



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Summer 2018 Midweek / Sermon Starter

Unit 3: Final Destinations

Sermon Series Title: Living with Eternity in Mind

Sermon 4 Title: Praise for Eternity

Bible Passage: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Background/Context

There was a man who was buried at the age of seventy. The man that eulogized him at his funeral said, “Here lays a man who is being buried at age seventy, but who died thirty years ago when his twenty-year-old son was killed in a tragic car accident.” The pressures, predicaments, and problems of life have a way of zapping the life out of some people. Life is hard. Life is unpredictable. Life is unfair, and life can be cruel at times. The only way to cope with the experiences of this life in a healthy way is to stay focused on the promise of eternity that believers have in Christ Jesus. As we live, we must also be looking forward to eternity.

The author was Peter, the people he was writing to were under persecution, and the purpose of the book was to encourage his readers to continue pressing forward in the face of persecution. They were to remember that earth was not their home, and that heaven was their final destination (see 1 Pet. 1:1-3). After his salutation, Peter goes on to give some timeless advice on how to navigate through adversity. What he said to the scattered and shattered church back then can encourage and edify the twenty-first century church today.

A. Praise God for an Eternal Relationship
(1 Pet. 1:3)

Peter opens this paragraph with the word “blessed.” It comes from the Greek word [*eulogetos*], which means one who is worthy to be praised. There are many reasons why God is worthy to be praised, but Peter says it is because of the relationship He has provided for us in our Lord Jesus Christ. God, the Creator of the universe, the prime mover, the self-sustaining One is our Father. The One who is, was, and always will be has chosen to make us a part of His family. In Christ, we are not just His servants, subjects, and soldiers. We are also His sons and daughters (John 1:10-13). We’re not just His church; we’re also His children (1 John 3:1-2).

Peter says that our Father “has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This means that our relationship came through regeneration. Our hope is changed because our hearts are changed. Because we’re in Christ, God is our Father, and heaven is our final destination. So now, God lives with us, but when we die (or the Lord returns), we go live with God. It’s all because of our relationship with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise God for our eternal relationship!

Application Point: God’s relationship with us, and all that He makes available for us warrant our constant praise of Him. What are several relational-blessings that you can praise God for?

B. Praise God for an Eternal Reservation
(1 Pet. 1:4-5)

Peter moves from encouraging the people to celebrate their relationship with God through Christ, regeneration in God by Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, to encouraging them to praise God for their eternal reservation made possible by Christ. Peter says believers have “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (v. 4). Believers can celebrate the fact that God has additional blessings on reserve for us. Our eternal blessings are imperishable—they can’t be destroyed; undefiled—they can’t be spoiled; and unfading—they can’t suffer decay.

The awaiting blessings are “kept in heaven for you.” God is guarding our eternal inheritance. No person, power, nor predicament can rob us of our eternal inheritance. Time can’t kill them, and Satan can’t steal them. Not only is God guarding the inheritance, He’s guarding individuals who are in Christ. Peter says, “You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (v. 5). Our eternal relationship gives us eternal reservations and guarantees our eternal refuge. Our final destination is just as secure today as it was the first day we trusted Christ. We are in Christ, and Christ is in God the Father, and no man is able to pluck us out of Christ and the Father’s hands (John 10:27-30). Praise God for our eternal reservation!

Application Point: Every believer is blessed with eternal life and an eternal inheritance—now. How can you allow your inheritance that’s reserved for you to motivate you to walk with and work for God—now?

C. Praise God for an Eternal Reality (1 Pet. 1:6-9)

As followers of God in a pagan culture and under persecution, Peter felt the need to define reality for the believers he was addressing. For the believer, reality is not what we see, feel, or experience. Reality is what God says in His Word. Peter exhorted them (and us) to rejoice in the reality of God’s salvation, transformation, and glorification.

Peter encourages believers to praise God for how He operates in our lives: “You rejoice in this” (v. 6). Trials will only last for a short while, but our relationship with and inheritance in God through Christ will last forever. Let our praise be predicated on the promises of God.

Peter also admonishes believers to praise God for His transformation of our lives. God allows us to experience trials so that our faith and character will be proved (v. 7a). The trials of life refine our faith like fire in a furnace refines gold. God uses adversity to correct us, direct us, and to perfect us.

Peter goes on to exhort us to praise God for His glorification that will come from our lives when we’ve faced adversity and come through it. He says that our being refined will result “in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 7b). Though we may not see God now, we can rejoice because we will see Him later (v. 8). Though we have yet to receive our inheritance, we rejoice now because we have received the salvation of our souls (v. 9). God’s Word says it, and that’s our reality.

Application Point: God uses all life circumstances for our good, our growth, and for His glory (see Rom. 8:28-29). What are some ways that God has used adversity to correct, direct, and perfect you?