

# A Reasonable Hope

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, cool. What up, One Harbor? How you doing this morning? You guys doing good? Yeah. Thank you for the little clap there, guys. I feel you. I'm just going to preach right this way.

All right, cool. Yeah, so glad you're with us. If it's your first time, we are pumped that you are here. My name is Jesse. I am one of the pastors here at One Harbor Church, and just want to say a quick shout out to all those hosers listening online. Couldn't be here today. And I say hoser with the most loving, respectful way as possible. I wish you could be with us. Glad you get to keep up with us online. Look forward to having you back. All right, so we have just finished a few really hard Sundays, just thinking about the sermon topics that we've covered the last few Sundays of how we're called as Christians to live out particular areas of our life. It hasn't been too easy, but today, guess what, guys? Today is a little more broad. It's like the 30,000-foot view of Christianity. Christianity. It's less heavy. It's a little bit more light. So, yeah, you can say yay to that. It's going to be a lot of fun. Let's jump into it. 1 Peter 3, verse 8. It says, finally, finally, all of you. And I just want to stop there first, okay? Finally, all of you. Peter is starting this transition. He's saying, hey, we've talked about a few of these things now. I want you guys to really pay attention to this. Finally, he uses this word called telos. That's what finally means. And it's this word meaning final aim or the ultimate goal or the purpose and the target toward which you are living for. Pay attention to this. If you want to understand Christianity, if you want to understand what it means to be a sojourner, a citizen of heaven, what it is to look like living out this life as a Christian, of being in the world but not of the world, pilgrims passing through, we're called to live toward a different aim, right? Our telos is different to what the world says our purpose and the meaning of life and our aim is. And as Peter, what he's doing, he's about to give us the answer to the ultimate question, why do I exist? And it's important how that question gets answered. How we answer that determines the way we live and what we live towards. So why do you exist?

Why do you exist? Am I just the confluence of atoms through random chance that has no more greater purpose than to suck up oxygen on this earth? Is that all I am? Is that why I exist? Maybe that's not your answer. I hope that's not your answer. Maybe you have another answer in mind to that question. Or maybe you're struggling to find an answer to that question. Either way, we're about to hear what God's purpose is and what God says the reason is why we exist. And maybe you're here and you're just like, you know what? I don't really care. I have my own opinion on that. But hey, you're here, so let's just listen and lean in. You know, maybe I could change your mind. Let's go for it. So 1 Peter 3, verses 8 to 9, we're going to start in that. Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless. For to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. So we see right away what he's getting at. He's like, we live, Christian, you are called, you live to bless, not to be blessed. So if you're anything like me, selfish, right? Just honest about that right now, you probably honed in on those last few words, that last phrase, that you may obtain a blessing.

Right? We like that. Yes, Lord, rain down the blessings, please. As the praises go up, the blessings come down. That's what we want, right? As Christians. So we often approach life that way. Lord, bless me, then I will bless. Lord, man, if you can just let me win the lottery, oh, imagine the tithe I could give to your church. Like, oh, Lord, just think about that.

[ 3 : 54 ] Mm-mm-mm. Let's be honest. There's probably not the purest motives there, right, behind that. Our version of the scripture is kind of more like, Lord, give me what I want, and then I'll be able to do what you want. Too often, the things we want from God is stuff that would make life easier, better for us, better job, better house, better car, more money. We want the good things to flow to us.

We want to live this good life. We want more and more and more. And we don't often think about what's flowing out of us. And if we thought about that a little bit more, if we think like, oh, man, actually, we exist not to obtain the blessing. That's not our primary motive. Our primary motive is to bless. Man, it would change what we pray for. It would change how we come to God and what we ask for, right? Peter says the things we should have are unity of mind, which is harmony. We should live in harmony with one another. We should have sympathy for one another. There should be brotherly love.

There should be tenderheartedness. There should be humility. And God says possessing these attributes is actually better than winning the lottery. That's what you really need. That's how God's called us to live.

