

What You See Isn't What You Get | 2-3-2019

[00:00:13] Good morning. Those of you here in Baker joining over in the sanctuary joining online I'd ask you take your Bible or your handheld your device and turn with me to first Peter. Chapter 1. We continue this series today through the books of First and Second Peter the believers Guide To The Galaxy subtitled Navigating a world that is no longer our home and we are digging into first Peter. We're still in chapter 1 and I just want to point your attention to something that we're going to try as church you know how if you're anything like me as you read in your list your scripture page Bibles to circle things underline highlight write notes in the margin. I know that my kids like to buy Bibles with huge margins in fact they're now making Bibles with a blank page on the left and the text on the right so you can draw art and really really go at it. And we're going to try to do something. The idea came to our attention as a creative team here at the church we thought we're going to try it and that is in a hallway. I know it's a bit of a ways from right here in the baker center but it's over just outside of our sanctuary we have a wall of glass that kind of looks over to what was the prison you know kind of right along Kingstree. And along that whole wall we've put first and second Peter and we want you to highlight or make a note around your favorite verse so please stroll over there and indicate as we make our way through this series we just want to celebrate with each other really what God is doing in your heart. So there's plenty of room on the sides and there's markers out there on the window sill so take part in that would. I'm really excited as this series unfolds to see what God is doing in your heart as we can kind of celebrate that together so we'll give that a try first.

[00:02:16] Peter chapter one verse one Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to God's elect exiles scattered throughout. As we've seen the provinces of glacier capital see Bethenny upon us these are regions in what is now modern day Turkey who have been chosen according to the fore knowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood. Beautiful picture of the Trinity father spirit and son sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Praise be.

[00:03:02] Peter saw this last week Peter says.

[00:03:04] Praise be to God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ as he enters into this letter. It begins with a doxology. Praise be praise be the word Doxa is the Greek word for glory and he begins not by teaching or giving an imperative. He just begins by looking up. Praise be to God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ in his great mercy. He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish.

[00:03:45] Spoiler fade this inheritance kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation. Ready to be revealed in the last time God's mercy has given us as His children. These three amazing gifts right. You see them one through this new birth. We have a living hope that each and every day we have a hope that is within us through the Spirit of God knowing that God is with us. He is getting us through it. We never are alone. Living Hope we have a lasting inheritance never perish spoil or fade. This is risk kept in heaven for us. And the third gift is knowing the beautiful living glorious hope the blessing of hope. The Bible calls it of the appearing of Jesus Christ when he comes back. These three things.

[00:04:42] Now verse 6 in all this you greatly rejoice.

[00:04:48] What's the all this it's everything that we see in three four and five right. It's these amazing gifts that God gives to believers in all this you greatly rejoice.

[00:05:01] And then he shifts gears in the middle of verse 6 though now for a little while you may

have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials though now for a little while you're going to be dealing with struggles.

[00:05:20] It's really what I see and this is the upper story and the lower story. We talk a lot about that here Kingstree right.

[00:05:28] The upper story God's higher purpose is in his plans and heaven and glory and what is what is happening in a world that we can't even see yet and yet it is so real the upper story the meta narrative.

[00:05:43] And yet we also have the lower story of our lives on this earth you know as I thought about what Peter saying. Praise be to the God and Father in His great mercy he's given us these these things these gifts a lasting inheritance. And yet right now in the lower story we struggle.

[00:06:01] I thought about it a passage of scripture that Jesus actually told iStore keep your finger in first Peter but turn with me to Luke 16 I want you to see this because to me it it absolutely dovetails with what Peter wants us to understand.

[00:06:18] About trials and about glory and about the things above and the things below Jesus told the story. There was a rich man Verse 19 of Luke 16. There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury. Every day he wasn't struggling at all. Not outwardly anyway and I think that's kind of the point of the story that that this rich man kind of had it made lived in luxury every day it was lower story glory if you will.

[00:06:56] And is at his gate was late a beggar named Lazarus covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. That's how bad he had it. Even the dogs.

