HOPE IN HOPELESS TIMES

A Study of 1 Peter

Visit the Hope in Hopeless Times series page on our website to download a digital copy of this book and find even more resources.

marinerschurch.org/series/hope-in-hopeless-times

Where do you look for hope when life feels hopeless? The people of Peter's day were not unlike us. They felt overwhelmed and, at times, filled with despair and frustration with what was happening around them. Peter's letter still speaks to us, as it did to the early church thousands of years ago, reminding us of the unwavering, unshakeable hope we have in Jesus.

I'm so glad you picked up this book.

Within its pages, you'll find resources, original content from the Mariners family, and inspiring stories to guide you as we explore the book of 1 Peter together. You'll also find opportunities for you to take your next step in your faith to follow Jesus, grow together, serve one another, and change the world. I encourage you to bring it back with you week after week as we go through the book of 1 Peter as a church family.

We are not going to miss a verse in 1 Peter, so don't miss a week! Meaning, if you are traveling–join us with Mariners online.

I love 1 Peter. It's an amazing book of the Bible, filled with practical teaching and godly wisdom on how we can have hope in the midst of suffering and challenges. The people of Peter's day were not unlike us. They were overwhelmed and, at times, filled with despair and frustration as a result of the hopelessness surrounding them. In Peter's letter, he reminded the early Christians of the unwavering hope that they have in Jesus, even when life feels hopeless. I pray it encourages you just as it encouraged the original readers thousands of years ago.

One of the things I appreciate most about our church is our diversity in giftings, backgrounds, and stories. The Lord has blessed us with a vibrant community of talented people who call Mariners home and desire to use their talents to make much of Jesus. During each week of our teaching series, and throughout this book, you'll encounter the incredible work of our creative arts volunteers and be encouraged in your own faith journey. If you have a gift that you'd like to share with our church, I invite you to check out the serving page on our website or talk to one of our volunteers in the Welcome Center to discover how God might want to use you (and your gifts) to serve and love others.

I'm so excited to dive into God's Word with you this summer. The journey begins now.

In Christ,
Eric Geiger
Senior Pastor

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How to Use This Book

This book was created for you. It's filled with resources, original artwork, stories, and creative written pieces to enhance your own personal study of 1 Peter throughout our teaching series *Hope in Hopeless Times*. This book is meant to travel. Bring it with you to weekend services to take notes and follow along with messages. Take it to your Life Group gathering to go deeper into 1 Peter with others. Use it in your own time with the Lord as you process the wisdom and teaching of this amazing book of the Bible. We pray it inspires and encourages you in your walk with Jesus every day.

Here is a breakdown of the different elements to guide you:

Sermon Notes

Each week there is space for you to take notes during the weekend message. It's a great way for you to follow along each week of the series and record how God is speaking to you through His Word.

Life Group Curriculum

These lessons are meant to be explored in the context of a Life Group. In Life Groups, we grow in our faith together and experience life as God intended—in community. We encourage you to join a Life Group and dive into 1 Peter with others during the week. Visit marinerschurch.org/joinagroup to learn more.

Faith Rhythms

Every week there is a Faith Rhythm (based on the seven rhythms of Rooted) for you to put into practice to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus. We invite you to take a moment during your week to process the faith rhythm prompt and take a step to go deeper in your walk with the Lord.

Creative Elements

At the end of each week's content you'll find creative pieces, including original artwork, personal stories, performance art, and creative writing, contributed by our amazing Creative Arts Volunteer Team. Each of these pieces are inspired by the words of 1 Peter and its themes.

Hope Map

The Hope Map is a fun, creative way for you to track how God is moving in your life throughout the course of this series. Each week has related "destinations" designed for you to pause, reflect, and note how you are growing in hope. You can go through the Hope Map on your own or with your family. Visit the full map at the back of the book to get started!

Introduction to 1 Peter

First Peter provided encouragement to suffering believers living in northern Asia Minor who faced intense persecution. The letter encourages faithfulness while under oppression. Specifically, God's holy people should lead distinctive lifestyles as temporary residents in a foreign land. Although they will suffer for Christ while in this non-Christian world, they should remember that heaven is their future homeland.

Circumstances of Writing

Author: The author of 1 Peter identified himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). He viewed himself as a divinely ordained, directly commissioned, authoritative representative of the Lord Jesus himself. Several statements in the letter indicate that the Peter who plays a prominent role in the Gospels is the author. For example, he called himself an "elder and witness" to Christ's sufferings (5:1). Further, he described Christ's crucifixion with an intimate knowledge that only a disciple would have of that event (2:21-24).

Several expressions in 1 Peter reflect Peter's experiences with Jesus. For example, the exhortation for elders to "shepherd God's flock" (5:2) evokes the charge that Jesus gave Peter in John 21:15-17. Moreover, the command to "clothe yourselves with humility" (1Pt 5:5) may recall the episode in John 13:2-17 where Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

Several themes in 1 Peter can also be found in Peter's sermons in the book of Acts. For example, God is "the Father who judges impartially" (1:17; cp. Ac 10:34) and who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory (1Pt 1:21; cp. Ac 2:32-36). Christ is "the stone that the builders rejected" (1Pt 2:7-8; cp. Ac 4:10-11).