All those things, all these things that we just talked about are others focused. It's not focused on me. It's focused on someone else. And it costs me something. It costs you something to have these things. Think about it. Unity of mind, harmony. It means I don't get to demand my way no matter what.

Sympathy. It means I'm looking out for others. I'm listening in. I want to know what's going on in your life. Man, so I can sympathize with what's going on. I want to like sit in the pain that you're sitting in. I want to understand how you're feeling. Humility. Humility. C.S. Lewis has this famous quote about humility. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It's actually thinking of yourself less. It's a good definition of humility, right? And so we can see, man, this changes the way we live. And one big change is this. We don't repay in kind. We respond in grace. 1 Peter 3.9 says this. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling insults for reviling insults. For to this we are called.

[ 6 : 14 ] Right? To this we are called. God called us to follow Jesus on his terms, not our terms. We take the high road of love and grace no matter what happens, no matter what comes our way.

So what does that look like? What does that look like to live in this way? We not repay in kind, but we rather respond with grace. What does that look like practically? Then Peter jumps in to these verses in verse 10 and 12, through 12. It says this. Whoever's desires to love life and to see good days. Ooh, that's good. Let's just stop there. Man, we want that, right? We want to love life. We want to see good days, right? The blessings. Let's name it and claim it. Maybe it's just going to come our way.

That's what we want. No. Then what comes after that? It says this. Let him keep his tongue from evil, right? So we're not using our mouths and our words for evil things, tearing people down, lying, being deceitful, his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good, right? So we don't walk in this way of evil. We actually turn from that and we walk in this way of doing good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. Just think about that. Let him seek peace and pursue it. No matter what comes our way. Man, we don't run after violence. We don't run after the fight. We seek peace and we pursue the way of peace. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. So kind of in short, let's just summarize this. Christians bless with their words and we bless with our actions.

And notice there isn't any if statements or there isn't any qualifiers here that get us out of this. It doesn't say, Peter's not saying, hey, when you feel like it, do good. When it suits you, seek peace. If people are treating you nice, then be nice back to them. No, that's not what he's saying at all. We do these things. We live this out because why? Well, it says this, the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. And that is big. Why do we respond with grace rather than repay in kind?

[ 8 : 34 ] And I would say this, it's because we live life for the audience of one. That's what we're called to do. Think about that. Let that sink in a little bit. We live life for the audience of one.

Your Savior's eyes, the king of the universe, his eyes are always set on you. In every facet of your life, whether you're going to school or work, in your marriage, in your parenting, in your rest, in your relaxation, whatever you're doing, the eyes of the Lord is upon you. And so we do all of these things. Every area of our life is lived out for the audience of one, which is living a life of worship. Now, we might be thinking, why do it for God and not for yourself or for the benefit of another person? I mean, those are pretty decent motives, right? Living for the benefit of everything else. Well, what Peter's getting at here is that our hope, our hope to obtain a blessing, our hope is set on a different kind of blessing. Now, let's think about what motivates us, okay? We live for a different kind of blessing. Okay, what motivates us? We do anything that we do. I would challenge us to think about this. Anything that you and I do is motivated towards some kind of reward, right?

So why do we diet? Why do I diet? Well, it's because I want the reward of a trimmer, healthier body. And as you can tell, I'm not dieting right now, all right? Thank you, Bear. I appreciate that. Shame on all of you who laughed. I'm nice to my wife because I'm hoping my reward later on might be a little smooching time, right? All you guys in the room, please, all right? Please. Let's not pretend there's not some like backhanded motivation there. I work, we work hard, you and I work hard for the reward of a raise or for job security or for promotion. And here's the point. It's just in everything that we do, there's this attached hope of a reward for what we are doing. But for the Christian, the Christian who realizes that the eyes of his Savior is upon him, that we live before the audience of one, our reward and our hope is that. And it's a different reward. Now, this isn't meant to scare us into good behavior, right? It could, but it shouldn't. And that would be true if we lived in fear of God and we were scared like God's some mean guy in heaven waiting to throw a lightning bolt at us when we mess up. But if God were a harsh critic and a judge, yeah, it could scare us into good behavior. But for Christians that are saved by grace and the eyes of Jesus, when we know that grace that we've received, the eyes of Jesus aren't eyes of judgment. They're eyes of love. I love this story.

