

TO MAKE THE
MOST
OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY
INTENTIONALLY | GENEROUSLY | COURAGEOUSLY | TOGETHER



On good days, as followers of Christ, it easily can be our firm intention to . . . READ SLIDE

TR: But then there are the days that don't feel so good . . .



**. . . when stress seems to mark up everything.
-- While we can imagine that the world around us,
in our communities, wants to hear the testimonies
of folks who pretend they never red-line it with
stress . . .**

TR: In reality, the majority of people want to know

• • •

Make the MOST

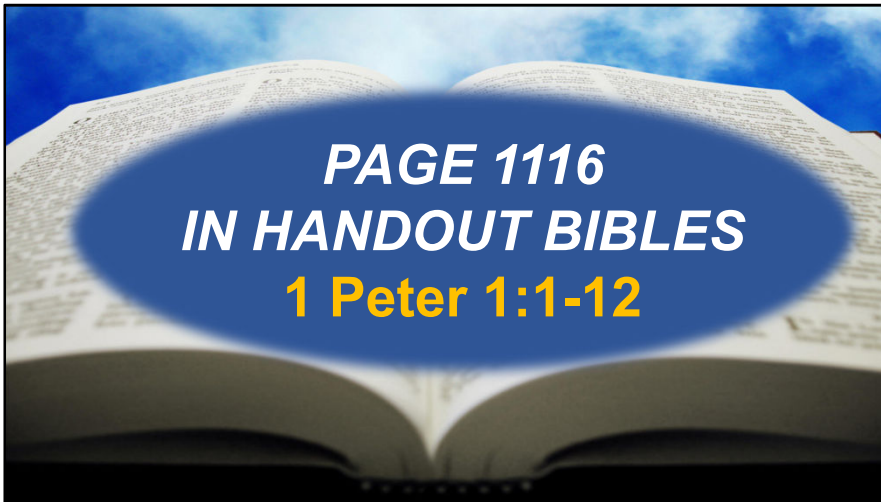
even of

STRESS

The Apostle Peter's First Letter Teaches Us What to Stress When Distressed

**. . . how they can make the most, even of stress . . .
especially the stresses of life that cannot be
avoided.**

**TR: What are we to stress when we feel distressed
as followers of Christ?**



The answers come to us from a wonderful letter from the Apostle Peter. Let's turn there in our Bibles.

-- handout Bibles

-- reference the sermon notes page

TR: What these first 12 verses of chapter one present could be likened to . . .



. . . a survival kit.

-- Those of us who have broken down on the side of the road, or seen a hiking trip turn into a matter of life-and-death, understand the importance of having packed a kit that will give us what we need to make it through one of “those days.”

TR: But I believe the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter, wants for us to do more than just “make it through” . . .

FROM SURVIVING TO
THRIVING



- . . . I think He wants us to go from surviving the days of red-lined stress to actually thriving in them.**
- Whether it is the stress of being seen as weird for being a Christ-follower, or to actually being persecuted for our faith . . .**
 - Whether it is the stress of the ordinary suffering associated with living in this fallen world, or the**

extraordinary angst of pointed malicious attacks, verbally or physically . . .

TR: 1 Peter 1 helps us to understand what God has packed into our “go bag” . . .



**God has
prepared our
“thrive-kit”**

. . . what He has prepared in our “thrive-kit” as His followers.

-- How can we make the MOST, even of stress?

TR: Our text gives us three compartments of resources . . .

We can make the MOST, even of stress, by . . .

1. (1-2) Remembering Who We Are

READ SLIDE

-- The first compartment is tied to our identities.

TR: Let's read in our Scriptures . . .

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are **elect** exiles of the
Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, ²according 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.

READ SLIDE

TR: The word “elect” could be translated . . .

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are **elect** exiles of the
Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, **CHOSEN** 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.

. . . “chosen.” We are the chosen exiles.

TR: And while you and I may not be in . . .



. . . the region of northern and eastern modern-day Turkey, like Peter's original readers . . .

- we too are chosen exiles.**
- This world is not our home.**
- When we trusted Christ we became different people . . . and now we are strangers and sojourners here . . . just passing through.**

TR: In verse 2, Peter expands upon this idea of being “chosen” . . .