[00:07:12] How visual is that. Came and licked this poor beggars sores as he laid at the gate of the rich man's house.

[00:07:26] Well the time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.

[00:07:33] So the poor man named Lazarus in this story is brought up and and brought into glory gay beside Abraham's side.

[00:07:45] In Hades or I'm sorry the rich man also died and was buried in Hades where he was in torment. So the rich man went from a luxurious life to a place of torment that is as we'll see in this account eternal in Hades where he was. He looked up and he saw Abraham far away with Lazarus biocides so he called out Father Abraham have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue because I am in agony in this fire. Well there's a lot to this story isn't there. Jesus is clearly indicating that after we die that our destiny our fate if you will is sealed and this rich man that had upper I'm sorry lower story glory ends up in an eternal struggle and the poor man Lazarus is there in glory Lazarus arms or the rich man calls out send him down here I'm in I'm in torment in this fire. But Abraham said Son remember that in your lifetime you received your good things while Lazarus bad but now he is comforted here and you are in agony and beside all this between us there is a great chasm so that no one can cross from one side to the other he said. Then I beg you father send Lazarus to my family for I have five brothers. Let them warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment.

[00:09:21] Abraham replied Well they have the Bible. They got preachers. They got people that are telling them all of these things. Pastor Jodie's preach on this Sunday at Kingstree.

[00:09:36] Father Abraham he said but if someone from the dead goes they will repent goes to them.

[00:09:45] Did you find it interesting that Jesus named the beggar he gave him the name in the story Lazarus. Just take note of the fact that Jesus told this story a mere weeks before he went to a place called Bethany and raised a man literally named Lazarus from the dead.

[00:10:07] He's foreshadowing the fact that even Lazarus who after four days in the tomb would rise again and would have the opportunity to literally speak to his five brothers and say No listen to me. I've been on the other side. I have experienced upper story glory and I've seen eternal torment. Listen to me.

[00:10:31] What's Jesus saying. He said even if Lazarus rises from the dead and he will they're not going to listen. If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets they won't be convinced.

[00:10:42] Even if someone rises from the dead what we see in this account here in Luke 16 is is the difference between what I'll call upper story glory. The reality of God and His presence in Heaven and The Kingdom of God and the inheritance that we have is as as children of God. Upper story glory and lower stories struggle and what Peter wants us to understand is that into our lower story struggle God wants to pour into our hearts a lasting inheritance a coming salvation a living hope he wants our eyes to be opened to the upper story and to realize that whatever we are going through in this life it's temporary. It's not eternal and it has a purpose. Verse 7 go back to first Peter Chapter 1.

[00:11:37] These trials have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire.

[00:11:51] Even the most incredible gold on this earth won't last into eternity it will ultimately perish in this world.

[00:12:01] But your faith is worth far more than gold in it that it may result in praise glory and honor. When Jesus Christ is revealed you see Peter wants us to understand some things about our trials on this earth.

[00:12:15] I want to point out five things. First of all trials are opportunities not obstacles. Trials are opportunities. Not obstacles.

[00:12:26] How many of you have heard of resistance training resistance training right in the end the world of fitness where you can get these straps and and do this training where it's its resistance against your muscles even dumbbell bells and free weights are a form of resistance training let me tell you what resistance training is. It works by causing microscopic damage or tears to the muscle cells. Resistance training literally goes into the cellular structure of your muscles and damages it creates these microscopic tears in your cells. No wonder it hurts right.

[00:13:12] Which in turn are quickly repaired by the body to help the muscle regenerate or grow stronger. You see whatever trials we face they are resistance training for our soul. They are opportunities not obstacles. God gives these struggles and trials in our lives for a reason. Second of all trials are temporary not forever. Look back in verse 6 verse Peter Chapter 1 in all this you greatly rejoice though. Now for a little while you may be suffering trials what Peter wants us to understand is the trials are temporary not forever.

[00:14:00] Paul says the same thing in Romans Chapter 8 verse 18. I consider that our present

sufferings. Paul writes Romans 8 18 are not worth the worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us you see. There is an expiration date on suffering.