Corrie ten Boom. She was a Dutch Christian during the Nazi era and she actually survived a Nazi internment camp. And she tells this story that deeply impacted her as a teenager. She was listening to a man from India tell a story of how Jesus saved him. And he hated this God of the Bible. He had heard about him, but he absolutely hated him. And he even burned a Bible one day to publicly display his scorn for this God of the Bible. And three days after he had done that, he had this, he still had this unrest in his soul. And he was so unhappy with life that he wanted to die. And so he had come to a place where he said, you know what, I'm going to see who this God is. And it seems like the only way I could find that out is by killing himself. And here's his own account. I planned to throw myself in front of the train which passed by our house. Then suddenly something unusual happened. The room was filled with a beautiful glow and I saw a man. I thought it might be Buddha or some other holy man. Then I heard a voice. How long will you deny me? I died for you. I have given my life for you. Three days before I had burned the Bible and yet he was not angry. I was suddenly changed. I saw him as Christ, the living one, the savior of the world. As this Indian man described his visions of Jesus, someone in the audience asked the question that was on everyone's mind. What did Jesus look like? The man put his hand over his eyes and he says, oh his eyes, oh his eyes. They are so beautiful. They are so full of love. And Corrie ten Boom then writes, man, since then I've longed to see Jesus's eyes. See, the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.

[13:26] His ears are open to their prayer. And too often we get caught up in the difficult call to live to bless because it's not easy. Or we motivate ourselves by putting our hope in the wrong reward. We don't bless so that God will give us bigger homes or better cars. It's now our blessing. The blessing that we seek is the pleasure of Jesus's face and knowing that shining upon us, living before the audience of one.

It's the pleasure of knowing that. His loving eyes set upon us, his ears open to our prayers. Now, we can make a mistake to mean that this means we're guaranteed a life on easy street.

And 1 Peter 3.13 starts out with giving us a hope in that. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? That's a pretty good question. We hope the answer is nobody, right?

If God's for us, he's hearing our prayers. His eyes are on me. I'm living for the audience of one.

Surely, surely that means no more suffering, right? Surely, God. Wrong.

You might be thinking, hey, man, I thought you said the sermon was going to be light and fun. See, our hope doesn't guarantee an escape from suffering. It fuels us to keep being a blessing in the suffering. 1 Peter 3.13-17. Actually, 14-17.

[14:53] But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will than for doing evil. Man, he talks about fear and trouble here. Everyone suffers from fear and trouble. All of us do. I don't care how brave you think you are. We all suffer from fear and trouble.

And here's what happens. If we let ourselves live out that life of fear and trouble, it causes us to live defensively. I mean, think about it. Think about fear-based parenting, right? Fear-based parenting

has these good intentions to keep our kids safe. We don't want our kids to suffer. We're afraid that they're going to get hurt and harmed somehow, some way, shape, and form. But actually, as nice as that may sound, and as good as those intentions may be, it's actually producing harmful results. The more protections we've put around our kids, the more fragile they've actually become. In our attempt to eradicate suffering, we've kicked the can down the road, only to come up to a worse can of worms later on. So here's an example. This is true data. You can find it anywhere, even on Wikipedia, I'm sure. So peanut allergies. Like a few decades ago, man, peanut allergy is a serious thing. Hey, you know, this is pretty dangerous to kids. We're just going to knock them out. And doctors started telling parents, avoid any trace of any peanut in any of the foods you give them while they're infants. Don't expose them to any peanut stuff in the first year of their lives. And then school started eliminating peanut products. And over the years, what started happening isn't that allergies got less. Actually, people, kids started having more peanut allergies. The peanut allergy began to spread to more and more people. Not only the amount of people were coming up with more peanut allergies, but the severity of those allergies to peanuts got even worse. So good intention, man, but it ended up producing more fragility. Helicopter parents and fear of kids being kidnapped. So we don't let our kids leave our sight, right, until they're like 18 and we have to get them out of the house.

