

## GLENWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

October 4, 2020

Born Again to a Lasting Hope

*I Peter 1:3-12*

Ben Cunningham

[music: "By Faith"]

*Nathan Nymeyer:*

Good morning! It's good to be here with you to worship the God of the Bible. This morning I want to start our service with words of comfort that God spoke to His people through the prophet Isaiah thousands of years ago. God says, *"But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham My friend, you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off.'" God says, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."* We live in a world where our hopes are failing all around, but we have this confidence in Christ as God's people that He is with us, and we're gathered together today to worship Him. So will you join me in prayer as we do that.

Father, thank You for providing so abundantly for us in Christ Jesus. Jesus, thank You for giving Your life as a substitute for ours. Jesus, thank You for providing forgiveness. And Father, thank You for sending Your Spirit, to raise Jesus from the dead and to raise us from the dead. Father, help us as Your people to live in this resurrection life. You've given us so much to be thankful for. You've given us so much that causes joy. Father, thank You. Thank You for this opportunity to be here together, to respond, to worship, to give You praise. And Father, for our world right now, we ask that You would work. Would You work in us as Your people. Father, we

think especially this morning of those who are sick, Father, with Covid or with other things. Would You uphold them. We think of people from our church; God, would You bring healing and help them to trust You in this time. And we think even more broadly for our nation and those who are struggling with this. God, would You use Your church right now to bring hope and life and joy, even as we face uncertainty. God, we love You. We ask that You would work in us now, even as we sing songs of praise, work through the truth of the music. Thank You for Ben coming to preach. Work through the truth of Your Word to shape our hearts, to know You and to love You and, as a result, to follow You with all of who we are. We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen. Would you stand with me as we praise the Lord who has given us the hope of salvation in Christ. Our basis of hope is in Him. Let us sing.

[music: "How Firm a Foundation"]

[music: "This My Inheritance"]

Amen. Please be seated.

*Ben Cunningham:*

Well, good morning. Before we jump into God's word, let's pray.

Gracious King, we come to You this morning thankful for this certain inheritance. Nothing can take it away. It comes to us by faith because of the sacrifice of Your Son, and, God, as Your children, we want to assess the value of that inheritance this morning. So many things are proving unreliable. We pray that this morning

would remind us that You are our God, and we have every hope because of that fact. Lead us in Your Word now, we pray. In Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

Well, there was an out-of-the way road in Northern California that I would drive occasionally just to spend time with God and in the attempt to realign my heart. And as soon as I would hop on this road, the fight for perspective would begin, and I would often times come stressed to those drives. But there was something about quieting my mind, about listening to the world of God, and about being in these vast farmlands and settings that just--it would help me to get perspective. Looking at these dumb cows, thoughtlessly chewing, and watching birds just, without a worry, gathering what they needed for the day seemed to help. This road led to a rocky coast on the coastline of Northern California, and I would just park my car and look out at the ocean and just watch it work for hours. And it was in this vast setting that my problems would shrink and perspective would be regained again. It was like I needed a wider angle lens to see. And so the merciful patience of God was demonstrated by slowly giving me that perspective back, and that tunnel vision would expand, and I again would be very small, God would be very big, and His plans would be very much on track.

It's easy to lose perspective on any ordinary day, but it's especially challenging and evasive when there are trials and struggles and unusual things. And we meet this morning in a season of political unrest, of wildfires, of a wearying pandemic. And these things have not only, I think, put us on edge, but for many our teeth are clenched, our heads are down, and we are just gutting it out. And I think this morning Peter and the Holy Spirit would call us to something more than just gritting it and bearing it, because our joy is not actually dependent on things like Covid counts, or schooling formats, or even election results. We have an unchanging reference point that allows for the kind of perspective that gives us joy and hope. We can live at twenty thousand feet over the life that we have.