Objections to the letter's authorship by Peter are inconclusive and cannot be proven. The claim that someone wrote this letter using the apostle's name as a pseudonym cannot be sustained. A number of early church leaders—e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria—accepted the letter as authentic. Further, the early church soundly rejected the practice of writing under an apostolic pseudonym as forgery. In light of the above, the epistle should be accepted as genuinely written by the apostle Peter. Silvanus may have in some fashion helped Peter write the letter while serving as his secretary, but more likely he was merely the letter carrier (5:12).

Background: The recipients of 1 Peter are identified in 1:1. Peter wrote to the "exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These were Roman provinces located in the northern part of what is now

modern Turkey, unless Galatia includes the Galatia in the southern region of Asia Minor. These people were likely persecuted Gentile Christians. They had earlier been involved in idolatry (4:3), were ignorant (1:14) and "empty" (1:18) before they came to Christ, and formerly were "not a people" but now were "God's people" (2:9-10).

The reference in 1 Peter 5:13—"She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings"—suggests Rome as the place of the letter's origin. "Babylon" was used cryptically to refer to a place of exile, but specifically for Rome. Other possibilities include the cities of Babylon in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but these places are highly unlikely because we have no record of Peter ever being in those places.

First Peter was probably written sometime between AD 62 and 64. While Paul was under house arrest from AD 60 to 62, he did not refer to Peter in Rome. Peter likewise did not mention Paul as being in Rome; only Silvanus and Mark were his companions (5:12-13). These facts suggest that Peter wrote 1 Peter some time after AD 62 and before the writing of 2 Peter.

The theme of suffering appears throughout 1 Peter. The recipients of the letter are the sufferers in four of its five chapters. Given a composition date of about AD 62–64, 1 Peter was written during the persecution of Christians under Nero's reign. The persecution arose in Rome and was spreading into Asia Minor.

Message and Purpose

Peter wrote to encourage suffering believers in Asia Minor to stand firm for Christ in the midst of persecution. He urged them to do so by focusing on their spiritual privileges and, more specifically, the place where their rights and privileges lay: the next life. Believers in Jesus are "exiles" (1:1; 2:11) and "strangers" (2:11) in this world, a land of sojourn where they have no real rights or privileges. Inheritance rights, privileges, and justice for Christians really belong to another realm to which God has delivered believers—heaven, their ultimate home.

First Peter emphasizes that suffering is normal for believers because they are temporary residents in this world. As such, they lack rights and receive no justice in this foreign land. Though suffering occurs on earth for temporary residents, their inheritance and exaltation await them in their eternal homeland.

The fourth section of the letter also ends with a doxology and "amen" (5:11) before the closing.

Contribution to the Bible

Peter's intent in writing was to strengthen believers in the midst of the suffering and persecution they were facing. His message to them continues to speak to modern believers, reminding us of our heavenly hope and eternal inheritance in the midst of our sufferings. We are called to holiness and a life of love. We are also called to glorify God in our daily lives and to imitate Christ.

Structure

The structure of 1 Peter has been the subject of discussion from the earliest history of the church. The diversity of outlines illustrates that the task of exegesis is not merely a science but also an art. Peter wrote this letter with a typical opening for a letter (1:1-2) and then began the next major section (1:3–2:10) with a blessing (1:3). The two succeeding sections are marked by "dear friends" (2:11; 4:12), and as noted earlier the segment from 2:11–4:11 concludes with a doxology and "amen."

Outline

- Opening (1:1-2)
- Called to Salvation as Exiles (1:3–2:10)
  - » Praise for salvation (1:3-12)
  - » The future inheritance an incentive to holiness (1:13-21)
  - » Living as the new people of God (1:22–2:10)
- Living as Strangers in a Hostile World (2:11–4:11)
  - » The Christian life as a battle and witness (2:11-12)
  - » Testifying to the gospel in the social order (2:13–3:12)
  - » Responding in a godly way to suffering (3:13–4:11)
- Persevering in Suffering (4:12–5:11)
  - » Suffer joyfully in accord with God's will (4:12-19)
  - » Exhortations to elders and the community (5:1-11)
- Concluding Words (5:12-14)

1

Greeting

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:

To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

A Living Hope

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials 7 so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced

to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

A Call to Holy Living

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. 17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. 18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For

All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

2

The Living Stone and a Holy People

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, 3 if you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God— 5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and honored cornerstone,
and the one who believes in him
will never be put to shame.

7 So honor will come to you who believe;
but for the unbelieving,

The stone that the builders rejected—
this one has become the cornerstone,
8 and A stone to stumble over,
and a rock to trip over.

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

A Call to Good Works

11 Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.

13 Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. 15 For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good. 16 Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God's slaves. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Submission of Slaves to Masters

18 Household slaves, submit to your masters with all reverence not only to the good and gentle ones but also to the cruel. 19 For it brings favor if, because of a consciousness of God, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if when you do wrong and are beaten, you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God.

21 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth; 23 when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

3

Wives and Husbands

1 In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elabo-

rate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.

7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Do No Evil

8 Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble. 9 not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For the one who wants to love life
and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, 11 and let him turn away from evil and do what is good.
Let him seek peace and pursue it,
12 because 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 what is evil.