So we hover over them and we're trying to protect them. And then there's the fear of our kids being bullied and treated mean. And so we don't let our kids just have unpoliced playtime with other kids because we are so afraid somebody might say something hurtful and harmful to them.

And what the data is showing us is that it's producing adult children who actually are living in fear and are becoming so dependent on adults and looking to adults to keep them safe from their perceived dangers, not even actual dangers. And what's that resulted in is more kids not leaving home.

[17:54] There's an increase. There's been a massive increase. This is fascinating to me. In college counselors, because there has been a huge demand from more students because of their fear, they're experiencing more anxiety and stress. And so they're saying, I need an adult person to help me out with this. I can't cope.

So fear of suffering. The point is this fear of suffering drives us actually to live more defensively. That's what it does. And it makes our world smaller and not bigger, which in turn feeds more fear into our lives. And so this is ugly cycle that just gets worse and worse. It's like, wow, bro, you painted a really bad picture here. What's the antidote? All right, good question. You might think, well, we just got to be more courageous. We got to take more risks. Sure. Okay. But let me tell you something even better. Let me tell you something even truer than that. How, what is the antidote for fear? And I would say faith and hope in God and his promises are the antidote for fear. Not just gearing yourself up to be like, you know what? I'm just going to go for it. I'm just going to start being brave and face this tough world. Abraham, the father of our faith, God called him to leave his hometown and go on this journey. And he did. He left daddy and mommy. He left the safety and security of the familiar.

Why? Because God was looking around for somebody and he thought, oh, I like this guy wearing a fearless t-shirt. I bet you he'll listen to me. No, that wasn't. I mean, he just picked Abraham and he said, hey, I'm calling you to a place. And he gave Abraham these promises, right? Abraham wasn't Rambo. He wasn't this fearless dude with this false bravado that like, hey, I ain't afraid of nothing. If we look at Abraham's life, we actually see the opposite of that. There's a couple of times he used his wife and hid behind her to save his own bacon. He wasn't perfect. So how does he do this? How does he live this life of faith? When God called Abraham, he says this to him, go from your country, Abraham. Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you.

[19:55] And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God gave Abraham a promise.

He gave Abraham a hope to put his faith in. He called him to be a blessing. And Abraham believed in that promise. That's what God said. It said Abraham believed and God credited to him as righteousness. Abraham had to believe in the promises that God was saying. God wasn't saying like, hey, I'm going to pick you up and transplant you right into the land of Canaan, right as I promised you. You need to trust me that it is going to happen. And you know what? This land I'm

calling you to, you're not even going to possess it ever. It's not even going to belong to you. You're just going to journey around it. Like what we're talking about now as sojourners, you're going to journey in it, not really belonging to it. But you know what? It's going to be a place for your kids and your grandchildren, your great, great, great grandchildren. They are going to possess it, but you're never going to see it. And so Abraham, by faith, had to trust God and hold on to those promises. And it kept him from turning back. It was his anchor. It was his hope. And God never promised him as he called him out, you know what? Your life is going to be amazing the whole time. It's going to be suffering free. He doesn't do that. And then we don't see also Abraham doesn't say, he doesn't respond and say, okay, God, I hear what you're saying. Can we parlay some terms here?

You know, can I come and bring something to the table and make some requests before I agree to following you? No, the call of God does not work that way. There is a famous pastor, again, from the Nazi era. I don't know why I'm stuck in the Nazi era in today's. I just realized this now. It's like, wow, man, I was really stuck in the air here. But Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he was a famous guy. Definitely worth reading. He says this, when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him. [ 21 : 59 ] Or it may be a death like Martin Luther's who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time. Death in Christ Jesus. Death of the old man at his call.