Now, we learned last week that Peter's letter, the people who received it, they were no strangers to distress, right? They were strangers in this land, either literally or

figuratively, and that means that they were constantly misunderstood and mistreated, harmed. And it's in the midst of that setting that Peter actually invites them to this, what he calls, "inexpressible joy" and perspective. So how is that possible? Those things don't seem to go together. Well, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter invites them to get some altitude, to see this panoramic view of the salvation that God provides, so that they can reframe their lives in the larger narrative of God's story; they can place their sufferings on a larger timeline. If you've ever been on a hike where you finally got to the top and it was just--you gasped because of the glory that you saw--that's what Peter is after. He wants to show us this 360 degree, panoramic view of salvation that we might worship and trust. So open your Bibles, if you're not there already, to I Peter 1:3-12. I'm going to read it in its entirety to us. Here's what God says:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for His salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found a result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

*"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which have only been announced to you*

*through those who preached the Gospel to you but the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look."*

The road map's pretty simple this morning. We're going to look at what Peter's point is, and then we're going to go with him on this journey to see this panoramic view of salvation. And we're going to stop at four different points - you could say ninety degrees each - to get the full picture of what he's telling us, to join him in this perspective. We'll talk about some implications of that, and then we're going to actually celebrate communion this morning as well when we're done.

So what's Peter's point? What is he after? Well, it's pretty simple; his point is this: praise God for our comprehensive salvation. That's what he wants. Now, how would you start a letter to a group of people who are suffering? Who day-in and day-out faced trials and challenges because they follow Jesus? Would you write with a kind of sympathy or compassion, or would you start it off maybe by identifying with them or trying to relate to them? Well, Peter just kind of gets shot out of a cannon here, and he just goes for it in a very different tactic, and he just cuts straight to inviting his audience to join him in blessing and praising God for what He's done. And he spends the next ten verses in the hopes that we will, in the end, join Peter in his praise. So that's what he's after. It's a bit like admiring a building and wanting to praise the architect for what you're seeing. Peter is looking at this salvation and just saying, "Can you believe what God has done? How good a job He has built this! How long it will last! The kind of quality! The way He arranged it, and what He's actually done! Look at the detail of His mercy; this is staggering!" And he's inviting us to join him in that.

Now, verses 3-5 are actually one big sentence in the original language; you can see that there in most translations. But in this text, once we get past the purpose, which is to praise God, we couldn't have anything else that comes if we didn't have that first phrase, when it says, "*Who according to His great mercy.*" See, everything in God's redemptive plan has to start with mercy--getting what we don't deserve. And everything flows from that. If it were not for the mercy of God, nothing would

have been written. So he starts there. Now what has this great mercy actually accomplished? Peter's going to take us backstage and show us this incredible picture of salvation.

So the first thing that he wants to draw attention to is, he says, praise God, our hope doesn't die. Praise God, our hope doesn't die. He says that His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope, that God has given us a spiritual pulse; He's allows us to start over; He's recreated us. And this language is borrowed from Jesus when he's talking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and being born again when a person is saved, and Peter's going to use this language throughout the letter to say, "Because you've been born again, therefore your life needs to reflect that in this way." And we might take that for granted, but to those who are not connected to Christ yet, who know that their lives are a wreck, and that their relationship with God is broken because of this sin and this independence, this is incredibly good news to hear that we can be born again. It's like the Scriptures are saying, "You're right; the situation is so desperate, that God has to take drastic measures, so drastic that he basically starts over and remakes you." It's the hope for the Gospel that we have.

And now, "We're born again to a living hope." What does Peter mean by that? In what sense is our hope alive? Well, when a person is born by the Holy Spirit, they are united to Jesus in His crucifixion and His resurrection. We are attached to Him, you could say, by faith; there's a union that takes place. So what he's saying is that our hope is as alive as Jesus is. Our hope is alive in a very real sense, in that Jesus is risen and the right hand and is going to return. Our hope is that alive. So he starts by saying, "Well, just stop and look at this. Our hope doesn't die."

The second thing he wants to point out, he continues on by explaining what God has caused when Be born us again in verse 4. It says, "*To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*" Peter says. "Praise God, we have an inheritance that doesn't diminish." We have an inheritance that doesn't diminish. This is incredibly important, especially to

Peter's audience, because they would have thought of a couple things that maybe you and I wouldn't think of when we hear the word inheritance. First of all, they might have thought of the Old Testament, where God constantly, in talking with the twelve tribes, describes the Promised Land as their inheritance. Maybe you can think of different scenes in the Old Testament where He describes it that way. The second thing that would be a little bit different is, in their culture, a lot of time inheritances were in the form of family land. And so, that's how it worked: when your parents pass away, they pass you the land, and you work that land typically, and then you prepare it for the future generations.