Undeserved Suffering

13 Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 16 Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when

you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison 20 who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

4

Following Christ

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin— 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. 3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards.

End-Time Ethics

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Christian Suffering

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. 13 Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. 16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

18 And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

19 So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

5

About the Elders

1 I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: 2 Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Conclusion

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. 8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen.

12 Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Jul 10 & 11

Our Living Hope
(1:1-12)

When someone is “hopeless,” there is no positive outlook on the future, no motivation to look with optimism on what is to come. In hopeless times we must remember our Living Hope who was crucified for us, continues to hold us through the difficult times, and promises our forever inheritance. We have a bright future.

1 Peter 1:1-12

Greeting

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:
To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

A Living Hope

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials 7 so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

Hope is a noun - a gift given to you.

1 Peter 1:1-5

Hope is a verb - an active element of your spiritual life.

1 Peter 1:6-9

- Life in a broken world
- Tests the genuineness of your faith
- And results in praise and joy.

Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit. Psalm 51:12

Hope is an adjective - a description that sets you apart.

1 Peter 1:10-12

Week 1: Our Living Hope

1 Peter 1:1-12

PREPARE

All group members:

- If you missed the weekend experience or want to review specific teaching points, you can watch, listen, and find notes for all of our message series online.
- The Mariners Current Series Spotify Playlist is a great way to prepare your heart through personal worship. Reflect on the lyrics and be open to the Spirit.

Life Group leaders:

- Listen and subscribe to the Mariners Life Group Leader Podcast. Each episode includes a quick conversation to help you identify key topics and tips for leading your group.
- Review the downloadable Leader Guide for additional notes to guide your discussion.

MAIN POINT

When someone is "hopeless," there is no positive outlook on the future, no motivation to look with optimism on what is to come. In hopeless times, we must remember our Living Hope who was crucified for us, continues to hold us through various trials, and promises our forever inheritance.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- When have you had high expectations for something? What was it?
- Did it motivate any patterns of thought or behavior? If so, what?
- Why were you looking forward to it? Did it live up to the hype?
- Today we'll look at our ultimate hope as Christ followers and how past and future realities can transform the way that we see our lives right now.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 1:1–12. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

Greeting

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character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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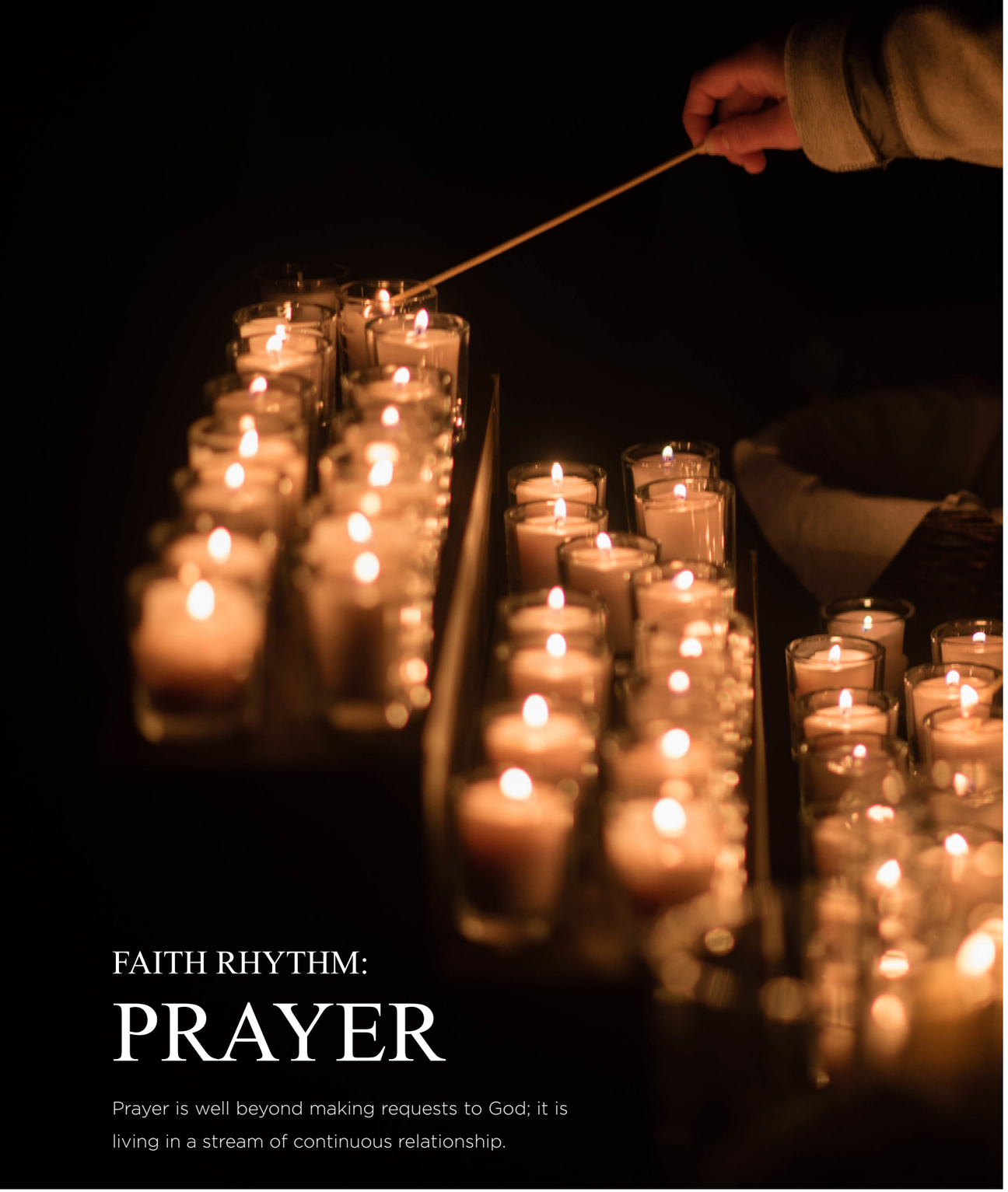
- How does Peter identify himself (verse 1)? How does he identify his audience (verses 1–2)? How do those identifications frame our understanding of this letter?
- What is the overall tone of the opening to Peter's letter (verses 1–12)? What repeated words or ideas do you see? Is this surprising or appropriate?
- All three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned throughout these verses. What specifically does Peter say about God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?
- How would you summarize Peter's main point to Christians in exile? What hope do they have in the midst of grief and various trials?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- Are Peter's words encouraging or do they feel out of touch with reality? How would knowing a little bit about Peter's story affect the way you receive this greeting?
- When has the hope of Christ given you strength and even joy during hard times? What did you cling to in that season? How did that experience affect your faith?
- How is this Scripture timely and relevant for your own life right now? In what ways are you experiencing grief, various trials, or a sense of being scattered and feeling alone?
- If you had to pick one main truth from these verses, what gives you the greatest hope? Why?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- Who else do you know that is experiencing grief, various trials, or loneliness?
- How do people cope with grief or various trials? What advice does "the world" offer? How do those efforts and things eventually fail and leave us hopeless?
- If you had to pick one main truth from these verses, what might offer the person(s) you identified the greatest hope? Why?
- What can you do to share your hope with them—both in word and deed?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Prayer requests
  - » Prayer



