

Celebration of Salvation – Part 1

1 Peter 1:1-5

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We're going to look at 1 Peter 1:1-5 tonight. The title of my message is "Celebration Of Salvation." I hope and pray that you'll come every week as we go through this amazing first epistle of Peter. We'll go into 2 Peter as well. I want to just read one verse to get us started, verse 1. It starts with, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

Someone said that Paul was the apostle of faith, that John was the apostle of love, but that Peter was the apostle of hope. I love that. It's really that theme that Peter picks up in this first epistle, the hope that we have—the hope even in suffering, the hope even in sorrows, the hope even in our trials. Peter is the apostle of hope, and I want to look at three things in this first verse. First, the writer, or the human author, is listed right off the bat, "Peter." Now, who doesn't like Peter. We love Peter. Every time the list of the apostles are given in the Bible, guess who's on the top of the list? Good ol' Peter. Peter was an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Two hundred and ten times in the New Testament, more than any of the other apostles or disciples, is the name "Peter" found in the Scriptures. His name, "Peter," means rock, and it's taken from the Greek. Jesus, when He called Peter, took Simon, who is the name he was born with which is Hebrew, which means listen, and He changed his name to Cephas or to Peter. "Cephas" is the Aramaic of Peter which is Greek. When you read about Simon or Simon Peter or Cephas, you're reading about the Apostle Peter. What a wonderful apostle he was. He was called by the Lord in an interesting situation where his brother Andrew...Andrew the apostle was his brother. Andrew came to him and said, "We found the Messiah," and brings him to Jesus. Jesus changed his name and called him to follow Him.

Peter also was a man who had a couple of unique situations where Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Peter, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I've prayed for you, that your faith fail not, and when you are converted, or turned, strengthen your brothers." He says, "Satan desires to have you." Can you imagine Jesus turning to you and saying, "The devil asked for you. He wants to sift you as wheat." And you're thinking, What'd You tell him, Lord? What'd You tell him? You told him, 'No,' right? He can't have me. I love it that Jesus said, "But I have prayed for thee." Do you know Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father right now? Do you know what He's doing up in heaven? Praying for you, praying for me—that when Satan comes and tries to attack us and sift us as wheat, that our faith fail not. But He said to Peter, " . . . when thou art converted"—or turned back—"strengthen thy brethren." I love that. That's what Peter's doing in this epistle. He's writing to strengthen us in grace of God, to strengthen us to stand in the grace of God.

There's that other episode after the resurrection when Peter had denied the Lord three times. When Jesus met with Peter in a post-resurrection appearance, He said, "Peter, do you love Me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You." He said, "Well, then, feed My sheep."

Then, He said again, “Peter, do you love Me?” He said, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” He said, “Feed My sheep.” Then, a third time He asked him, and Peter was grieved that the Lord would ask him three times. He denied Him thrice, and he affirmed his love for Him thrice. He said, “Peter, do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.” Then, Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.” Peter was one of the great, great apostles who in this epistle and his second epistle as well was feeding the sheep. Do you know what it means to pastor? It means to feed. It’s the word, “shepherd.” A shepherd’s primary job is to feed the sheep who are the people of God.

In this epistle we’re going to be encouraged and strengthened by Peter himself, who is commissioned to feed the sheep and to strengthen the brethren. What a blessing this epistle, I believe, will be.

The recipients are mentioned for us in verse 1. Peter is called, “an apostle of Jesus Christ,”—he’s one sent and commissioned, and he’s writing—“to the strangers scattered throughout”—and names the regions—“Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” That area, by the way, is modern Turkey. In Bible days it was known as Asia Minor, but in today’s map it’s in the position of Turkey. These were, “ . . . strangers scattered,” note those two words in your Bible, verse 1. That means that they were resident aliens. “Scattered” means that they were of the diaspora. We get our word “seed” from that word, so they were scattered.