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are **elect** exiles of the
Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, ²**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.

**. . . we are elect or chosen . . . according to the
foreknowledge of God the Father**

**-- What a comfort to know that God is ultimately
in charge and that He first chose us.**

**-- This election and foreknowledge in eternity
past gives us a sense of assurance like nothing
else.**

**-- EX: I gave up on the Patriots in the SuperBowl . . . feeling sick and not wanting to endure through their being slaughtered, I went to bed.
-- But the next morning when I KNEW the outcome, I could go back to the highlights we a sense of confidence. God KNOWS the outcome – He chose us! We can have confidence.**

TR: A second expansion on the idea of being elect or chosen is . . .

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are **elect** exiles of the
Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, ²according 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.

. . . that this election is “in the sanctification of the Spirit.”

-- Some would translate this along the lines of “consecration by the Spirit.”

-- This is the setting apart, declaring holy, that the Holy Spirit did when we were born again.

-- Not only was God the Father at work . . . but

so was the Spirit

TR: The final expansion of the idea of elect or chosen is . . .

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are **elect** exiles of the
Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, ²according 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.

**. . . that this choosing was “for obedience to
Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”**
**-- Obedience in putting our trust in Him and His
work at conversion AND in loving Him by
obeying Him more and more.**
**-- The “sprinkling” takes us back to the Old
Testament and the covenant making actions that**

Moses took.

**-- We have been sprinkled with Christ's blood . .
. the blood of the New Covenant that He has
made with us.**

**TR: How can we face grueling times of stress
without breaking? We need to have absolute
confidence in WHO we are . . .**



. . . even the Marines understand this.

-- I have only talked with one Marine who despised his time in active service . . . all the rest have echoed, "One a Marine, always a Marine."

-- This self-identity is what helps one walk with honor even in the most stressful of times.

-- In a much greater way, God the Spirit is telling us

through this opening greeting to Peter's letter that we need to remember Who we are.

TR: Our "thrival-kit" has a second compartment, found in verses 3-5 . . .

We can make the MOST, even of stress, by . . .

- 1. (1-2) Remembering Who We Are**
- 2. (3-5) Worshipping God for What He's Done**

READ SLIDE

-- EX: I got a digital caliper for Christmas . . . how neat to get such precise measurements on little stuff. But you don't just turn it on . . . you zero it out each time. In a sense, that's what we do when we worship God in Spirit and truth . . . we zero out the world's distorting lies and again remember

Who God is and what's He's done and will do for us.

TR: Look at your Scriptures beginning in verse 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,

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

-- This really is the beginning of one long sentence with coordinating and subordinating thoughts, but the controlling verb over it all is “Blessed be”

**TR: For what should we bless God . . .
worshipping Him?**

2. Worshipping God for What He's Done

a. (3) Caused Us to be Born Again to a Living Hope

The text will go on in verse 3 and say that we worship God because He has caused us . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Look again at the text . . .

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,

READ SLIDE

- in accord with God's great mercy, not giving us what we deserve . . .**
- He has caused us to be regenerated or born again . . .**
- this new birth is to a living hope because it is based on the fact that Jesus Christ is alive . . .**

- we are born again “through the resurrection of Jesus”**
- No matter how stressful of situation, how frightening the enemy, how insidious the temptation, or how overwhelming the pain . . . we must bless God for the death of Christ (sprinkled with His blood) and His resurrection.**
- This is the foundation of hope that makes the most, even of stress . . . the resurrection of Jesus.**

TR: In this second compartment within our

**“thrival-kit” is something else that we worship
God for . . .**

2. Worshipping God for What He's Done

- a. *(3) Caused Us to be Born Again to a Living Hope,*
- b. *(4-5) and to a Secure Inheritance.*

... READ SLIDE

TR: The phrase “caused us to be born again” is expanded upon in verses 4 and 5 . . .

(caused us to be born again) . . . **to an inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

. . . we are born again to a secure inheritance . . .