That reality, living to what we were called to, living this life, God's calling out us into this journey of faith. It changes how we live. It's freedom from fear, right? Not freedom from fear in the sense of we're not going to face anything that is fearful. But it's freedom from that as we trust in God more and more. When you and I are mistreated for the name of Jesus, we don't become defensive. Instead, we give a reasonable defense, right? Because if we become defensive, what are we going to do? We're going to react and we're going to respond poorly. But man, when we are resting in the truth of God's promises and that he's for us and not against us, and we believe in his call, then we can give a reasonable defense. And we can give it with gentleness and with respect. When we are mistreated, period. We don't react in kind. We don't give, we don't return insult for insult or accusation for accusation. We entrust ourselves to God. We respond with gentleness and a generous grace.

How does this work out? Well, I knew this family a long time ago. And they had some neighbors that were a little bit difficult, right? And so they used to let their little ones into the backyard to play and their little ones, of course, being little ones, would get a little rambunctious and get a little loud. And so one day they came over and said, I'm sorry, you can't let your kids play in the backyard anymore. They're just too loud, right? Now, how many of us would think, why don't you get back into your own property and we'll handle our business on our property, right? I'm sure that was super tempting for them. But you know what? They chose not to hold on to their rights, which they could have. They chose to die in that moment. And so what they did is they said, okay, cool. We'll put our kids in the front yard to play instead of the backyard. And they had a different motive. They had a different reason. They weren't living for themselves and for the immediate blessing.

Why? They wanted to keep their relationship open with this couple so that there would be opportunity in the future for the gospel. And so they didn't respond in a gangster rap-esque tirade back to these people, right? They didn't do that. Man, they responded with undeserved grace.

[ 24 : 44 ] And you know what happened? In time, those neighbors came and apologized to them and said, you know what? We shouldn't have done that. And the relationship remained open. Living defensively, it builds barriers. It builds walls. You know what walls do? Walls keep other people out. And then if that happens, how can we be missional? If all we're doing is inculcating ourselves and just, I got to keep myself safe. I got to play defense. I got to be defensive.

Man, nobody has access to you. And you don't have access to anybody else. Man, but living to bless, what it does, it keeps the door open. That's what we're called to. Now, that doesn't mean the results always work out as well as the story I just told you, right? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who I just quoted, he got killed because of his beliefs. He got killed because he refused to give in to what the Nazis were saying, how he should preach and how he should live and how he should treat others. He was saying, no, I'm staying true to the gospel and it cost him everything. So whatever you're dying might look like, man, guys, we get to do it with joy and a greater hope. We can live to bless. We can only live this way once we realize we have already, we already have everything, every kind

of blessing we need in Jesus. 1 Peter 3, 18 to 22. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison because they formerly did not obey. When God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons were brought safely through the water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him. Man, I wish we had time. We don't have time to get into all the nuance of this particular portion of the scripture, but the headline here is that Christ suffered once for sins. Why? So that he might bring us to God. That's the headline. Because of sin, every person one day must end up in unending suffering, which is life without God. But for Jesus, but for this amazing Savior, that would be true for every single one of us. He came, he suffered the eternal, infinite judgment for our sins.

The justice of God the Father fell upon the righteous Son of God. And as he stood in our place on that cross, taking our sin upon himself, man, he did that for us. The righteous for the unrighteous, right?

He lay in the grave three days, and it looked like death had won. And therefore, sin would have won, but he rose again. He rose again, and like we see at the end of this passage, is now reigning in heaven with all power and all authority. We look at Jesus. We look at what this passage is saying. It says he couldn't receive the glory of the crown until he passed through the humility of the cross. [ 28 : 20 ] That is the way of Jesus. That is the calling that we are called into. We receive the crown of life we're promised if we endure. And it's through the bearing of our cross today and tomorrow and the tomorrows after tomorrow. We enjoy the crown of fellowship with God while we are taking up our cross daily for the name of Jesus. Our hope, our hope is that in Jesus, death has been defeated. That's the promise God has given us. Our hope is death has been defeated. Jesus defeated it for us. Our hope that in Christ, our sins are paid for. Our hope is that our eternal life, life with God, is secure. So we don't try to earn our way into heaven with good works. We hold on to the hope that all that we need, all the blessings that our souls truly want, they're secured in Jesus and his finished work, that we might belong to God. That's the ultimate blessing. It's not his stuff, it's him. In him, we have everything we need.

