



Wait! There's More!

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1:1-12

I remember looking out over the vast Kansas farmland that seemed to extend forever into the distance. “This is going to be a long, boring summer,” I said to myself. I had just turned sixteen and was far from home and my high school friends. Going there had seemed like a good idea back in January when I’d agreed to work on my cousin’s farm. Now that I was there, I couldn’t imagine how anything good could come out of it. I couldn’t see into the future and know that just two days later I’d meet a couple of high school students who lived in the nearby small town and be invited to a youth gathering at their church where my life would change forever.

On Friday night of that first week in Kansas, I recommitted my life to Christ and began moving on a trajectory of spiritual growth and ministry on which I continue today. I couldn’t have seen it coming nor a lot of what has happened since, but I have experienced God’s faithfulness and goodness again and again. I’ve learned that whatever my experience may be in the present, there is always more—more to the situation, more to reality, more to the story, and more to the future than meets the eye. Neither the best things nor the worst things that happen are the end of the story with God. God is the Alpha and the Omega, and God always has good, more good, more good than you have yet imagined, up his sleeve.

This confidence, this faith, in God’s faithfulness is at the heart of what the Scriptures teach and of what the text we will be focusing on in our upcoming seven-week sermon series is all about. The First Letter of Peter that we will be examining is written to Christians living in difficult times. Persecution was increasing, the wait for Christ’s return was growing long, and many were tempted to turn from their faith. In the face of such challenges, Peter reminded them that though they were a long way from their eternal home in heaven and that life in this world is full of challenges, they could trust God’s goodness, protection, and promise of salvation.

Midway through this Sunday’s passage in 1 Peter 1:1-12, Peter talks about how precious their faith is. It will be tested, he says, like gold is tested. Yet unlike gold which is perishable, the value of faith is eternal since it will result “in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” Faith in the grace of God is the thing we need in order to begin our life in Christ. And Peter makes it clear, faith is the thing we continue to need in our ongoing life in Christ, including when the going gets tough. Our faith is precious, and we need to treasure, nurture, encourage, and remain steadfast in it.

Peter urges us to let the hope of salvation, the fulfillment of all God’s promises, to serve as a bright light encouraging us forward through the darkness of our world and the dark times in our lives. This world as it is will not be our ultimate home. We are exiles living in this world awaiting the Day that John writes of in Revelation 21: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” But for now, we are exiles, citizens of another kingdom. We are people who have faith in and who serve a King who is above every king, who sees around every corner and beyond every barrier, who can be counted on to work everything for good in the lives of those called by his name, who can be trusted with our past, our present, our tomorrow, and our forever.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, because of your resurrection from the dead, we have hope even in the face of life's greatest troubles, even as we face death itself. Yet I confess that when faced with challenges, I am often tempted to put my hope and faith in things and people who are far less than you. Forgive me, I pray. Help me to trust you. Help me to believe in the good future you have promised so that I may venture forward with confidence and courage to love and serve you. Amen.

Suggested Verses for Meditation and Memorization:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1 Peter 1:2c

Some Thing(s) to Try:

- As you meditate on this week's suggested verse, receive it as a prayer from the Apostle Peter for you. Receive it also as a prayer from me. Know that as I write this, I am praying for God's grace and peace to be yours in abundance, you who are deeply loved by God.
- Think about and thank God for a time in your life when God "turned the tables" for good in your life, turning a dead end into a positive pathway forward for you.
- Look for an opportunity and share with another person a story of God turning a challenging situation into something good for you.
- Practice sitting still with God away from distractions for five minutes or more each day. Slowly breath in and out, repeating one of the lines in 1 Peter 1:1-12 that caught your attention. It might be the one suggested above or one of the many others worthy of contemplation in the passage.
- Practice praying as the Apostle Paul urges us in Philippians 4:6-7. Talk with the God who sees you as his beloved child about the things that trouble you. Give thanks for God's faithfulness and look with anticipation to how God will work for good in the situation.
- Pass on the encouragement Peter offers us in this week's text by speaking words of hope and faith to, or simply being a person of hope and faith with, someone going through a difficult time.

Further Suggested Readings:

- Romans 8:28-39
- Isaiah 62:1-5
- Psalm 36:5-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- John 2:1-11