

Announcements:

Dismiss Kids - Welcome Guests

- 1) Winter Spring Group - FPU Interest Mtg. today after the service
- 2) Covenant Class today at Reddy's 12:30-3:30p
- 3) Baptism Class 1/19 following the service 12:00-12:45p
- 4) Vision Sunday 1/26

Happy New Year. I missed being with you last week, but had the great privilege of representing you at the Mayoral Inauguration, as our new Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn, invited me to lead the closing prayer. It was a great opportunity to serve her and bless our city.

But I am really excited to be back for week 2 of our new Series through the book of 1 Peter. If you missed last week, go back and listen to Pastor Jon's excellent introduction.

Introduction: Pg. ____

“Today & Tomorrow” 1 Peter 1:3-5

We're calling this series: “Keep Moving,” because the people to whom Peter wrote needed big time encouragement to (that's right): **KEEP MOVING**. Someone say: “Keep Moving.”

They lived in a culture at odds with their commitment to Christ, even to point of significant persecution. Though we may not share the same difficulties, we will gain insight on how to live in a culture that often holds contrary values and perspectives to those of Jesus.

To help them navigate their difficult situation, Peter immediately turns their eyes to the expansive, robust quality of their faith.

- Just as many people falsely assume Christianity is only a spiritual endeavor holding little relevance for the rest of life (which could not be farther from the truth! — as C.S. Lewis said: “I believe in Christianity, as I believe the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but by it, I see everything else.”...
- In a similar way, many people falsely assume Christianity is about booking your eternal destination, but it does not do much good TODAY.

With his introductory words, Peter shows them and he shows us that we have a today and tomorrow kind of faith. Yes, there's more than we can dream on the horizon, but God is up to something great, RIGHT NOW.

These words call us to...

The Point: Praise God for changing our today & tomorrow.

Listen to how Peter opens his introduction in **Text - 1 Peter 1:3-5** ... [[the intro forms one massive sentence that runs through verse 12 in the Greek text. It introduces the key themes that will be addressed throughout the letter.]]

Jesus brings us...

1. Life for Today (1:3).

Look at this first word: “Blessed”

- The Greek word is *eulogētos*. You can hear the root of our word: “eulogy.” It could be translated “praise.”
- Peter immediately LAUNCHES into PRAISE, celebrating God's amazing work through Jesus! (You! You! You!)
- Praise be the God and Father...

In this, we learn two lessons to help us “Keep Moving...”

#1) We can praise God in the pain. These words are just as radical as the beginning of James' letter, when he wrote: “Count it all joy when you face trials of various kinds.”

#2) There is immense value in stopping to praise. Call it a praise break, call it pushing play, call it whatever you want: stopping to praise God realigns our hearts, refocuses our minds, and causes a SHIFT within us that equips us to do the next thing God has called us to do.

A year and a half ago, during a time of worship with other church leaders from across the Northeast, God whispered to my heart: “Worship your way to revival.” In other words, you will see a widespread move of God [in RHC and way beyond] by continuing to praise ME!

Praise takes us places!

Whatever the destination (making it through the day, seeing breakthrough in your family, or being part a major move of God, whatever!), God is saying: **“Worship your way THERE.”**

But remember, our worship is always a response to the revelation of who he is!

When Peter addressed God as the Father of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, he made a troubling claim to the ears of Rome. Why? Under Roman rule, the Emperor demanded that people worship him. To say Jesus is LORD is to say Jesus is the true King, the true Ruler, the one true God (after all, the term LORD is the divine name given to God - YHWH).

Apologetic Sidebar

So many people say, “Jesus is just a good option among many.” But the life, death and resurrection of Jesus do not leave room for that option. He is either God or he is joke.

T: Why does Peter launch into praise? God has brought us a whole new life!

Born Again

As we begin this new year (new decade), there’s something refreshing about a fresh start. Who doesn’t appreciate a new beginnings where we can make the most of a new opportunities?

Look at this: God offers us something so much better than a fresh start? He offers us a whole new life!

To be born again is to experience a death to life miracle.

- Peter is saying, once you did not have spiritual life. You were spiritually dead. Now, you are spiritually alive!
- Once you were outside of God’s family. Though you may be rejected by others, you’ve been born into God’s family!
- This new reality changes everything (what we love and want, how we think and feel).
- It is the reality by which we filter every experience, even the really difficult ones.

That’s why Peter begins here. Our ability to keep moving forward is fueled by what Jesus has done for us!

And let me be very clear this morning: this is an absolute necessary for every one of us.

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

How does this happen?

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

Have you been made new? Have you received spiritual life through Jesus?

- You say: I’m not good enough. That’s right. No one is! It comes by faith and the GREAT mercy of God: “According to his great mercy.”
- The mercy of God is his compassion toward us in spite of our total helplessness to right our wrongs.