READ SLIDE

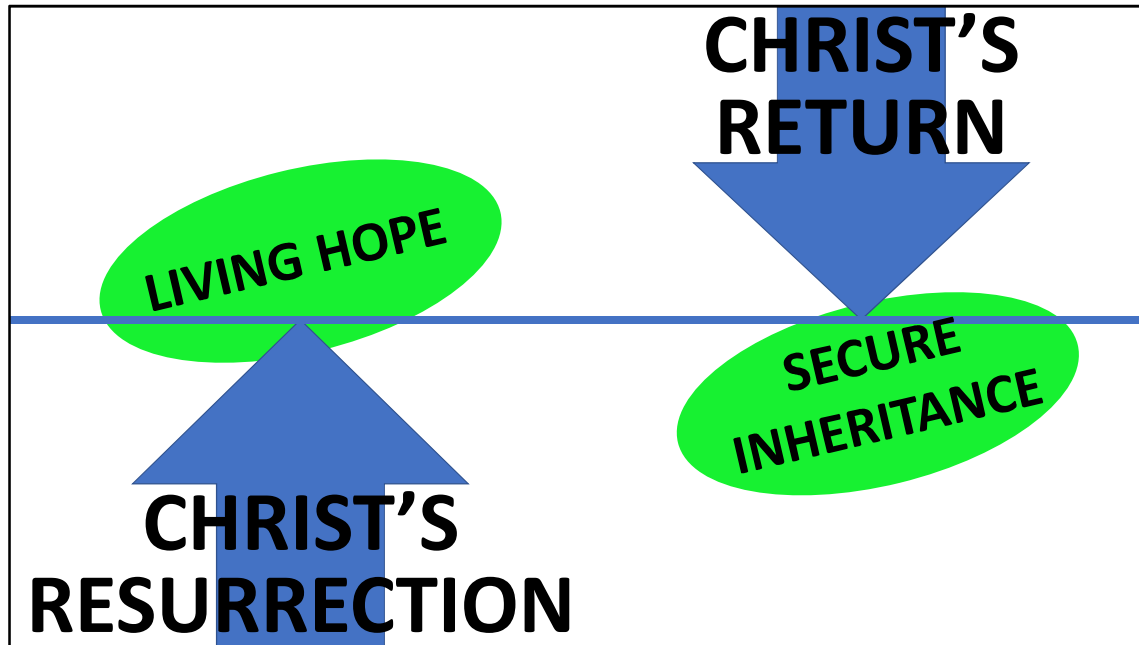
-- We have an INHERITANCE

TR: And that inheritance is . . .

(caused us to be born again) . . . to an inheritance **that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

. . . “imperishable, undefiled, unfading . . . kept in heaven for you”

TR: The Spirit is helping us to gain perspective and zero out all the world's distortions . . .



. . . telling us to look back to Christ's resurrection that makes possible our being born again to a living hope . . .

-- AND reminding us that we have been born again TO a secure inheritance that will be revealed in the last time.

TR: And not only is the inheritance secure . . .

(caused us to be born again) . . . to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **⁵who by God's power are being guarded** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

. . . verse 5 tells us that WE are secure . . . READ SLIDE (verse 5)

-- Our security is based on God's power . . . and yet it is through faith that we are guarded.

TR: There is a third compartment in our "thrival-kit" . . .

We can make the MOST, even of stress, by . . .

1. (1-2) Remembering Who We Are
2. (3-5) Worshipping God for What He's Done
3. (6-12) Rejoicing in What We Know

. . . found in the rest of this long sentence, in our Bibles referenced as verses 6-12.

-- READ SLIDE

TR: Read with me, beginning in verse 6 . . .

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so 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.

READ SLIDE (just verse 6)

- “In this” = what we’ve been worshipping God for**
- “grieved by various trials” – these are the stress inducers**
- note the perspective of “for a little while”**

TR: How can we rejoice . . . what can we know that helps us make the most, even of stress?

3. Rejoicing in What We Know

a. (6-7) Our suffering has a purpose



READ SLIDE

TR: Back to the text . . .

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so 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.

READ SLIDE (verse 7)

- All people go through suffering . . . many just want to mask it or endure it or escape it . . . there are even religions that imagine the best end is to become nothing and escape the suffering of this world.**
- BUT followers of the Christ understand that**

various trials test the genuineness of our faith.

-- LIKE the parable of the soils . . . trials can be hardship and persecution or the choking out by worldly cares . . . but they will reveal whether people are truly people of faith.

