

Sunday School (Adult): 1 Peter 1:3-7

Today, we'll look at the next 5 verses (Lord willing) – 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 3 – 7.

One interesting thing to understand about this passage is that verses 3-12 are all one sentence in the Greek language. So throughout this lesson, it may feel like we're hopping back to reference too many previous verses, BUT it's because this is one sentence that all relies on itself – there are things said in the later parts of the original Greek sentence that refer back to earlier parts.

So as we look at the first half of this entire sentence today (verses 3-7) we will do the same – as we discuss verses 6 & 7, we will refer back to verse 3-5 for a reason.

Let's read it together, first.

[\(Read 1 Peter 1:3-7\)](#)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! hAccording to his great mercy, ihe has caused us to be born again to a living hope jthrough the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to kan inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and lunfading, mkept in

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heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded nthrough faith for a salvation oready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by pvarious trials, 7 so that qthe tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes rthough it is tested by sfire—may be found to result in tpraise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter starts – actually, he bursts out with a passionate gratitude – by saying:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ...”

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Before we go too much further and examine why Peter is “blessing” God. It’s important for us to stop and notice two things:

1. What he says
2. How he says it

We must know what he means and then understand the emotion behind it. What follows after this phrase is better understood when we know these two things.

Why?

- It’s an easy word (“blessed”) to breeze by or even disregard. We don’t use this word often and when we do, it’s not in the same way Peter is using it.
- Typically, if we use the word “bless” at all, we are referring to a “blessing” that we have received or been given – something that we have recently received as a gift – or something that happened in our lives, that was good.
- *However*, Peter uses “blessed” in a different way here.

○ **Who knows what it means here? What does**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ”? (*leave time for answers and*

discussion)

- (*if they are stuck, then a few helps could*

*be the following, but **BE CAREFUL -***

this is a bit of a rabbit trail, but a good

one, if necessary to mark the distinction

between the way this word is used in

the New Testament)

- **When Jesus preaches his Sermon**

on the Mount, and he uses the

word, “blessed”, does He speak

about **man or **God**?**

- Man.

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- The word, in the day and age when

Matthew was writing meant

“prosperity”, as in financial prosperity

- Clearly, from the rest of the Bible,

we know that Jesus was not

promising *financial* prosperity.

Through the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit, Matthew uses this

word, quoting Jesus (who taught

in Aramaic) to describe the

spiritual prosperity. If our lives are

marked by the characteristics

described in The Beatitudes – if

our lives are described by using

words like humility, and

meekness, and purity, and a thirst

for righteousness, - then we will

bear much spiritual fruit. We will

be *spiritually* prosperous.

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- *"Blessed are sthe poor in spirit, for utheirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are vthose who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the wmeek, for they wshall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and xthirst yfor righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are zthe merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are athe pure in heart, for bthey shall see God. 9 "Blessed are cthe peacemakers, for dthey shall be called esons¹ of God. 10 f"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for utheirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 g"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely hon my account. 12 iRejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for jso they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:3-12)*

(Getting back on track)

So what does Peter mean when he uses the word,

"blessed"? (Assuming they understand he means, "Worthy of

praise!" ...) When translated into English, it's the same word –

"blessed"; but Peter uses a different Greek word here. It means,

"praise-worthy"; it's the basis of our word, "eulogy", (which means:

1. *a commendatory oration or writing especially in honor of one deceased, or*

2. *high praise*)

So it means a commendation – a word of honor or praise of someone.

In the New Testament this form of “blessed” always refers to God.

We see the same word used by Paul. I’ll read these two verses for you, to help emphasize the meaning.

1. *“Blessed be the gGod and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and hGod of all comfort,” ([2 Corinthians 1:3](#))*
2. *“Blessed be fthe God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing gin the heavenly places,” ([Ephesians 1:3](#))*

So, Peter means, “worthy of praise”, when he says,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ...”

We could read this verse then like this:

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“Worthy of praise (is) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, ...”

(Could delineate the meanings of this word, both in the NT and in the OT.)

He is by nature worthy of praise and worship – He is the *only one* who is. The New Testament uses this word, in this way, *only* when speaking about God.

When we study the Bible, if we take time to dig into it, we are confronted with the glory and majesty of God. He *is* worthy to be praised – he *is* “blessed”. When we study the Bible, it also shows us who we are – our corrupted nature – our flesh; the position that puts us in – separated from God because of our sins. So by studying the Bible we see *who God is* and *what He has done*, and we also see *who we are* and find that there is *nothing we can do* to reconcile us to God – we are helpless.