FAITH RHYTHM:

PRAYER

Prayer is well beyond making requests to God; it is living in a stream of continuous relationship.

PRAYER

How can you make communicating with God a regular rhythm in your life?

WHERE ARE YOU?

By Jack West | Pastor of Care and Recovery

The first glimpse into the conversation between God and His creation in the Bible is through the question “Where are you?”. This is God’s question to Adam and Eve in the Garden after sin severed their relationship. Creator God once enjoyed the intimate presence of Adam and Eve. Now, because of their choice, the relationship is broken and God is looking for His child. He invites the relationship to be renewed with the question: “where?”.

Fast forward to Genesis 16 and Creator God is again inviting His beloved creation into conversation with Him. Hagar, the concubine of Abraham and Sarah, has run away from her masters on a suicide mission into the desert. God had promised to bring blessing to the world through the offspring of Abraham and Sarah. Childless and anxious for God to fulfill His promise, Abraham, with Sarah’s blessing, impregnates Hagar. Sarah has regrets afterward. Watching Hagar grow with child and “blessing” was too much, and Sarah abused Hagar mercilessly.

Hagar, at the edge of the desert and the edge of her life, sits down to die pregnant and alone. Hagar is running toward death and despair because of the sin of others. God invites her, like Adam and Eve, back into a relationship with Him through another question of location: "where have you come from and where are you going?"

God knew where Adam and Eve were. God knew where Hagar was. But He wants them to find Him where they are. God accomplishes this by moving toward them and searching for them.

In both of these stories in Genesis, sin and pain dislocate humanity. Whether the sin is yours, by your choice or put on you by the choices of others, God still pursues us. He seeks and invites us to be found in His presence.

Are you grieving a loss? Are you addicted? Are you hurt and hopeless? These are all places from which God is calling us to answer the question "where are you?" These are all places to be found by Him. When we're found, we open ourselves to intimate relationships with Him and others. The kind of relationships that redeem what sin and pain have stolen.

The best place to answer these questions is in community. The kind of relationships that can support you and help you find a way to articulate where you are. Being found is hard because we have to admit we've lost our way a bit. Maybe our sight was blocked for a while and we stepped off the path. Now, we need to be found again.

Remedy is a ministry of healing and recovery where redemptive relationships can be found. There you will be invited to join a group and locate yourself, wherever, and with whatever, life has brought you.

Everyone has a story. But sin, hurt, pain, hopelessness are the not the end of the story with God. They are precisely where He shows up and does His work of redemption. Will we step into the conversation? Will we be found by a God who is looking for us?

I invite you to join me and others every Monday at Remedy 6:15-8p Student Center Room 1 at Mariners Irvine where we are being found as we recognize and join Christ in restoring what sin and pain have stolen.

Visit Hopeless Harbor on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **what is something you're currently hoping for?**

NEXT STEP

Ready to take your next step and go deeper at Mariners Church? Join us for a 60-minute experience that will help you find your place in the bigger story of how God is working in you.