-- Our suffering purifies us and the RESULT is praise, glory and honor . . . whose? Jesus and us?

-- CF being sick again this week . . . frustrating and stressful . . . but then remember that this is testing my faith.

TR: This third compartment has another item we need to rejoice in . . .

3. Rejoicing in What We Know

a. (6-7) Our suffering has a purpose

b. (8-9) Our faith has a destiny

READ SLIDE

TR: In our text . . .

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.**

READ SLIDE

TR: Our faith has an outcome, a direction, a destiny . . . NOT like the small “h” hopes of folks

. . .



. . . that are boldly going nowhere.

-- For the believer, going to funerals is an opportunity to reorient ourselves and remember that, for us, death is not our final destiny nor final destination.

TR: The final item in this third compartment in our

“thrival kit” is . . .

3. Rejoicing in What We Know

- a. *(6-7) Our suffering has a purpose*
- b. *(8-9) Our faith has a destiny*
- c. *(10-12) Our position is one of privilege*

. . . READ SLIDE

-- Even as the Marine is strengthened knowing that they are “The Few . . . the Proud”, so we can make the most, even of stress, when we rejoice in our position.

TR; It is a position of great privilege, as verses 10-

12 tell us . . .

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about **the grace that was to be yours** searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

READ SLIDE

- Peter has been talking about our salvation . . . that for which we bless God our Father
- This salvation was foretold by the prophets
- They searched and inquired carefully . . . what person or circumstance (some disagreement in translation) or what time they were prophesying

about

**-- They prophesied about both the sufferings
and the glories of Christ**

TR: Verse 12 then continues . . .

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.

READ SLIDE

- our position is privileged because we live this side of so many fulfilled prophecies
- the prophets served us because they made it possible for us to know that Jesus is indeed who He claimed to be
- note that it was “you . . . you . . . you” that the

prophets served.

TR: Our privileged position is because we are standing on their shoulders . . .

**If I have seen further than
others, it is by standing upon
the shoulders of giants.**

Isaac Newton



**. . . as Isaac Newton said . . . READ SLIDE
-- Or as has been said, “Even a little person,
standing on the shoulders of a giant can see further
than the giant.”**

**TR: Our privileged position, in which we rejoice is
even better than that . . .**

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.**

- . . . note the last phrase . . . “things into which the angels long to look”**
- The angels marvel at the good news that has been announced to us through preaching**
- The angels only received justice . . . we receive mercy and grace and they marvel at it all!**
- We are in the privileged position of receiving**

“the grace that was to be ours” (verse 10)

TR: Let me just review for a moment what God has put in our “thrival kit”

We can make the MOST, even of stress, by . . .

- 1. (1-2) Remembering Who We Are**
- 2. (3-5) Worshipping God for What He's Done**
 - a. (3) Caused Us to be Born Again to a Living Hope,*
 - b. (4-5) and to a Secure Inheritance.*
- 3. (6-12) Rejoicing in What We Know**
 - a. (6-7) Our suffering has a purpose*
 - b. (8-9) Our faith has a destiny*
 - c. (10-12) Our position is one of privilege*

It is these provisions that allow us to make the most of each day and each opportunity, even when they come red-lining with stress because . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Let's take a moment to pray in light of all these blessings . . . let me lead you through some guided

prayer . . .

Lord, I admit I'm stressed.

**Help me remember
that I have been chosen by You.**

I have been consecrated by Your Spirit.

**I have made covenant with You through
Christ's blood.**

**Father God, help me to exalt You
for causing me to be born again
to a great, vital, living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus.**

**Thank you, that through Him
I have a secure inheritance.**

**Cause joy to well up within me,
even in the midst of the stress.**

**I know nothing touches me without Your
purpose of making me more pure.**

**Cause joy to well up within me,
because I know that I have a destiny
. . . my life going somewhere great.**

**I am a person of great privilege.
Help me allow the joy of these things
to overwhelm the grievous stress
of these various trials I face.**

**Lord God,
because of what You have done,
are doing, and will do for me
through Christ
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
I choose to not just survive, but to thrive!
Help me, Lord Jesus! Amen.**