop in you through your current challenges?
- Why do we need hope when life is hard? Where have you turned for hope in the past? How has hope in Jesus been better?
- Peter is the author of 1 Peter 1:1-12. What do you know about him? What credibility does he bring?
- 1 Peter 1:4-5 talks about both our inheritance and our own selves being guarded by God for the future. Why is it important for each to be protected by Him?
- Peter says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him" (1 Peter 1:8). What helps your love for Jesus grow even though you cannot physically see Him?
- Who could you encourage this week to live like they truly believe the story ends in victory through Christ?