



**Series Title:** "Exiles – the First Letter of Peter"

**Date:** January 16, 2022

**Message Title:** "Hopeful Exiles"

**Teaching:** Neal McKinney

**Reference:** 1 Peter 1:3-12

Here's a brief outline of the passage:

- The future inheritance (vv. 1-5)
  - A living hope
  - An eternal hope
- The present joy (vv. 6-9)
  - Rejoicing in our trials
  - Refining our faith
- The past revelation (vv. 10-12)
  - Prophecies regarding Jesus
  - Sufferings now and glories to come

#### Message Notes:

When Peter writes of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he states important theological truths. Peter tells us that God the Father is the God and creator of the humanity of Jesus, that the Eternal Word takes on the physical body and name of Jesus the Son, and that the Holy Spirit equips and encourages the Son and executes the will of the Father. Here, as in so many other passages, we are shown the nature of the God who is Three and One.

Almighty God, in his great mercy, does not give us what we deserve for our disobedience. Instead, he does everything necessary for us to be "born again." Instead of death and eternal separation from God, we have been released from the curse of Adam. What joy!

We have faced many distractions over the past two years. Pandemics, political unrest, division and conflict within the Church, personal attacks, falsehoods, failures of high-profile leaders... all these trials have tested—are

testing—our faith. And we wonder, what is God doing?

Is there a disconnect in our thinking about God's sovereignty and God's goodness? We may say we believe that God is in charge, all the while not being certain that he has our best at heart. Sometimes in the midst of our trials we don't really "like" God all that much.

What is the hardest thing you've ever been through? Think about how you felt during that trial—or if you're going through it now, how you currently feel. Do you "know" that God is in control? Do you sometimes wonder whether or not he really loves you?

That's OK. We all feel that at some time. It's part of the "already but not yet" nature of our lives. Yes, we know that God's Kingdom has been inaugurated with the coming of Christ. But the plan hasn't been fully realized yet. So we find ourselves facing challenges, some really, really hard ones.

But is this what we were "born again" into? No, we have been born into what Peter calls a "living hope" through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This hope is an eternal inheritance for us, and a source of our joy in the midst of trials.

These trials, Peter tells us (and which Paul echoes in Romans 5) strengthen us; they increase our faith. They are part of the process of our sanctification. Trials are to faith what fire is to gold—refining, purifying.

All of this, Peter reminds us, was foretold by the prophets. And even angels have longed to see the fulfillment of God's plan.



### Questions for Reflection:

- Have you ever been treated “unfairly?” What happened? Did that experience change you in any way?
- Has someone ever disappointed you by not keeping their word, not doing what they said they would? How did you (do you) feel toward that person after that?
- Think of a time when your faith was tested by trials. Perhaps you experienced at the loss of a loved one, or of your health, or your finances. What were your feelings at the time? Or if perhaps you are currently in a time of severe trials; what are your feelings?
- When you consider the current state of our world, do you question whether God is truly sovereign, that he is “in control?”
- Have you struggled at some time with a disconnect between God’s sovereignty and his goodness?
- Have you ever found yourself not “liking” God very much? What brought that about?
- How do you feel when Peter tells you to “rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials?”
- Imagine yourself one of the Jewish prophets, searching to learn the details of God’s plan to save his people. How would you feel when you discover that your efforts to discern the details of that plan were for the benefit of others who would come after you? Why might they have rejoiced?
- Try keeping a journal. Write down your trials. Write your questions, your doubts... and your joys. Describe your feelings toward God. Describe God’s responses to your trials, his grace toward you. As time goes along, return to prior entries to see how God uses trials to increase your faith.

## My Notes and Questions