[00:14:20] They are temporary not forever. How many of you like to fly anybody or any like to fly. Let me flip it around. How many you hate flying. You can't stand getting in an airplane. My wife is one of those. She will do it but kind of dreads it. But I want to ask you a question. Would you rather have a smooth flight with a crash landing. Or a bumpy flight with a safe landing.

[00:14:57] What would you rather have right.

[00:15:07] Thirdly trouser purposeful not random. Every trial has a so that so that Mark that in your brain someone go and underlined so that on the wall out on our scripture wall so that every trial has a so that there is a reason that God allows trials into our lives.

[00:15:32] Fourth trials are painful. Not imaginary.

[00:15:38] We need to understand that these are real trials. This is real struggle in fact. How does he put it.

[00:15:46] Though for a little while you may have had to suffer.

[00:15:51] What's the next word.

[00:15:53] Grief is not just suffering and trials but suffering grief in all kinds of trials.

[00:16:02] You know when I think of grief and what ultimately causes real deep grief it's it's actually not the trials that we face.

[00:16:13] It's when we see trials and other people and when we lose people that we love we have a ministry here called Grief share and people that go through it are working through the suffering of grief because they've lost someone very close to them. You know this is real grief is real struggles are real trials are real and yet there is a so that behind each one. And fifthly to say this trials are multifaceted and not one direction though you experience trials of various kinds or of many kinds that word various in the Greek as the Greek word Poika kilos which means many coloured we don't often think of trials coming in many colours many splendid vibrant colours and yet they do right. Every trial can build our faith and they come in so many different forms multifaceted Peter then says this in verse. Though you have not seen him you love him. And though you do not see him now you believe in him and you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. For you are receiving the end result of your faith the salvation of your soul. Here is the bottom line of what Peter wants us to understand trials build our faith.

[00:17:54] They expand our capacity for joy. That seems so counterintuitive but so does breaking down the cellular structure of our muscles to build it up. It is what God is doing in our lives he is using trials and struggles ultimately to expand our capacity for greater joy and to remind us that this world is no longer our home.

[00:18:22] We don't live here forever on it all three of my favorite chapters in fact my very favorite chapter in Scripture is second Corinthians chapter 4. Turn with me there real quick if you would in your Bible. Second Corinthians chapter 4 Paul book ends this chapter. With this idea Paul writes second Corinthians the whole book of second Corinthians.

[00:18:51] Out of place of struggle out of a place of trial of the comfort of God coming in to

minister to him in the midst of his deep deep struggles in fact chapter one he describes how he almost lost his life. We don't know the exact situation but all of second Corinthians 4 is written from a place of Paul's deep struggle and yet this triumph in the fourth chapter. Paul declares sins through God's mercy. We have this ministry. We do not lose heart. And he books that bookends this whole chapter with that phrase look at verse 16. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we waste away inwardly we are being renewed each and every day.

[00:19:42] Paul is declaring. Life is tough. I'm going through some real struggles and yet in the midst of it he said I have this treasure of God's power and mercy and and strength in this jar of clay to show that this all surpassing power is from God. It's not from me for seven. And he rolls into verse 8 to say even though I am hard pressed on every side. I'm not in despair. Even though I am crushed I'm not alone. Even though I'm I may be going through the hardest of times. I am not abandoned. God is always with me. And I love that and then he called culminates this fourth chapter to remind us exactly what Peter says. We don't look at this life through the lens of it being eternal. Our light verse 17 and momentary troubles are light and momentary troubles are achieving for us. Upper story glory and eternal glory that far out weighs all of the struggles that I'm going through in this life.

[00:20:53] So we fix our eyes not on what we see. But what we don't see because what we see is temporary but what we don't see is eternal.

[00:21:04] Paul is making this point exactly the same point that Peter is making and he says something in chapter 6 verse 10 that is it's really almost mindblowing he says sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Look at it they're sorrowful yet always rejoicing. These two things can coexist in my heart. At the same time I'm going through deep grief deep struggle deep trial. And yet in the midst of it I understand and experience the great mercy and joy of God poured into my heart.