We don’t know if they were primarily Jewish or Gentile, and it doesn’t really matter, it’s probably a mixture of the both. The early church was made up of a lot of Jews, and many times the Jews were those who were part of what was called the diaspora. We get our word “scattering seed” from that. Because of the persecution, they were scattered out of the Holy Land and were in this area known as Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. They were in this area which was primarily Gentile territory.

Thirdly, notice also that Peter’s purpose in the letter was because they were strangers, because they were scattered, they were also suffering persecution. If you don’t get anything else I say in this quick little introduction, 1 Peter was written to suffering Christians, so there’s a lot of great information in this epistle to encourage us, to strengthen us to stand in the face of persecution and opposition and trials and testings and suffering. If you want to know how to stand in trials and suffering, get your Bible open and turn to 1 Peter.

I want to point out a couple of references. Look at 1 Peter 1:6. He says, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations,”—which is trials or testing. Peter says we are rejoicing right now in this little season where we are going through heaviness and “ . . . manifold temptations,”—or testings. Peter is writing to strengthen them during this time. Look at 1 Peter 4:12 for just a moment. I just can’t wait to get to chapter 4. It’s my favorite section on encouraging people through suffering. Peter says, “Beloved,”—when you suffer, remember God loves you—“think it not strange”—which means foreign or odd—“concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” I’m resisting expounding on this verse right now

because it's so packed, but we'll get there in several weeks. What a marvelous thing he says, "We rejoice at this time of suffering and heaviness, even though we're in trials and testings."

It's been normal for Christians to suffer throughout all church history. We, living in America at this time, kind of a rarity and an oddity, the tide is turning and we are becoming more persecuted in even America. But the majority of Christians around the world are suffering right now because they're Christians. Many of them are actually being martyred and imprisoned for their faith in Jesus Christ, so we need to remember those that are in bonds as bound with them and pray for them. We need to also strengthen ourselves for the persecution that could come and be, even in our own beloved United States of America. What a sad and tragic thing that is.

Peter was writing to help those who were suffering to stand in the face of opposition. Look at 1 Peter 5:12. This is one of the key, if not the key text, to understanding the book of 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 5:12, he says, "I have written briefly,"—he's explaining why he's writing—"exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God"—and here's the theme—"wherein ye stand." Peter tells us why he wrote his first epistle, ". . . I have written . . . and testifying that this is the true grace of God"—and this is what causes us to—" . . . stand"—during this time.

Peter was writing perhaps from Rome. At the end of the book in 1 Peter 5:13, he mentions Babylon, and again we can't be certain but a lot of Bible scholars believe that that was kind of a code name for Rome, and he was writing from Rome to the area of Asia Minor. He was writing to encourage them to stand in God's grace, 1 Peter 5:12.

Just a quick outline of the whole book, Peter teaches us in this book to stand in our salvation in 1 Peter 1:1-2:10; secondly, we'll be looking at he teaches us to stand in submission, 1 Peter 2:11-3:12; thirdly, he teaches us to stand in our suffering, 1 Peter 3:13-5:11. Peter starts with the subject of salvation even in his salutation in this epistle. Now, as does with Paul in his Pauline epistles, this is what's called a general epistle, he starts with doctrine. You've heard it said a million times, but doctrine always proceeds duty, principles always come before practice. A lot of preaching today is on practical Christian living but without a doctrinal foundation for how to live as a Christian. If you follow sequentially the way the Scriptures are laid out, before we're exhorted to live the Christian life, we are given a doctrinal, theological foundation for who we are in Christ and its solid foundation so that we can live out our Christian life. So, doctrine always comes before duty or principles come before practice. As you believe, so you behave, and you need to understand the Christian life before you can live the Christian life.

It doesn't do a lot of good to exhort people to live as a Christian when they don't know what a Christian is or they don't understand who Jesus is or what their salvation involves. So, we're going to look at two things as Peter wants us to stand in this section tonight, verses 1-5, two aspects of our salvation as we celebrate salvation, standing in our election, verse 2, and standing in our salvation's hope, verses 3-5.