And with both of those things in their minds, both those senses of inheritance were lost for them. Right? The Old Testament--God brings in foreign armies and disciplines His people and reminds them that if they're going to pollute the land with idolatry, He's going to remove them in His love to remind them of their fundamental purpose. And, if you remember, the backdrop of this letter is that these people have likely been expelled from their homeland and were planted in Asia Minor, which meant that their financial well-being and security and inheritances were lost. Can you imagine how sweet it would have sounded to hear that there is an inheritance that God has provided that no one can take away? The way that Peter describes it, it's incredible. He says it's imperishable. It never expires. It lasts forever. It's undefiled, meaning it's never corrupted or tainted by sin. It's not going to fade; it's not going to fade like things we possess, that we leave outside that lose their color or that break apart just through time. It's not going to be like that. One author says that the inheritance is untouched by death, unstained by evil, and unimpaired by time. This is sweet to Peter's audience.

And you think, well how could an inheritance be kept that secure? Right, I mean even in the most conservative 401K, even the most set-up situation you can possibly have, there's still risk involved. But Peter explains why, if you look in verse 4, "*imperishable and undefiled, will not fade away, reserved in Heaven for you.*" It means it's kept, it's guarded. The word is in the passive sense, meaning that someone else is doing the guarding, referring to God. That God Himself is making

sure that the reward He has prepared for His people, they will get. That's about as certain as you can get, right? So, no Roman emperor can touch this; no foreign can come in; no market shift will devalue the stock of this thing. It's going to last, and in the end it'll be ready waiting for you. So praise God, our inheritance won't diminish.

But Peter addresses kind of a lingering question that you might have in your mind and his audience might have had in their mind, and that's this: this all assumes that we'll hold up, that our faith will last to the end, right? I mean, you could promise me ten million dollars, but then say, "All you have to do is swim across the ocean." And because, no matter how sweet the promise is, it doesn't matter; if I can't get to it, it doesn't matter. And so, it's great, Peter, that this inheritance is out there waiting for us, but is it even possible, will I get to the end?

The third glimpse, the third view that he gives us, is this: praise God, He guards us with faith that doesn't fail. He guards us with faith that doesn't fail. The end of verse 4, the word "you" is in the plural, which explains who the "who" is in verse 5. It says, "*Who are protected by the power of God through faith.*" This is speaking of God's people that, in this mysterious and astounding way, God not only moves towards them with mercy that they don't deserve, He not only causes them spiritual life and attaches them to a living hope in Jesus, He not only gives them an inheritance and a reward that they don't deserve, that's certain and sure unlike everything else, but He also protects us by faith to make sure that we get to experience His full generosity. God guards His children through the full journey of faith, that your inheritance is not only kept for you, but you are kept for it. That is incredible.

There have been different times with my own children that--we start off agreeing with desiring an end result. Maybe it's earning five dollars so they can buy something at the store. And then we decide, "Well, my car needs a little vacuuming out," and so we'll assign the job to one of our kids, and they'll get to work. And like any kid, they despair at moments, right? It's like, five minutes in it's like, "ugh."

And as their dad, I want them to get to that end result. I want them to get that thing that they desire, or to work hard in order to do it. So all along, I'm kind of propping up their endurance, right? "No, stick with it!" and "What about that spot?" and "Make sure to do it this way," and "This is a bit easier," and just kind of helping them along, because, as a father, you want your child to get to that end goal, that end thing that's satisfying, that even they forget at times. Our God is so gracious that He not only gives us what we don't deserve, but He makes sure to walk with us and to be with us and to encourage us and exhort us so that we experience it in the end. He is that generous.

Do you see how comprehensive this salvation is? That how much God has provided for, how careful and tender and resolute His endurance is. Can you imagine the job of getting a million, millions of untold people to stick with believing in an unseen Lord, despite all their desire to stray, to get them all the way to the end of that process so that you can be generous to them? Do you know the skill and the wisdom and the power that's involved in accomplishing what God accomplishes in this salvation? And these verses are precious to us, right? When you're just kind of done, and you feel like quitting, or you feel like doubt has kind of overtaken you, to know that God's power ensures and protects the faith that will save in the end; it's such a comfort. So praise God, He'll see us all the way home; He ensures that saving faith will not fail.