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We are dead in our sins Paul says in Ephesians, chapter 2:

*“And you were kdead in the trespasses and sins 2 lin
which you once walked, following the course of this
world, following mthe prince of the power of the air,
the spirit that is now at work in nthe sons of disobedience— 3 among
whom we all once lived in othe passions of our flesh, carrying out the
desires of the body¹ and the mind, and pwere by nature qchildren of
wrath, like the rest of mankind.² 4 But³ God, being^rrich in
mercy, sbecause of the great love with which he loved
us, ⁵ even^twhen we were dead in our trespasses, umade us alive
together with Christ— vby grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised
us up with him and^wseated us with him in the heavenly places in
Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the
immasurable xriches of his grace in^ykindness toward us in Christ
Jesus. ⁸ For zby grace you have been saved^athrough faith. And this
is bnot your own doing; cit is the gift of God,⁹ dnot a result of
works, eso that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For fwe are his*

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*workmanship, gcreated in Christ Jesus hfor good works, iwhich God
prepared beforehand, jthat we should walk in them.”)*

So, as we continue in verse 3, in 1 Peter, we see one reason God is to
be praised (one of the reasons, at least; there are countless reasons, actually).
God is the one who caused us to be born again, if we believe.

Look at verse 3 again:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ! hAccording to his great mercy, ihe has caused us to
be born again to a living hopejthrough the resurrection of Jesus
Christ from the dead,”*

If we paraphrase this for a right understanding, we can read it like
this:

*“Worthy of praise (is) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ! Because He is so merciful, He caused us to have new
life, spiritually...”*

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It is crucial that we see, according to this passage, and within the context of Scripture-at-large, that **God is the initiator** in the act of our salvation. Here's a brief sampling of a few passages that demonstrate God's initiative and describe our own spiritual states – the reason it is that God **MUST** take the initiative in our salvation.

1. [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) *“For zby grace you have been saved athrough faith. And this is bnot your own doing; cit is the gift of God, 9 dnot a result of works, eso that no one may boast.”*
2. [Romans 5:1](#) *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, bwe 1 have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

a. It's faith that makes us justified, but that faith is in the one who was sent by God when we were yet sinners and enemies, as Romans, [chapter 5, verses 8 and 10](#) say.

b. Verse 12 tells us that death was spread to all men, because of Adam's sin:

- i. *“Therefore, just as tsin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and vso death spread to all men 5 because wall sinned –” (Romans 5:12)*

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- ii. [Ephesians 4:17-18](#) *“Now this I say and dtestify in the Lord, ethat you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, fin the futility of their minds. 18 They gare darkened in their understanding, halienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to itheir hardness of heart.”*

3. There are passages like [John 8:42](#) and following where Jesus describes being sent by God - **God took the initiative** on our behalf to save us, through His Son’s precious blood
4. Listen to this passage from [Colossians, chapter 1, verses 11-14](#), and hear the description of God’s actions and initiative

- a. *“1 yMay you be strengthened with all power, **according to his glorious might, for zall endurance and patience awith joy, 12 bgiving thanks⁴ to the Father, **who has qualified you⁵ to share in cthe inheritance of the saints in light. 13 **He has delivered us from ethe*******

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domain of darkness and transferred us to the

kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have

redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

So, we've established so far:

1. God is worthy-to-be-worshipped, to-be-praised, because...
2. Acting in his great, abundant mercy, he caused us to be born again - to have new spiritual life

We see *who* God is and *that* our affections towards Him should be

because of *what* He has done for us.

But why?

According to this verse, why did God cause us to be born again?

(leave time for answers and discussion)

(Look for the right answer:

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- that we might have hope
- that He might accomplish the purpose for sending His Son
Jesus to be our substitute
- that we might receive our inheritance – one that never fades
away or rots – one that God is keeping for us

**Why do we need hope? Why should God save us to “a living
hope”? What is hope?**

(leave time for answers and discussion)

**Why is hope so important (that God would send His
Son to die for us, paying the penalty for our sins)?**

- **according to verse 6, 7, why might we need
hope?** *(leave time for answers and discussion)*

- o Some right answers include:
 - Because of trials

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- Suffering
- Being tested, etc., etc.

What should flow out of our lives, when we remember that God is the one who caused us to be born again?

((((God is worthy of worship because he saved us (acting in accordance with his merciful nature) so that we might have a living hope and an eternal, everlasting inheritance. This is great news! For those who are saved it should compel us to worship and praise and adoration and wonder and awe. Just considering all the darkness and sin God saved you from – just considering all the times you have failed to walk in a way that is worthy of the calling you have received – how could we not stop and marvel at his loving, gracious, and merciful work on our behalves?!)))

It doesn't stop there, though does it? Peter continues in verses 6-7, as we move towards our last bit of time this morning.