The first thing we want to do is to understand our calling as being, "Elect . . . of God," verse 2. Look at it with me. Peter says that salvation involves that you are "Elect according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,”—and then he wishes them—“Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” There’s his greeting or salutation, verses 1-2. Notice, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

Peter gives us three reasons to celebrate. I’m going to try to keep it, as best I can, simple. Now, I can’t explain the doctrine of election so that it’ll be all clear in your mind or resolved in your heart, but I do believe that clearly the Bible teaches this truth, that if you are a Christian, God chose you, you did not choose Him. You say, “Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Didn’t I repent and believe in Jesus?” Yes. “Didn’t I ask Jesus to come into my heart?” Yes. But Jesus said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” You say, “Well, I don’t understand that.” Welcome to the club! I don’t understand it either. Here’s what the problem quite often is, when you try to reconcile the issue, you’re going to do damage to one or both of those doctrines. Human freedom, man’s free will, to believe and repent and trust in Jesus Christ, and I believe that we can resist the grace of God, and God’s divine elective purpose. You will never be able, this side of heaven, to perfectly reconcile these two issues. But I do believe that we should accept the fact that election is indeed a doctrine found in Scripture.

Now, not to get into this theological debate, but there are two general categories that people fall into—Arminianism and the other is Calvinism. They take on one side or the other, and they camp on one side or the other. The Arminians emphasize human responsibility and man’s free will, and they deemphasize the elective purposes of God. Calvinism emphasizes, I think many times overly so, the sovereignty of God, the choice of God, the elective purposes of God. I’m not really in either one of these camps completely, I think there is truth and error in each one, but I think that whenever we come to Scriptures that teach a doctrine, that we should just accept them as being biblical and that they reconcile at a higher unity. How do you explain the hypostatic union that Jesus was both fully man and fully God but only one Person? How do you reconcile that? You can’t.

How do you reconcile the Bible was written by man, but it’s the Word of God, that they spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, that the Word of God is God-breathed, so it’s got a human nature and a divine nature? We can’t. So, we accept the fact that God reconciles that in a higher unity. In Ephesians 1 Paul says that God, “. . . hath chosen us . . . before the foundation of the world.” How do we understand that? All we do is accept that.

I like what Warren Wiersbe said. He said, “If you try to explain election away, you lose your salvation. If you try to not explain it away or you try to reject it completely, if you try to understand it, then you lose your mind.” Some people are about ready to lose their brain, lose their minds, over this issue. By the way, both camps or categories are within the realm of orthodoxy, that means they’re brothers in Christ, and we should love one another and accept one another as brothers in Christ.

Notice the breakdown of this verse. Verse 2, God the Father chose you, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” The term “foreknowledge” I happen to believe means not

God's omniscience or that God knows everything, but it means that God set His love upon you. It's consistent with the idea of God predestinating and electing and foreknowing. Predestination is the truth that God determines those who He elects and chooses will end up in heaven. He predetermines before we are even saved in time what He will do with those who come to Christ, those He elects. And then He foreknows us in eternity past in that He sets His love upon us.

Have you ever just had a thought of, Why me? Why did God save me? Why did He open my heart and open my eyes? Why did He give me His Holy Spirit? Why did He forgive my sins? You might have a brother or sister or a family member that has rejected Christ, has rejected the gospel, and God reaches down and just saves you. I know my wife when she first got saved, she didn't come out of a Christian family and her parents weren't Christian and her only sibling, her sister, was not a Christian, but God just reached down and saved her. I'm glad He did. She's been my faithful wife for 46 years, the mother of my children, and grandchildren.