Now there's a question that Peter is going to address in verse 6-9 about this third view, about this preservation, and that is: How does God actually create this kind of saving faith? How does that work? What ingredients are involved? I mean, Peter's audience might be sitting out there wondering, "Peter, how does my daily experience of suffering, being made fun of, and being ostracized--like it's great; what you're talking about is great up here, but come down the mountain, right, and join us where it's really hard. I don't quite see how the day to day suffering and the cost of following Jesus fit into this grandiose plan that you're talking about, Peter." And so Peter's graciously and with pastoral wisdom and care, in verses 6-9, explains that part of the way that saving faith is forged is through the types of

struggles that they are actually experiencing. Look at it in verse 6. He says, "*In this you greatly rejoice,*" speaking of that salvation, "*even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.*" He's saying rejoicing is possible even in the midst of the feeling sorrow and disappointment and discouragement. He's saying that we can always probably find a reason to clap or cry, right, as Christians; whereas Paul says "sorrowful yet always rejoicing." What a strange blend that is, but Peter is saying, "Yes, that's true."

See, he acknowledges the elephant in the room. And he doesn't do what a lot of eastern religions and other religions do, which is just, "Well, we don't know what to do with suffering, so we're just going to deny that it exists." Peter doesn't have to do that, because his hope in the Gospel is so massive, it's so all-encompassing, that, regardless of the amount of suffering, if you put it in the grand scheme of things, if you reframe it according to God's salvation, it's counterbalanced by hope. And so he's not denying the reality of their suffering; he's saying that faith and discouragement are not mutually exclusive things. They often times occur together in this strange way.

And notice the little subtleties of his encouragement to them in verse 6. "*Even though now for a little while.*" Just a little reminder, like, "Guys, I know it's difficult. I'm suffering in a lot of the ways that you are, but it'll be over. It's going to be done." And you can endure the pain of the shot if you know the medicine's going to help you. You don't punch the physical therapist because they're causing you pain, because you know that in the end that little dose of pain will result in healing. And when you know that pain is temporary and suffering is temporary, endurance is more possible, and that's what Peter is doing. He's saying what Paul said: "*For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.*" That's Peter's version of it: "*Even though now for a little while.*"

And then he says this little irksome phrase. "If necessary." If necessary? How is it that suffering would be necessary? Well, he actually goes on to explain in verse 7 when he says, "*So that,*" - these trials, or what is the purpose of them - "*so that*

*the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" He says that these trials actually prove your faith; they contribute to your salvation, in removing dross and creating a genuine faith. So Peter is saying, "No, no, no, guys. I don't need to come down and stop looking at God's salvation, because these trials that you're talking about are actually a part of the picture. They're one of the ways that God is forging and giving you the faith, the kind that saves. It's a part of His goodness to us. It's a part of what makes our faith last." I mean, think about your own lives. What has strengthened your faith more than anything? What has caused you to see the goodness of God in new ways? What has forced you to depend on Him and rely on Him? Isn't it difficulty? Isn't it challenges? Isn't it hardship and stressful situations?

I have a friend who is in the middle of a battle with ALS, and it's been one of these remarkable experiences to see faith that is lived out in the midst of an incredibly difficult affliction. Two days ago he texted me this. He's about 6'2", big guy. He said, "Okay, a 139 pounds. Number one: we live by faith not by sight. Number two: we fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Number 3: Ephesians 5:8-10, '*Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.*'" You probably know people who have been through afflictions that you just look at and go, "I would not have come out the other end of that!" There are thousands and scores of examples of people who have endured through things, remarkable things, because what Peter says is true! That God guards their faith and refines their faith so that, as they come through the furnace of affliction, they come out as people who are more humble and reliant, in position to minister to people in new ways.

I love what John Newton says about this image of refining, this precious metal. He says this, quote, "He" - God - "will put His silver into the fire to purify it, but He sits by the furnace as a refiner to direct the process and to secure the end He has in view, that we may neither suffer too much nor suffer in vain." Our God watches the fires and makes sure that they shape us and that they form us in the way that He

intends by His sovereign will. And in the same way that gold grows in it's value when the dross is removed and it's refined, so too our faith's value increases as it's toughened and purified by affliction. I mean, think about this: God makes something invaluable that lasts forever out of a temporary affliction and difficulty. Only He can do that.

And look at what it results in! It results in praise and glory and honor. We're going to be what happens in the end because of that. Now these are words that are described in reward-like terms, so, as odd as this sounds, these are actually what believers are going to receive, that praise and glory and honor. In verse 9, it says, "Obtaining as the outcome or the recompense of your faith." Now including in--God giving us these things doesn't detract from His praise, it demonstrates His generosity that reward is a part of this, that He rewards us for His accomplishments and saving faith.