Read those two verses again – verses 6 & 7:

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“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ([1 Peter 1:6-7](#))

We need to establish some things from these verses and tie them together with what we’ve already established:

God is worthy of worship because he saved us (acting in accordance with his merciful nature) so that we might have a living hope and an eternal, everlasting inheritance.

We need to know what “this”, from verse 6 means. **What does**

Peter mean when he says:

“In this you rejoice,”

In what do we rejoice?

(leave time for answers and discussion)

Look for these answers:

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- our salvation
- God's merciful salvation
- The living hope we have

My research confirmed my thinking; Peter **does** have in view the entirety of verses 3-5, when he says, "*in this*".

The **entire** thought of verses 3-5 are in view when Peter says, "*in this*" (most commentators agree on this, by the way).

- "he concurs that there is little difference in sense between this construal and taking the relative pronoun as a neuter singular with reference to the entire preceding thought in verses 3-5, which is the way most interpreters read it (Achtmeier 1996: 99; Best 1971: 77; Beare 1970: 86; Calvin 1963: 234; Grudem 1988: 60; Thurén 1995: 71). Calvin (1963: 234) observes, "*In which* refers to the whole subject of the hope of salvation laid up in heaven" (emphasis original). BECNT)¹"

So now we know why we need hope – we will be "*grieved by various trials*". We all experience trials. **What are some trials that you have faced in the last year?**

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(insert passages that are straight from Jesus' mouth, regarding suffering, following, and the consequences there of; look in John 15-17; and passages where Jesus says to take up your cross; and where Jesus talks about not having a place to lay his head)

This hope **characterizes** Peter. One commentator said:

"Peter is without question the apostle of hope. The hope that he had in mind is the eager, confident expectation of life to come in eternity.

*Hope in the New Testament always relates to a future good! Amid present and difficult dangers we are justified in viewing the future with optimism because we are securely attached to the God who deals in futures. Furthermore, our hope is a **p 8** living hope because it finds its focus in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our living hope comes from a living, resurrected*

Christ. 1¹(HNTC)''

Hope is essential. It's crucial. It's a necessary ingredient – an integral part - of the abundant life Jesus gives us when we believe and commit to follow Him. God knows all things, at all times. He knew there would be dangerous, difficult and even very wickedly-evil trials his children would encounter in their time on earth. He knew that we would need a living hope.

What else do we often hope in, instead?

- **How is the resurrection of Jesus tied to hope?**
- **Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important?**
- **Why should we hope in Jesus, rather than anything else?**

Because Jesus was raised from the dead by God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what we celebrate next week – Easter Sunday. Jesus is not still hanging on the cross. The focus should not rest or

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stop on his sufferings - the cruel and vicious beatings he endured in our place (being our substitute).

He is not still in the grave, as-is every other person who has ever once lived or will ever live. Jesus is not some great moral teacher and thus like every other so-called great moral teacher. He is not still lying there, in that tomb.

The key difference between Jesus and every other person that has ever lived or ever will live is that Jesus came back to life! The Bible says God raised him from the dead in the power of the Holy Spirit (technically, the Bible says (at various points) that each person in the Trinity raised Jesus from the dead).

Christ and His resurrection is what gives us hope! Since Jesus conquered death we can say, like Paul, citing [Hosea](#):

“Where is your sting, O death”? ([1 Corinthians 15:55](#))

Death (the penalty of our sins) - what we deserve - no longer has any right to our souls.

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So, to summarize – so far we have established:

God is worthy of worship because he saved us (acting in accordance with his merciful nature) so that we might have a living hope and an eternal, everlasting inheritance.

He did this because we need hope – he knew we would encounter “various trials” and this hope (based on the victory Jesus accomplished over death itself) would propel us in enduring these trials.

There’s another reason, though, as we see in verse 7; and we will conclude with this verse this morning – there are two more things, I’d like to show you.

The first: It begins by saying, “*so that*”. When we see words or phrase like, “so that”, or “for” or “because” or “therefore”, our minds and hearts should perk right-up.

Are trials random?

Are trials meaningless?

What does the phrase, “so that” imply?

According to verse 7, do trials have a purpose?

- Yes! The words “*so that*” tell us what the purpose of trials are in our lives

It says that “*various trials*” serve to test the genuine nature of our faith. They are like the intense heat of a furnace that burns away all the impurities in our lives and proves (or disproves) our faith – whether or not the faith we say we have is actually real.