But the thought that God would just reach down and save us by His grace, that strengthens us in our sorrow and our suffering and our hardships, to think that, I've been chosen by God. Remember when you were maybe in elementary school and you'd go out on the playground and they'd have recess and would pick out teams? They'd get two captains (some of you are starting to freak out thinking about that, bad memories) and you maybe weren't very athletic or very skilled on the softball field or whatever sport it was. You knew that you were going to be the last one chosen. And, you didn't even get chosen, they just said, "Okay, we'll take 'em. Come on over here." They'd put you in right field and tell you to stand way back in the corner and if the ball comes just don't move, somebody else will get it. You always feel so rejected.

To think that God—the God of all the universe—would choose me for salvation is more than I can fathom or comprehend. I don't believe that He chose us based on a foreknowledge concept of He looked ahead in His omniscience in time and knew who it was who would repent and believe in Him and then He chose you because that would actually completely negate the doctrine of election—it would be God choosing you based on your choice of Him—and election is, I believe, God's sovereign free grace. Again, I can't comprehend or understand that, but I'm not going to resist or fight it. I'm just going to be thankful that God has saved me by His marvelous grace. So, we're, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." He set us love upon us, that's God the Father chose us.

Secondly, notice we have God the Spirit has set us apart, verse 2. So, we are, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,"—and that happened—"through sanctification of the Spirit,"—and I believe that's the Holy Spirit—"unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,"—and then the salutation of—"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." God the Father chose us, God the Spirit sanctified us.

The word "sanctification of the Spirit," the word "saint," "sanctify," and "holy," all come from the same root word that means to be set apart and made holy. The Holy Spirit sets us apart. The essence of that word "sanctify" means to be set apart and made holy. This is what happened in your salvation—God the Father chose you, God the Holy Spirit came, and this is the way I

would lay it out, to convict you and to convince you of your sin and to draw you to Jesus Christ. You didn't come to Him out of anything other than the Holy Spirit drawing you to Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicting you and convincing you that you are a sinner in need of a Savior. What a blessed thing that is! The Holy Spirit's involved in your salvation—He draws you to Christ, He convicts you, and then when you believe in Jesus Christ, when you repent and you believe in Christ or trust in Christ or accept Christ, I'm fine with that term, or invite Christ to forgive your sins and come into your heart, the Holy Spirit regenerates you.

Now, the Calvinist would say, and this is one of the points I disagree with Calvinism, that they believe because we're dead in trespasses and sins that we don't have the ability to seek God. I agree with that, but I don't think that the concept of being dead in sin means that we can't resist the grace of God or choose to accept or reject Jesus Christ. The etymology of the word "dead" literally means separation. That's what the word "dead" actually means. When you die physically, you leave your body.

When our dear brother James, yesterday afternoon, died, he didn't die in that he ceased to exist, he went out of his body and went to be with the Lord. Amen? That's why the Bible says, "... to be absent from the body,"—is—"to be present with the Lord." I just believe that that, "... dead in trespasses and sins," means that we're separated from God. Are we fallen? Yes. Are we unregenerate? Yes. But the Calvinist teaches that the sinner must be regenerated—given spiritual life—in order to believe in Jesus Christ and that the faith in believing in Christ is a gift from God. I don't believe that's clearly taught in the Bible. I believe that what happens is the moment you believe, you are born again or regenerated.

That word "regenerate," and we're going to get the concept of the rebirth in our text, literally means to be born again. We know and use and understand the word "born again." The theological term is regeneration. It means to be made alive, "quicken," made alive, given new life. I do believe that God chooses us, we don't choose Him, that the Spirit convicts us and draws us, and if you're saved, it's all of God. Salvation is the work of God. But if you reject Jesus Christ, you are to blame, you are responsible. Again, don't ask me how to reconcile that, I can't, but I believe that's what's taught in the Bible. I don't believe that regeneration precedes faith. I believe it happens the moment you believe in Christ you are quickened or made alive, and you're indwelt. Those are different works of the Holy Spirit which is mentioned here—He convicts us of sin, He converts or regenerates, and He indwells the believer. You become a believer the moment you're regenerated, and you're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Once that happens, I believe that you are eternally secure and that you will end up in heaven.