In verse 8 and 9 we see that, just to finish off this section, that faith is not only refined, but it's the source of what Peter describes in the second half of verse 8 as "*joy inexpressible and full of glory.*" That, even though we don't see Jesus now, that we experience His life in this way that words just can't fully grab and grasp. That's the kind of joy that's available, and that's because Jesus says things like John 20:29. "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" So the third view is: praise God; He guards us with faith that doesn't fail.

Let's look at the last one and then we'll talk about implications. The fourth view we find in verse 10-12, and we know that Peter's continuing to talk about salvation, because he says in verse 10, "*As to this salvation.*" And he goes on to explain this fourth stop, this last ninety degrees of this view when he says, "*Praise God for our privileged position.*" Praise God for our privileged position. Now, he's saying that because we're privileged to know details that the prophets themselves didn't know. As you look at those verses you can see that, boy! the prophets were carefully searching and acquiring; they were dying to know the details. Right? They saw a

mirror with smudges on it, and they described what the Holy Spirit of God gave them to tell the nation of Israel, but there were things that they didn't quite know. They didn't have a face; they didn't have a name; they didn't have a timeline. And that's because the Holy Spirit of God gave limited access to those folders. But Peter is saying, now you have access to those! You know things that prophets were dying to know. They knew something about the sufferings and the glories of this Messiah, but they didn't know how it was going to play out and how it was going to work, but now we do. And not only are we privileged beyond the prophets, but the last verse says that angels are interested and eagerly looking. It's a very very--it's a stirring curiosity. They're dying to know, "What's going on with this redemptive plan on earth? What is God up to amongst these creatures?" And to think that angels in heaven are curious to know things that we know gives the listener kind of a sense of privilege that we have access to chapters of this story that other people don't. And so Peter says praise God for our privileged position.

Now what does all this mean? Peter takes us up and he shows us this huge view of salvation, and just to remind us, he says praise God that our hope doesn't die, that we have an inheritance that doesn't diminish, that He guards us with faith that doesn't fail, and that we're in a privileged position. What does this add up to? What does this mean? Well, this morning, friends, it means that your hope is comprehensive and certain. Praise God your hope is comprehensive and certain! You have all the hope that this world offers and the next. Do you know how valuable, do you know what the market rate on that kind of hope is right now in our world? Think about how eager people are to have something to hope in that's not going to fail them right now, that's not going to fold.

I apologize for the reference for The Forty Niners, but I'm just going to go for it, okay? Forgive me. But Jim Harbough used to say this, as a former coach of the Niners, he'd have his team all gathered together, and they'd have this tradition of yelling. He'd yell this question: "Who's got it better than us?" And the whole team would scream, "Nobody!" And I think that's kind of what Peter is after. I mean, these people might not have expected this opener to this letter, but at the end, if

they're listening and they're paying attention, they're caught up in what he's doing here, he's saying, "Just lose sight of yourself for a little bit and just look at the greatness and glory of God! God is doing something incredibly fantastic, and you should notice that, and that should be a part of how you live and how you think, and what motivates what you're doing." Who's got it better than us? Nobody.

Now let's talk about a couple of reasons why we lose sight of this comprehensive plan, right? You might be thinking, "Well, that's great, but how do I actually navigate this and apply this?" Well, we know that it's not--we don't miss out on this because, while our hope--there's something wrong with our hope, or it lacks something. It doesn't. We've seen that it's full, it's certain, it's protected, it's alive. But if you're not a Christian here this morning and you're still kind of working out how this faith works, I'd encourage you to assess the inventory of your hopes. Look at them, consider them. Are they the kind of things that will last? Have they failed? Maybe that's why you're here, or you're listening online, because your earthly hopes have changed in just a matter of moments. But for those who are Christians here, I wanted to point out a few ways why we miss out on experiencing joy from this hope.

First, some of us are just unfamiliar with it. We're unfamiliar with it. We might not know that the nitty gritty details of what salvation includes. We might just think it's kind of like, well, after you die this great thing happens. Or some people might think of it in terms of just this life only, which both are such a narrow slice of what God has done. It's like sixty degrees of view of what God's goodness is, when it's full, panoramic, 360 view. So familiarize yourself with the hopes that you have. Fight to get that twenty thousand foot view. Keep your salvation in the forefront of your mind. Find God's promises, and by God's Spirit make them unchanging reference point for you for gratitude and joy. Maybe you're just plowing through life right now, right? You're just day-to-day, just trying to not be overwhelmed by the layers of bad news that keep coming, more cases, more unrest, more division. And maybe what you need to do is look up and get some altitude and get some perspective, invest some time in thinking about what God's salvation has

accomplished, and what He's doing right now, and what He'll do in the future. Frame the difficulty of this moment in the larger span of what God is doing. So maybe we're unfamiliar with it.