- “The clause “although for a little while you have had to suffer” acknowledges the reality of suffering but qualifies it as being only “for a little while” and suggests the necessity of the suffering by hinting at its purpose.”¹ BENTC

¹ Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005. Print. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

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Does anyone feel led to share about how suffering - trials - has tested your faith? (Giving praise to the One who

was faithful to help you endure it)

You may have known someone who “fell away” from the faith during, or after, a season of trial. Taking God’s Word at face value, it says here in verse 7 that trials serve to test whether or not our faith is real – is genuine.

Should we expect trials?

Yes; Peter says in [1 Peter, chapter 4, verses 12-13](#):

*“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.¹³ **But rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”*

Suffering is necessary. Suffering has a purpose.

**If you want to read more about God's purposes
in suffering see also passages like (*not* exhaustive)**

1. Acts 14:22 (for context [14:21-23](#))
2. Rom 5:3–5 (for context [5:2-5](#))
3. [Jas 1:2–4](#)

Should we seek suffering? No. We should expect it, though. And if you are not suffering as a Christian (see [1 Peter 4:16](#)), then perhaps it's because no one knows you are a Christian. If there is not a distinct difference between the way you live out your daily life and the way the non-believers live out their lives, then perhaps you are living in disobedience.

- “For, by virtue of being chosen to respond in faith to the gospel (1:1–3), one is at the same time necessarily alienated from the priorities and values of unbelieving society, which inevitably results in various types of suffering. Just as physical birth bestows citizenship based on that of one's parent, Christians have been given new birth by the divine Father bestowing on them a new citizenship and inheritance in the kingdom of God. This new identity and allegiance make them to some

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extent aliens within society. Therefore, those who are intent on serving the Lord must not be surprised by the distress that they experience in many kinds of trials (cf. 4:12). While their faithfulness to God may be why they are not receiving p 96 any praise, glory, or honor from their society, that same faithfulness will ultimately result in praise, glory, and honor when all is said and done. Therefore, the very experiences that cause them distress because they are Christians should also cause them joy because they are Christians. They rejoice with a joy that is beyond words and that has been glorified even by the dark circumstances in which they possess it.² (BENTC)”

- NAC agrees (ie - entire thought of verses 3-5 are in view here)

Remember, Peter is writing to exiles – not those who are simply **geographic** immigrants – but *spiritual* immigrants. They are not yet in their permanent home – heaven, where Jesus waits for them. Exiles are to be distinct. Remember: we talked about it - in the same way that we notice migrants, refugees, travelers, we too should be noticed as exiles. People should be able to tell a difference about

² Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005. Print. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

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us – the way we live, the way we make decisions, the way we spend money, and so forth.

((If you are not suffering at the moment, there are just a few possible explanations:

1. You will, one day – maybe even soon, or...
2. You have and can now look back on it and see how it is God tested your faith and supplied you the strength and perseverance to endure the trial,
 - a. And now that you are not suffering at the moment, God means this time for rest for you – a time to recharge and find rest for your souls; to prepare yourself for the next trial that will inevitably come
3. You are not living a distinct life – you are so close to the world’s system that it looks like you are not a believer, or...
4. That you are simply not a believer yet)))

So suffering has a purpose, and also an outcome. Let’s conclude by looking at the **results** of suffering, according to verse 7.

It says:

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness

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of your faith— more precious than gold that perishes rthough it is

*tested by sfire— may be found to **result** in tpraise and*

glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1

[Peter 1:6-7](#))

- “The words “may be found” (*heurethē*, NRSV) refer to the final judgment when God examines the life of each person (cf. 2 Cor 5:3; Phil 3:9; 2 Tim 1:18; 2 Pet 3:10, 14; Rev 14:5). “Praise, glory and honor” are given on that day to the person whose faith has been tested and approved by fire (cf. Rom 2:7, 10, 29; 1 Cor 4:5).³ (NAC)”
 - [Romans 2:7](#) (for context 2:6-11)
 - [Romans 2:10](#)
 - *“He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those whooby patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking¹ and pdo not obey the truth, but*

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

³ Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. Vol. 37. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003. Print. The New American Commentary.

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*obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and
fury.⁹ There will be tribulation and distress qfor
every human being who does evil, the Jew rfirst
and also the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor
and speace for everyone who does good, tthe Jew
first and also the Greek. ¹¹ For uGod shows no
partiality."*

▪ Romans 2:29

- *"9... a Jew is one unwardly, and vcircumcision is
a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the
letter. wHis praise is not from man but from
God."*

○ 1 Corinthians 4:5

- *"Therefore qdo not pronounce judgment before
the time, rbefore the Lord comes, swho will bring
to light the things now hidden in darkness and
will disclose the purposes of the heart. tThen
each one will receive his **commendation**
from God."*

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¹Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005. Print. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

¹Walls, David, and Max Anders. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999. Print. Holman New Testament Commentary.