[00:21:42] And how does this happen. We see it in Chapter 5 Verse 17 4.

[00:21:46] We live by faith and not by sight.

[00:21:52] All of the struggles that we face have so that and that so that is the building up of our faith.

[00:22:00] You know I want to give you some prayers. Why don't you just suggest some prayers for you first prayer six of them came to my mind.

[00:22:09] Lord though I don't have all the answers. I know that I have you. I don't have all the answers but I have you.

[00:22:19] I believe that you are never closer God than when I am suffering struggling.

[00:22:28] I love the poem of the footprints in the sand right where we get through a trial and we look back and say there's only one foot set of footprints.

[00:22:36] God where were you. To which Jesus says oh my child that's when I was carrying we're never closer than when we Lord.

[00:22:46] I don't have all the answers but I have you and you're carrying me second prayer Lord although I can't always trace your hand.

[00:22:55] Everything doesn't make sense to me.

[00:22:57] God I trust your heart. I love that prayer I pray that prayer often God I don't get it all. I don't understand what you're doing but I know that your good and your god lord. Third prayer. I cannot experience all the good the you have for me until I embrace this trial. Father I believe. Please help my unbelief. Pray that prayer. Jesus I'm not just going to pray. I'm going to pray believing prayers. I think there's a difference. Now we can pray but then we can pray. True believing prayers where we to the core of our being trust God to get us through to help us to show us the way you are the God who creates beauty out of ashes.

[00:23:52] Be reminded of that. That's who he is. He is in the business of creating beauty out of ashes.

[00:24:01] That we rise up we rise out of whatever ashes we might be in. And my very very favorite prayer in all of scripture is in second chronicles chapter 20 verse 12. We're an obscure King by the name of Josiah a fat parade. This simple prayer. God I don't know what to do.

[00:24:21] But my eyes are on you. That's how God wants us to respond.

[00:24:29] It's how he builds our faith in the middle of our trials. Because I thought about kind of landing this sermon. I wanted to share with you an example or an illustration of someone's life. Her name is Johnny Erickson. TODD Have you ever heard of Johnny Johnny and friends ministry. Some of you have back in 1967 Johnny was at a summer cabin 17 years old she was a swimmer she dove in to what turned out to be shallow water off the dock and she broke her neck. Leaving her at the age of 17 a quad paraplegic paralyzed from the neck down. No use of hands or legs. Johnny says lying in my hospital bed. I tried desperately to make sense of the horrible turn of events.

[00:25:24] I begged friends to assist me in my suicide slit my wrists dumped pills down my throat anything to end my Minhas misery. Her friends wouldn't do it. She says she realized that she was too helpless to even die on her own.

[00:25:40] She adds I had endured long surgeries to shave down the bony prominences on my back and it was a long recovery I lost a great deal of weight for for well over three weeks I was forced to lie down on what's called a Stryker frame a long flat canvas sandwich where they put you face up for three hours then strap another piece of canvas and flip you face down to lie there for another three hours.

[00:26:06] Week after week trapped face down staring at the floor. Hour after hour my thoughts grew dark and hopeless. All I could think was great god way to go. I'm a brand new Christian. This is how you treat your new Christians I'm young in the faith. I prayed for a closer walk with you.

[00:26:24] If this is your idea of an answer to prayer I'm never going to trust you with another prayer again. I can't believe that I have to lie face down and do nothing but count the tiles on the floor of this stupid torture rack. I hate my existence.

[00:26:40] One night one of her close friends Cindy blurted out Johnny you aren't the only one Jesus knows how you feel. He was paralyzed too.

[00:26:50] Johnny glared at her. What are you talking about. Cindy continued it's true.

[00:26:54] Remember he was nailed on a cross. His back was Raul from beating he must have yearned for a way to move or change positions.

[00:27:05] But he couldn't.