The second reason we miss out on this is because, when life is confusing, it's hard to trust the bigger picture. It's hard to trust God. And I love that Christian life is not burying your head in the sand. Right? It's not trying to dress up suffering like it's fun. It just fully acknowledges this is really really hard. It's really difficult. We aren't joyful because we're living in some pretend fairy land, right? We can be joyful because we can place these instances of suffering in a much larger story and a much larger lens that has a certain finish. And if you read back over this passage carefully, you'll notice that faith has a very important role in what God is doing. God does a lot of things in this text, and we, essentially, exercise faith in Him. So when disappointment or discouragement sets in, we can go different directions with it, right? But what if instead of justifying, or of the road of self-pity, or focusing on the loss, we leverage those opportunities of disappointment to consider how lasting the hopes we have are. So, for example, when someone disappoints me, my truest hope is in the living Jesus. When I lose something of value, my truest inheritance is preserved by God is heaven. When I sin and repent and that cycle continues, I trust that God's power will get me to the finish line. Or when you're confused about God's specific will, thinking--the privilege to know the salvation story that we do. Or when you're distressed, or your faith is singed with that refining fire of affliction, to believe that saving faith is tested faith, and that's how God preserves us.

Life is disorienting right now for most people, but Peter helps to remember what is certain, and to let what is certain determine how we respond to what is uncertain. And if we catch a glimpse of this panoramic view that he gives us of salvation, then we have reason to trust Him with the specifics that we don't yet understand. Right? If God can pull this off, if He can draw up a plan so glorious and as good and effective and as complete as this, then certainly He knows what He's doing with the specifics, right? And we can trust Him with those details because we are in good hands, even when it's challenging.

Perhaps the best way to close this morning is by watching our Lord Jesus do what Peter is calling them to do in terms of hoping in God's salvation, in talking about praising and trusting God in the midst of unnerving circumstances, because God has a certain plan. Listen to Luke 22:14-18, in one of the most difficult moments in the life of Jesus, as He prepares to suffer, listen to how he hopes. It says this, *"And when the hour came, He reclined at the the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'* And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He said, *'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'"* Jesus trusted in the hopes that were in front of Him, that He would inherit the nations, that He would be exalted and vindicated, that He would taste this meal in a new way in the Kingdom of God with His disciples.

Let's take a moment and prepare our hearts and minds to receive communion this morning. Let's also prepare the elements that you grabbed, hopefully, when you came in. This is a time for those who have trusted Christ. If you're at home, go ahead and prepare those elements as well. We're going to have a time of listening and also of doing what Peter tells us to do, which is to praise and rejoice. So let's enter into that time of reflection now.

*Ben Rico:*

As you prepare, would you stand as we praise together the Lord, the God of our hope.

[music: "Doxology"]

*Ben Cunningham:*

Would you remain standing if you are able, as I finish reading in Luke 22.

It says in verse 19, *"And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is the body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"* Let's take the bread together.

In verse 20, it says, *"And likewise the cup, after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood.'"* Let's partake of it together.

We pray. As we prepare for one final song, let's pray.

God of hope, we thank You. We thank You for this amazing view of what You have done and what You are doing and what You will one day do. You mean for this hope to be a ballast in our boat, to steady us, to allow us to live with a reckless obedience and trust in what You are doing. And God, I pray that you would accomplish that in the lives of Your people, in all the ways that You intend. We see in the life of our Lord Jesus a life fully given over to Your will and a life that brings salvation. And God, I pray for those particularly who are in trial and struggle and difficulty. God, I pray you would persuade them of Your goodness, that You would help them, as a Father, place their difficulty in the larger story of Your salvation. Build that instinct in us, that reflex in us, that we might glorify You, that we might live full lives that are spent well. We pray this in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Let us sing with hope.

[music: "Living Hope"]

Amen, praise the Lord. We praise the Lord with hope. We live with hope because He has given us life. Go in peace.