Jul 18 & 19

Visit **https://www.marinerschurch.org/im-new/** for more information

OF GREATER WORTH THAN GOLD

Words by Natalia Guarino

When trials start to stifle delight
You hear my cries for a lifeline
Through faith the Holy Spirit sends joy at dawn
After having withstood the longest nighttime
He reminds me of how the world hurt You
Yet You knew You would triumph over it all
And even though I am a lesser thing
Your greatness will save me after each and every fall
Thank You Lord because I can fully live

Jesus You are worthy of all of my praise
Worthy of all my strength
Your power made perfect in weakest faith
Your grace is forever sufficient
I can hold onto Your Hope
A Living Hope from Your mercy
I can hold onto Your Hope
You are holding all of me

With the presence of Your precious promises
I am trusting You and anticipating more
Over the foe You continue to grant victory
The reward of joy and peace is truly invaluable
You give me a purpose, plans, and future
You give a new song inside of my chest
Your Word is sweeter than honeycomb
Your steadfast love lifts up my weary head
Thank You Lord for a life that is full to live

Jesus You are worthy of all my worship
Worthy of all my heart
You gave the greatest gift of faith
You see me fully and not in part
I am holding onto Your Hope
A Living Hope full of mercy
I am holding onto Your Hope
You are holding all of me

You give assurance of what I hope for
You give confidence although I cannot see
You bless Your saints who are full of faith
Their suffering not in vain but praiseworthy

After the finest gold fades away
After the consuming fire is gone
Your grace by faith will remain
With glory, honor, and praise at Your revelation
Thank You Lord because I will forever live

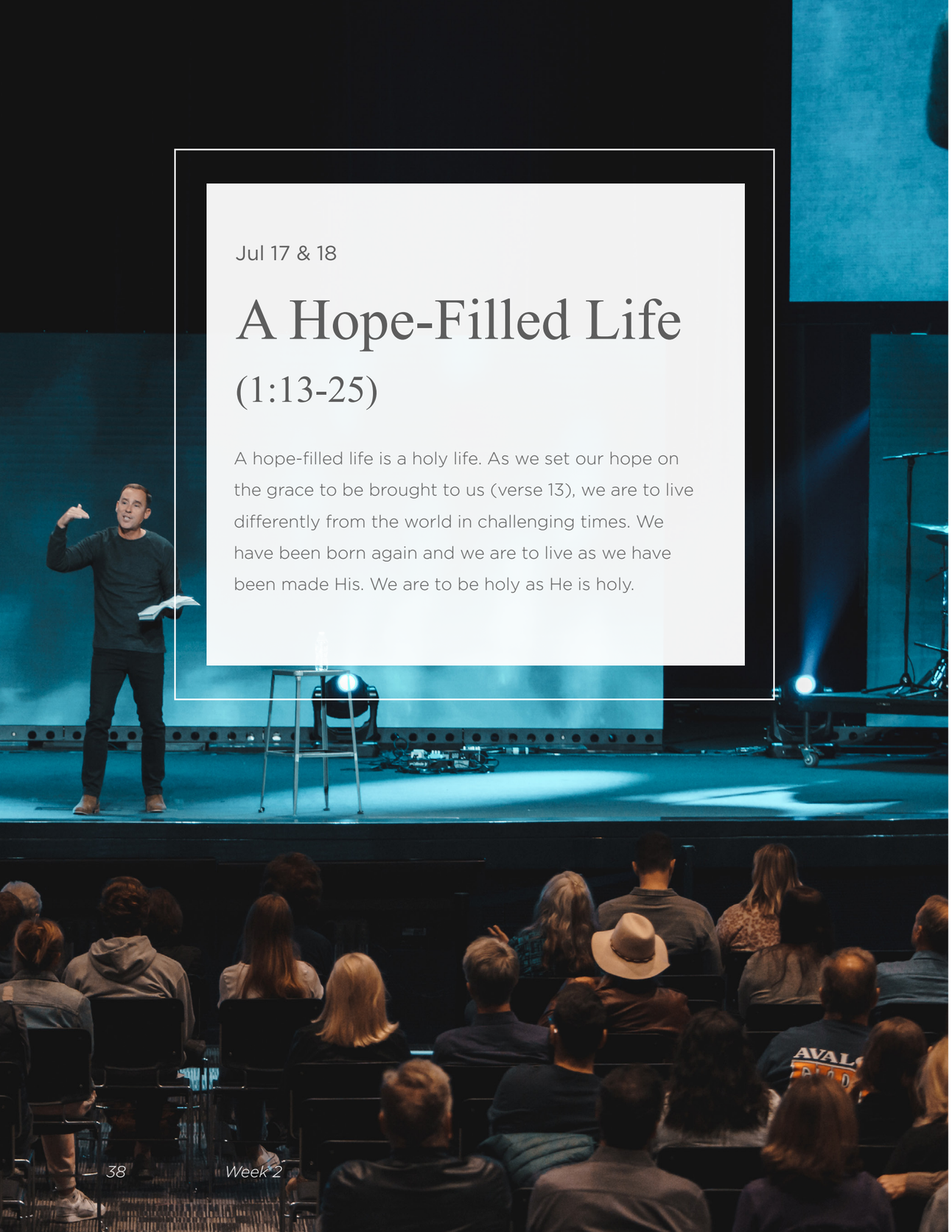
Jesus You are worthy of it all
Worthy of all the glory
You honor my mustard seed of faith
Opening these eyes to Your Majesty
I will hold onto Your Hope
You are a Living Hope, full of mercy
I will hold onto Your Hope
You are holding all of me

Author Note:

The original theme and message for this poem came to mind in the middle of the night, rousing me from sleep. It initially seemed like a complete gift from God, but I later realized that at the core of the composition, my despair was still overtly perceptible. I was confronted with the fact that there were still consistent pains where I needed the Lord's deliverance.