[00:27:06] He was paralyzed by his nails. The thought intrigued Johnny and God became incredibly close to her she says. I had no other identity but God. And gradually he became enough. The first months and years she was obsessed trying to find out what God was teaching her. Secretly she hoped that by finding out God's ideas she could learn her lesson and he would hear she went to the Book of Job and strangely she could not find answers to the why tragedies anywhere in the Book of Job. But job clung to to God regardless.

[00:27:42] And God rewarded. Is that what God wants. She wondered. Her focus changed from demanding an explanation from God to humbly depending on him. OK I'm paralyzed. It's terrible. I don't like it. But can God use me paralyzed. Can I paralyze still worship God and love him.

[00:28:05] He began to teach me that I could do you know who the truly handicapped people are. Johnny asks. They're the ones and many of them are Christians who hear the alarm clock go off at 730 in the morning. Throwback to clobbers covers jump out of bed.

[00:28:20] Take a quick shower choke down breakfast rush out the door.

[00:28:24] They do all of this on autopilot without stopping once to acknowledge their creator their great God who gives them life and strength every day. Christian of you live that way. Do you know the James for 6 says that God opposes you for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble she says I have hope for the future.

[00:28:49] Now the Bible speaks of our bodies being glorified in heaven. In high school that always seemed like a hazy foreign concept to me but I now realize that I will be healed. I haven't been cheated out of being a complete person. I'm just going through a 50 year delay and God stays with me even through that. I now know the meaning of being glorified. It's the time after my death.

[00:29:17] When I'll be dancing on my feet.

[00:29:19] And one day I'm going to leave this wheelchair behind. I cannot wait. I may have suffered with Christ on earth but one day I will reign with him in glory. I may have tested tasted the pains of living on this planet but one day I'm going to eat from the tree of life and the pleasure of evidence are going to happen in the twinkling of an eye.

[00:29:39] The Lord's overcoming of this world will be the lifting of the curtain on our five senses and we will see him and we will be like him and we will see the whole universe in plain sight. I think at first the shock of the joy that will come from reveling in the waterfall of love and pleasure that is the trinity may burn with a brilliance now of newness of being glorified but in the next instant we will be at peace.

[00:30:08] We will be drenched with the light we will feel at home as if we had always been this way as though we were born for such a place because we are for I sure hope I can bring this wheelchair to heaven.

[00:30:25] Now I know that's not theologically correct but I hope to bring it and put it in a little corner of heaven and then in my new perfect glorified body standing on grateful legs I'll stand next to Jesus hold his nail pierced hand and I'll say thank you Jesus and he'll know what I mean.

[00:30:44] Because he knows me he'll recognize me from the fellowship we're now sharing in his suffering and I will say Jesus do you see that wheelchair. You were right when you said that in this

world we would have trouble because that thing. Was a lot of trouble but the weaker I was in that thing the harder I leaned on you and the harder I leaned on you the stronger I discovered you to be.

[00:31:11] It never would have happened had you not given me the bruising and blessing of that wheelchair. Then the real ticker tape parade of praise will begin and all of Earth will join the party.

[00:31:24] And at that point Christ will open up our eyes to the great fountain of joy in his heart for us beyond all that were ever able to experience on Earth. And we were able to stop laughing and crying the Lord Jesus really will wipe away our tears. I find it so poignant that finally at the point when I do have the use of my arm to wipe away my tear I won't have to because Jesus will.

[00:31:53] Lord Jesus we thank you now for your your mercy your glory your power and yet Lord Jesus though for a little while.

[00:32:04] Even now we experience trials on this earth I thank you Lord Jesus that there is a so that for every trial that you have a purpose and a plan. Lord might these prayers becoming grained in our hearts. God I don't know what to do but my eyes are on you. Lord even when I cannot trace your hand I trust your heart. Lord I believe. Please help my unbelief. And Lord Jesus might these trials do the work.

[00:32:37] Of tearing down the cellular structure of my pride ripping that pride of part to the core of my being and building me up Lord in faith trusting you no matter what trusting you knowing Lord God that I have a living hope a lasting inheritance and a coming salvation or Jesus. Thank you. I worship the in your name we pray.