How can this be possible? “Caused us to be born again *through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.*”

Resurrection

- Christianity rises and falls on the resurrection of Jesus. The most important question a person will ever answer: Did Jesus rise from the dead?
- Cornelius Plantinga Jr. said: “In His resurrection Jesus opened a door that had always been locked and He has left it open.”
- You say: “Tanner, what does that mean for me?” It means EVERYTHING! He left the door open for us!
- We enjoy LIFE TODAY because Jesus defeated death. Right now, HIS LIFE IS FLOWING THROUGH MY VEINS. Right NOW!!
- The question is: are we living like it? Jesus rose from the dead so our lives could be FULL of his LIFE: love and joy and energy and supernatural peace in the difficult moments of life.

T: ...But not only does Jesus bring us LIFE FOR TODAY. He brings us...

2. Hope for Tomorrow (1:4-5).

Peter goes on to describe three results of God bringing us this new life: living hope, inheritance, and salvation.

Read 4-5 again

First, it says we possess a living hope.

What are we talking about when we talk about hope?

- Hope is the confident expectation that our deepest desires will be fulfilled.
- Ordinarily, when we express hope, it carries a level of uncertainty:
 - "I hope I will pass that exam. I hope I will get that job."
 - When I was a kid: I hoped I would make it to the NBA.
 - When Marsha was a kid, she hoped she would marry someone rich! :)
- What we mean is: "Maybe it will happen; maybe it won't."

BUT the biblical idea of hope carries an unshakable confidence that it will happen! God will fulfill every one of his promises!

That's why our hope is a living hope.

- This hope is alive.
- It's not a dying hope that grows weaker and weaker, but a hope full of strength, a hope that holds power to push us forward.
- This hope fuels our resolve and lifts our hearts above the chaos surrounding us.

This is so relevant because we live in a world that often seems hopeless: depression and addiction, sickness and stress, political turmoil and broken relationships.

Now, we can look at every one challenges and say: because of the resurrection of Jesus, there's something greater ahead.

And don't miss this. Christian hope is not an abstract ideal of something better, even though we don't know what that better is, other than, we just know it's better than what we're experiencing right now... no, no, no.

Our hope is Jesus Christ!

T: He is our living hope, and he is our inheritance. Look at verse 4.

Inheritance: wealth passed down or a legacy received as a member of a family. A REWARD!

- In the Old Testament, inheritance was most often associated with God's promise of land.
- Now, our inheritance includes every spiritual blessing through Jesus. Our inheritance includes the promise of living with God forever one day in the new heavens and the new earth.
- If you've been born into God's family, your God's kids. You get his infinite riches, an inheritance that cannot be calculated!

Listen, I'm all about stewarding money wisely so we can give, save, and spend in a way that honors God, but we need to recognize in our individualistic, materialistic, consumeristic, [narcissistic, make heaven the sickest sometimes] culture, there is so much more than riches in this life!!

Bank accounts, houses, and cars; wills and investment funds built through your Acorns App can never, ever, ever compare with the inheritance that awaits us!

What are you living for? Are you living for TRUE RICHES verse 4 describes?

- It is imperishable. It will never corrode or be corrupted.
- It is undefiled. It will not spoil or lose its value.
- It is unfading. It never loses its beauty or lustre.
- It is kept in heaven for you. In other words, God put your name on it, and no one can touch it!

Finally, in verse 5 says... "[we are] "being guarded" by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

The salvation he is talking about is our ultimate and final salvation from this broken world into God's presence forever.

- Saved (from the penalty of sin)
- Being Saved (from the power of sin)
- Will be Saved (from the presence of sin)

We will receive this ultimate salvation because God's power shields us like a fortified city. But notice that it's through our continual faith in Christ. He took God's judgment that we deserved. He died so we wouldn't have to pay the price for our sin. So we LOOK to HIM.

That's the beautiful, intricate relationship of faith and grace. I believe, because God gives me the grace and power to do so each day.

T: Jesus bring us LIFE for TODAY. Jesus brings us HOPE for TOMORROW.

Conclusion:

Peter gives us a vision to... **Let your tomorrow empower your today.**

As we lift your eyes to the horizon of tomorrow, it fills us with an unusual confidence and strength while our feet touch the ground today.

Yes, today may be difficult, but lift your eyes. You've been given a new life, a new power.
You can praise God, RIGHT NOW, for what he's done, and you can rejoice in what lies ahead!

*Invite Pedro...

Are you experience the LIFE God desires for you TODAY? Do you have an indestructible HOPE for TOMORROW?

In just a minute I'm going to pray, and when I pray some of the members of our Prayer Team are going to make themselves available to pray with you. You can come receive prayer for any reason, but I know some here today are saying: I need a FRESH START.

Maybe you want to begin a relationship with God. You're saying I want this new life and unfadable hope Jesus offers. Come and share that with us today!

Maybe others are saying: I have a relationship with Jesus but I also need a FRESH START. I need to be filled with a fresh hope. I need to learn how to praise God in the pain. I need God's power to keep me moving forward.
PRAY. (Band COME OUT) -- MIRACLES...