Currently, I see that despite the persistence of "my thorn," there is beauty in my chronic conflict. My faith in Jesus Christ is worth all of the perpetual and precipitated problems. Faith from Him is fireproof; it is protective and protected. It is the reason I still hope, and Jesus is the real Hope that all imperfections will one day pass away. Aside from family and friends, my faith in Him is my most precious gift on this side of heaven. It is a gift that cannot be stolen or spoiled, expired, or exchanged. No material possession I own or have obtained can ever offer me sovereign security. It is the reason that I can hope.

-Natalia Guarino



Jul 17 & 18

A Hope-Filled Life

(1:13-25)

A hope-filled life is a holy life. As we set our hope on the grace to be brought to us (verse 13), we are to live differently from the world in challenging times. We have been born again and we are to live as we have been made His. We are to be holy as He is holy.

1 Peter 1:13-25

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. 17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. 18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For all flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,
25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.
And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

Believe my value

For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

1 Peter 1:18-19

Embrace a new way of thinking

Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

- Set your mind for action
- Be self-controlled
- Set your mind completely on grace

Pursue a new lifestyle

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

1 Peter 1:14-16

Obedience: not pressed into the shape of old desires

Embrace holiness

Live inspired: a new motivation

God is your father

If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers.

1 Peter 1:17

My worth and value

For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.
1 Peter 1:18-19

We are part of God's divine plan

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
1 Peter 1:20-21

Forgiven: so we can love from the heart

Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly.
1 Peter 1:22

Good news: We have been made new

Because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. For All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.
1 Peter 1:23-25

Week 2: A Hope-Filled Life

1 Peter 1:13–25

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

A hope-filled life is a holy life. As we set our hope on the grace to be brought to us, we are to live differently from the world in challenging times.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- What characteristics have you inherited from your family—physical traits, personality types, customs, interests, accents, mannerisms, etc.?
- Were you taught to do or not do certain things because you represented your family name?
- Did people's opinions or expectations of you ever change when they found out where you were from or to whom you were related?
- As children of God through faith in Jesus, Peter will show us how our lives will begin to resemble our heavenly Father.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 1:13–25. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

A Call to Holy Living

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. 17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. 18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,
25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.,
And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