We're going to see that implied tonight in the text that what begins with grace will end in glory because the Holy Spirit not only convicts, regenerates, indwells, but He seals you until the day of redemption. That sealing of the Holy Spirit speaks not only of ownership, but it speaks of security. If you even just simply understood the doctrine of the sealing of the Spirit, which every believer has, you would understand how safe and secure you are in the hands of Jesus.

So, we are saved or chosen by God the Father, we are sanctified by God the Holy Spirit, and

here's the third facet of our elective salvation, God the Son died for me. In eternity past God the Father elected me in time, the Holy Spirit convicted, converted, indwelt, regenerated and sealed me, and then also in history past Jesus died for me on the cross. Go back with me to verse 2, and he mentions the " . . . sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." " . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This is a reference to the cross of Christ. If you want to get to heaven, you can't go around the cross, right? The only way to get to heaven is through the cross of Jesus Christ.

The NIV renders verse 2 for, " . . . obedience to Jesus Christ." So, we must believe, we must trust, and put our faith in Christ. Write down 2 Thessalonians 2:13. It says, " . . . God hath from the beginning chosen you"—there it is—"to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." You ought to write that down, look it up, meditate on it. All these points are found in that one text. So, Jesus becomes the object of our faith. Our faith is in Jesus Christ who died for us on the cross, so we have the " . . . sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." We are forgiven by God's grace, and again, verse 2, we experience His peace.

Now, we move to the second section, verses 3-5, and we are to stand in salvation's hope. We have the elective purpose of God choosing us, saving us by His grace, and what it does is bring to us hope. Let's read verses 3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father,"—this is a eulogy of worship and thanksgiving and praise to God—"of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again,"—that's the idea of being regenerated or born again—"unto a"—here it is, living—"hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,"—and notice this word in verse 4—"reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Write down these three blessings that come to us through our salvation. First, we have a living hope. Look at verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy"—God's mercy is abundant. God's mercy is new every morning, and through His great mercy He—"hath begotten us"—we've been born again—"unto a lively"—living—"hope,"—and it's—"by,"—and through—"the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." So, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the living Savior, brings to us a living hope.

Now, this list could be quite long, but this is the living hope we have. We have the hope that we have been pardoned from our sins. We have the hope that we have His presence in our lives, He said, "I'll never leave you or forsake you," so He becomes an abiding presence in your heart and life, never to leave you, never to forsake you. Thirdly, we have his power, right? When you become a child of God and you're born again, you're regenerated, you now have the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life of holiness and true godliness.

We also will have His pattern in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Do you know the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a pattern of ours? He's the prototype. Do you know that Jesus Christ is the first one to ever come out of the grave in an eternal, immortal body. He's called the firstfruits of those who sleep. What a great, great hope that is. This is why Easter gets me so pumped. It's

so awesome to celebrate Easter—not the chocolate eggs or Easter bunny, but the resurrection of Jesus. All our hopes are on Jesus Christ—His death, his burial, and His resurrection.

When you lay your loved ones in the ground and your heart is broken and you say, “Goodbye,” they’re only sleeping. They’re waiting the resurrection, and just as Jesus rose from the dead, our bodies will be quickened and risen from the dead as well. What a glorious prospect that is. So, we have a living hope.

Secondly, in verse 4, we have a heavenly hope. I like this. “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,”—and I’m so glad it’s—“reserved in heaven for you.” Our salvation guarantees heaven. Again, what a blessing it is when that reality hits you to realize, “I’m going to go to heaven.” What a blessing to realize that, “I’m going to go to heaven.” I believe not only in the doctrine of the security of true believers, but I believe also in the assurance that a believer should have of their security in salvation. If you’re not sure you’re going to heaven, something’s wrong. You’re not believing God or trusting God or resting in His promises. If you’re not accepting the truth of God’s Word and assurance, “I am going to go to heaven,” and that you can face even death with courage that you will be resurrected and meet Christ in the air...the moment you die, you’re with the Lord, but you’re in what’s called the intermediate state waiting for the resurrection of the body to be reunited with the soul and spirit and forever with the Lord. What a blessing that will be!