This is what frees us from living in fear. This is what frees us to bless. This is what frees us and how we live out being a blessing. We live free. We live for the audience of one to bless, to be a blessing, knowing that our blessings are complete in Jesus. If you're here and you're not a Christian, it's easy to live afraid. It's easy to try and think of, man, you know, I'm just going to live a good life. I'm going to do what's right. I'm going to earn my way into heaven. I'm going to earn my way into God's graces. Or maybe that's not you, but you're denying God altogether. And hey, I'm just going to do this on my own. I'm going to deal with the suffering of this life on my own. I want to ask you, how is that going for you? How is that going for you? And God is offering you a better hope.

God is calling you to lay down your fears. He is calling you to pick up faith in Jesus. Put your faith in him today. Put your promise in him today. They are good promises. He has done all the work for you. He's calling you to let go of defensive living and put your hope in him. God's calling you out of the place where you live right now, your spiritual hometown. It's not a good hometown, the place where you're stuck in. And it probably feels like safe and a secure place. It's probably going to be hard for you to leave. But man, he's calling you and he's a good God and he's calling you into his love. He's calling you into his blessing. He's calling you into his promises and believe in them. Trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Answer his call. If you're here and you're a Christian, as we respond with communion, we remind ourselves that Jesus calls to come.

He calls us to come and die to ourselves. What does that look like for you today? What does that look like for you and me today? Ponder, what is God calling you to die to?

Perhaps it's dying to the fears that are driving your life right now. Perhaps it's responding to stepping out in faith, to journey with God. Maybe he's calling you to something that you keep saying, no, no, no, no, no. And I want to say, man, some of you, many of you in this room have put up your hands already in faith to trust in God. You stepped out and you said, you know what? I don't feel qualified to lead a community group, but I'm going to go ahead and do that. Or I don't feel comfortable attending a community group in some stranger's home, but you've done that. You've

put up your hand to plant this church. You've put up your hand to serve in hospitality or in kids ministry on Sundays or with the music and media team. You responded, you give your tithes and offerings faithful, even when it isn't that convenient. You open your doors and your homes to neighbors. And there's like countless other things that only God knows that you do, as you put up your hand to die to yourself and respond to him. And as we come today, let's be reminded, man, God is calling us. He's calling us out of our seats to come to his table, which is a really cool thing. And when we come and we remember that this table represents every blessing that we need in Jesus Christ. His blood that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins, his body that was broken so we could come to God and belong to him. Communion reminds us that in his suffering, our blessings are complete and secure and waiting for us in heaven. And we can take it today remembering and believing that even in the meantime, in this life, as we suffer, we do so in fellowship with Christ and his sufferings. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you. We thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for this calling that you called us to you, this call to be a blessing. And Lord God, help us to live that out with the purity of just being satisfied in you fully, that we wouldn't live to be a blessing because, man, we're hoping that you're going to give us what we want. But that we would live knowing, man, living before the audience of one, living with the eyes of Jesus, the eyes of our heavenly father on us. Oh, what an amazing thing that we would dwell on that a little bit more.

[ 33 : 56 ] And even in the suffering, when it seems hard to bless, we would remember that. And your eyes are upon us. Your ears are open to our prayers. What a blessing that is. Do we need anything else? And you say no. And when we see you and know you for who you are, we agree with that.

We don't need anything else. Take the world, but give me you, Jesus. Let that be the cry of our hearts today. Amen.