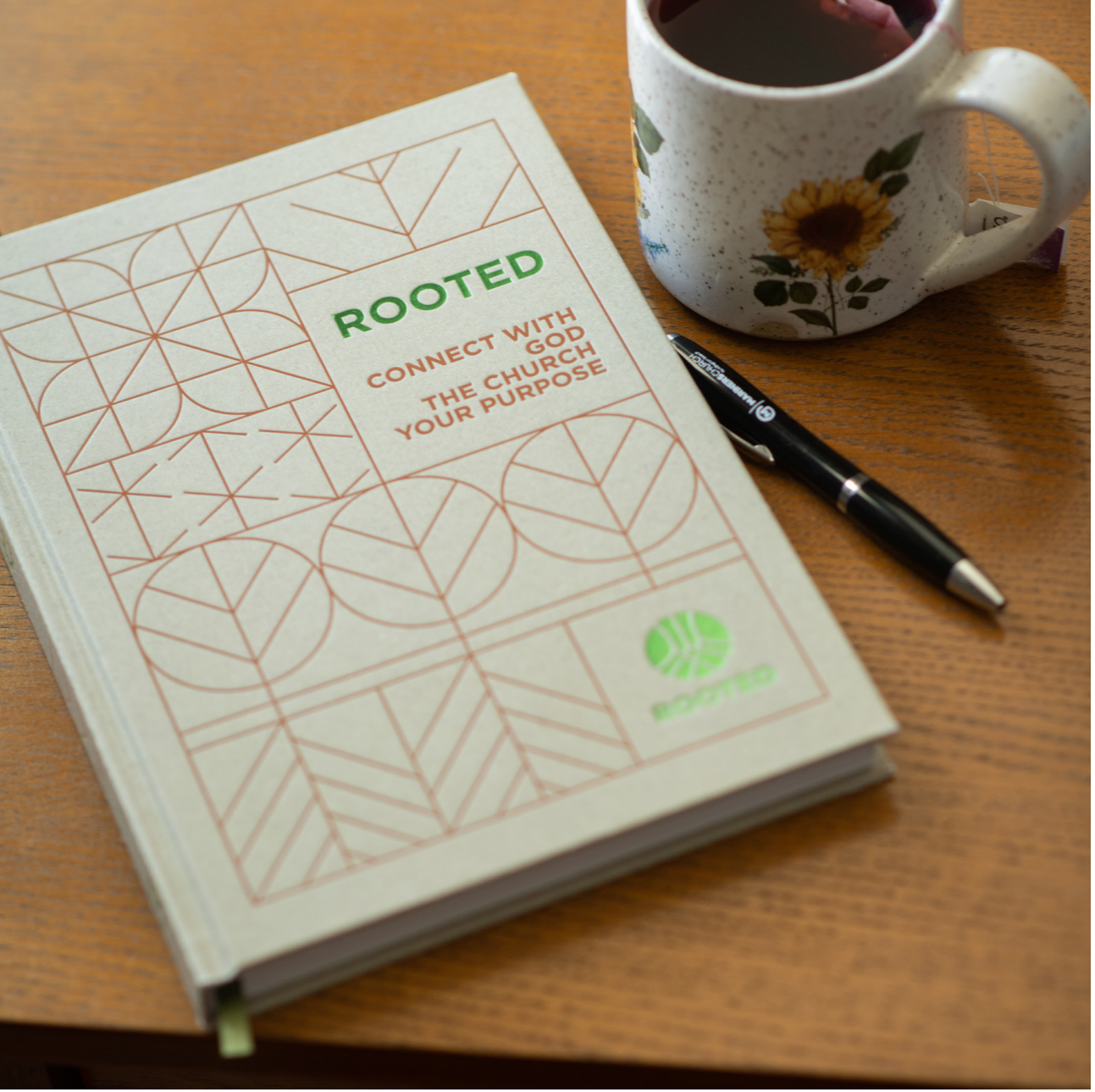
- What familial language do you see in this passage? Who is mentioned in terms of family? What truths of the Christian life are highlighted through these descriptions?
- What does this text say specifically about God? What characteristics and actions are mentioned? What does this text say specifically about our relationship to God?
- At the end of this chapter (1:24–25), what does it mean for the word of God—the gospel—to be living and enduring forever, never fading?
- How would you summarize today's verses? How does the vivid imagery help you understand Peter's point?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- Is Peter's reminder to "be holy, because I am holy" encouraging or overwhelming? Why? Can people see a family resemblance from the time you spend with our heavenly Father?
- How should thinking about the gospel affect our daily lives? Honestly, is your life segmented into spiritual and practical categories? What other parts of life do you compartmentalize, applying different rules and playing different roles?
- What stood out to you in Peter's description of Christ? In his description of your life without Christ? In your identity and ability with Christ?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- What would happen if you viewed others as worthy of "brotherly love" (v. 22)? What would it look like for you to live as a "stranger" in our culture (v. 17)?
- What "perishable" things has the culture used to try filling "empty" lives (v. 18)? What trends have you seen with people looking for meaning and purpose in life? Why is it important that the gospel never changes (v. 25)?
- In general, what needs to happen in order to be holy in all of your conduct? What specific things need to change in order to better represent God in the world?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer



FAITH RHYTHM:

SHARE YOUR STORY

God is alive and active today, writing remarkable stories, including yours!

SHARE YOUR STORY

Who is someone you can share your story with?

Taking the Next Step:

My Path to Rooted

By Brandon Gross

When the life you thought was secure suddenly falls apart and it feels as though you're treading water in a stormy ocean that will not cease, where do you turn? For some, it's a trusted friend or family member. For others, it's a small and quiet bar that doesn't judge and pours cheap drinks all night. For Christians, well, that's easy...we turn to Jesus, right? As a life-long Christian, I wish "yes" was my answer but in 2019, when the life I had worked so hard for and invested my heart and soul into fell apart, I was a stammering mess.

Let's rewind to 2010. My marriage suddenly became very bizarre. It wasn't a slow transition; I didn't even get a few weeks or a month. If

I had then I could've understood a progression, grasped it with logic and an undying will to fight, and made a game plan to fix it. Nope, not the case in my marriage. I began attending Mariners Church exactly two days before my marriage turned into an anxiety-ridden mystery that left me all but hopeless and turning to a heavy prescription drug regimen to function. What started as couples counseling turned into solo sessions on my own after one week. Looking back on it now, it's not one bit less bizarre. However, at least I know now why it became this way—she was having an affair that lasted one and a half years with a close friend of ours.

Clarity finally prevailed by taking the form of survival. "Stay strong, move out, continue on as a divorced 28-year-old, you'll be okay" repeated in my head throughout each day. I clung to Jesus for dear life praying over and over "Please take this burden of anxiety onto your shoulders and off mine." He was gracious and carried me through the hardest time I had faced in my life. In January 2012, I began attending Mariners consistently, and before too long, it became my place of refuge. Each week, different sources of help were advertised before/during/after service. Care and Recovery for divorce sparked my attention, as did Rooted. Having been a lifelong Christian, Rooted seemed at first like it may be more of a beginner's course. However, I was starting a new life on my own and was still a little raw. Joining a group of other Christians seemed like a solid remedy and path forward, so I signed up for a co-ed group. No more than 30 minutes into the first meeting I realized I was not ready to open up and be vulnerable around women yet. I emailed the instructor later that afternoon and withdrew from the group.