So, we have a living hope, and then we have a heavenly hope our salvation, verse 4, guarantees. Notice the word “reserved.” Have you ever been traveling and come to the hotel. They say, “May I help you?” “Yes, my name’s John Miller.” They start typing on the computer. “Do you have a reservation?” “Yeah, I have a reservation.” “Give me your confirmation,” they start typing. They say, “Sorry, Mr. Miller. We don’t have any record of you having reservations.” You just kind of for a moment say, “Lord, help me not to lose my sanctification.” Or, you go to rent a car and you book the car, set up the car, and then they say they don’t have your name, they don’t have you set up, you’re not reserved, and you have a confirmation number. How upsetting that is. Can you imagine getting to heaven, and you walk into the gates and they say, “What’s your name?” “John Miller.” (typing sound) “Sorry, Mr. Miller, we have no reservations for you.” “But, I was a pastor.” “Too bad.” Freak out, right? I’m so glad that there’s a name written in heaven and that I have a reservation and it’s reserved for me, kept by the power of God. It’s a sure hope.

So, we have a living hope, we have a heavenly hope that’s sure, our salvation is set that we’re reserved in heaven...that word “reserved,” I looked it up, means to guard. It means to garrison. It was used of a military garrison guarding and protecting. Jesus in John 14 said, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many mansions: if . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Jesus not only promised heaven, His Father’s house, but He prayed in John 17 and said, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me . . . that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” He said I want to have them in heaven with Me, and I

believe that the Father will answer that prayer.

When does the believer go to heaven? Well, you have two options: either you get raptured and you go to meet the Lord in the air in the rapture, that those who are alive and remain, translated; or you're resurrected, you'll already be in heaven waiting for your body to be resurrected, and there we will forever be with the Lord.

What about heaven does it say here, verse 4? Heaven is our inheritance, heaven is incorruptible, heaven is undefiled, heaven will never fade away. Notice it's incorruptible; it means that it won't decay, it's actually death proof. It won't decay. Undefiled means it won't tarnish, stain, or dim. Can you imagine, "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, then it started to dim a little bit? We notice the streets of gold are turning now to asphalt and there's cracks in the road. You say, "I can't believe it. I was on my way to the mansion the other day, and somebody graffiti'd it." But, the gold starting to tarnish, or the light starting to dim, it won't happen.

I love that stanza in John Newton's, "Amazing Grace," When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun—it'll never dim or weaken—We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we first begun." Praise God. That's for you, that's for me. All of this is intended to encourage suffering Christians. When the outlook is bad, try the uplook. You have a reservation in heaven.

Then, Peter says, " . . . and that fadeth not away," verse 4. It means that it can never suffer variations in value, glory, or beauty. It's time proof. Praise the Lord!

Thirdly, we have in verse 5 a secure hope. Look at verse 5, "Who are kept by the power of God." What is keeping us for heaven? God is by His own power, " . . . through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." This is when Christ comes back in His majesty, in His power, in His glory of the Second Coming, so our hope is secure. We're kept by the power of God. Jude, verse 24, says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." In Romans 8:1, every Christian should memorize Romans 8:1, it says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," period. That's where that verse stops. If you're a Christian, you're in Christ; if you're in Christ, no condemnation.

Write down Romans 8:30 where Paul says, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." I love what Jonathan Edwards used to say, "What begins with grace ends in glory." I know you've heard me quote that a million times. I start quoting it enough and I don't give credit to its source, Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan Edwards said, "What begins with grace ends in glory." You're saved by grace, you're headed for glory. Amen? This is all to encourage us. What a blessing.

I just want to give you a sneak peek at one more verse as we wrap up, "Wherein—in light of

what he just said—“ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations,”—trials or testings. Let’s pray.