Five years after my Rooted faux pas, most of which were spent single and focusing on graduate school, my career, friends, and family, I unexpectedly met a woman that I fell madly in love with. We both had a broken soul in some sense; baggage from the past that left scars which never seemed to fully heal. We were open and vulnerable to each other with ease, which was something I hadn't previously experienced. We both enjoyed attending church on Sunday mornings, and I now had an accompanying party to Mariners each week. It was surreal to think that the prayers my family and I had prayed for all of those years came true. Cloud 9 was an understatement; I was flying higher at 41,000 feet and nothing was going to bring me down now! As I write this, it's impossible not to laugh at how naive I was, yet again. Relying on my own "wisdom" and thinking God had answered my prayers, I slowly began to drift away from Him and Mariners. It started by having lazy Sunday mornings and experiencing Mariners online, and by 2019, it was a full-blown Category 5 hurricane.

By September 2019, the weight of carrying life without Jesus as my pilot was too much to sustain. I was exhausted. I was sad. I was angry. I was turning to alcohol more than to prayer. I was at my breaking point, and finally surrendered. Once again, Rooted was starting up and this time I was ready to take the plunge and be vulnerable. Having just left another volatile relationship, I joined a Rooted group of only men this time. Our group was made up of 21 men versus the standard 12. "This was bound to be fun" I thought. While I won't betray the confidence and trust of my brothers, I can tell you that each of us was struggling with some serious stuff (minus our fearless leader). A handful of us, struggling from similar challenges, bonded immediately and formed relationships that will last a lifetime. I have never seen so many men let

their guard down this quickly; you could see God at work, and each week was a healing experience bonding us with each other and growing our relationship with the Lord.

As time progressed and our stories were told, each spoken word became healing in its own way. There were laughs, there were tears, and hugs... a lot of hugs! Getting to know someone is an intimate experience; getting to know 21 people is nothing less than amazing, and I cannot thank God enough for the opportunity. While it pains me that the darkest hours are what led me to this group, it just wouldn't have been the same otherwise. I've never seen God at work in my life like I did in that season of Rooted. From the first meeting when so many heads were down and eyes were full of tears just waiting to pour out, to being on the stage during graduation with a cardboard cutout in hand, to having 12 of us in the baptism pool and praying as four of my brothers entered into a new life in Jesus, this Rooted experience was life altering.

Our experience was so positive, we decided to transition into a life group together. It's been one and a half years now, and I'm honored to lead this amazing group of men. Having a trusted team to call on for prayer, for an open mind, for a shoulder to cry on, or just a solid reality check is invaluable. I pray that if you're reading this, God will bless you with an experience that lifts you up in a similar fashion.

Visit Marinerschurch.org/joinagroup to learn more about Rooted

Living Hope
Josephine Lim
Junior High Ministry

Visit Fearful Falls on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **what fear is God helping you overcome?**

Jul 24-25

Remembering We are His
(2:1-10)

Christ is the Living Stone, the Chief Cornerstone. And we too are living stones. We are alive because He is alive, and He has included us with Him. We can rest secure because of who He is and who He has made us.

1 Peter 2:1-10

The Living Stone and a Holy People

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, 3 if you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God— 5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and honored cornerstone,
and the one who believes in him
will never be put to shame.
7 So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,
The stone that the builders rejected—
this one has become the cornerstone,
8 and a stone to stumble over,
and a rock to trip over.

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

We are God's family members who are satisfied in Him.
(1 Peter 2:1-3)

We are God's temple who serve Him.
(1 Peter 2:4-8)

We are God's nation who shine His glory.
(1 Peter 2:9-10)

Week 3: Remembering We Are His

1 Peter 2:1-10

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

Christ is the “Chief Cornerstone”, and we are living stones too. We’ve been joined with Him and with each other. We can rest secure because of who Jesus is and who He has made us.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

Take a couple of minutes to play a Jenga-type game. Take turns moving building blocks until the structure topples over. If your group is not meeting in person yet, check out jenga.com for streaming videos and fun facts.

In today’s text, Peter continues using vivid imagery in his letter to illustrate important points. In doing so, he overturns a common framework for religious life. God was building something even greater than people had previously imagined.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD’S WORD

Read 1 Peter 2:1–10. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

The Living Stone and a Holy People

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word,, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, 3 if you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

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7 So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,
The stone that the builders rejected—
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and a rock to trip over.

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises, of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- In verses 2-3, Peter introduces the first word picture. What imagery does he use? What is his main point? How is the imagery helpful for understanding the point?
- In verses 4-8, Peter jumps to a second word picture. What imagery does he use? What are his main points? How is the imagery helpful for understanding the point(s)?
- In verses 9-10, Peter uses a third word picture. What imagery does he use? What is his main point? How is the string of imagery helpful for understanding the point?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

In our fall series we will take a closer look at each of the profoundly beautiful truths strung together in verses 9-12. For now, let's focus on verses 1-8.

- When have you felt like a newborn craving spiritual milk? What has helped you grow spiritually and satisfy your thirst for God's Word?
- On a scale of 1-10 (1 = no desire, 10 = eager for more) how thirsty are you currently for the word of God? For spiritual growth?
- How does the "living stone" imagery change the way you see other Christians? How does it change the way that you relate to them?
- Is Christ truly your "Chief Cornerstone"? If so, how has He given the rest of your life shape and stability? If not, what needs to be rearranged to build your life on His foundation?
- How do these word pictures and applications build on last week's idea of being "born again" and being "holy because our Father is holy"? Do you have any updates from things you identified last week?

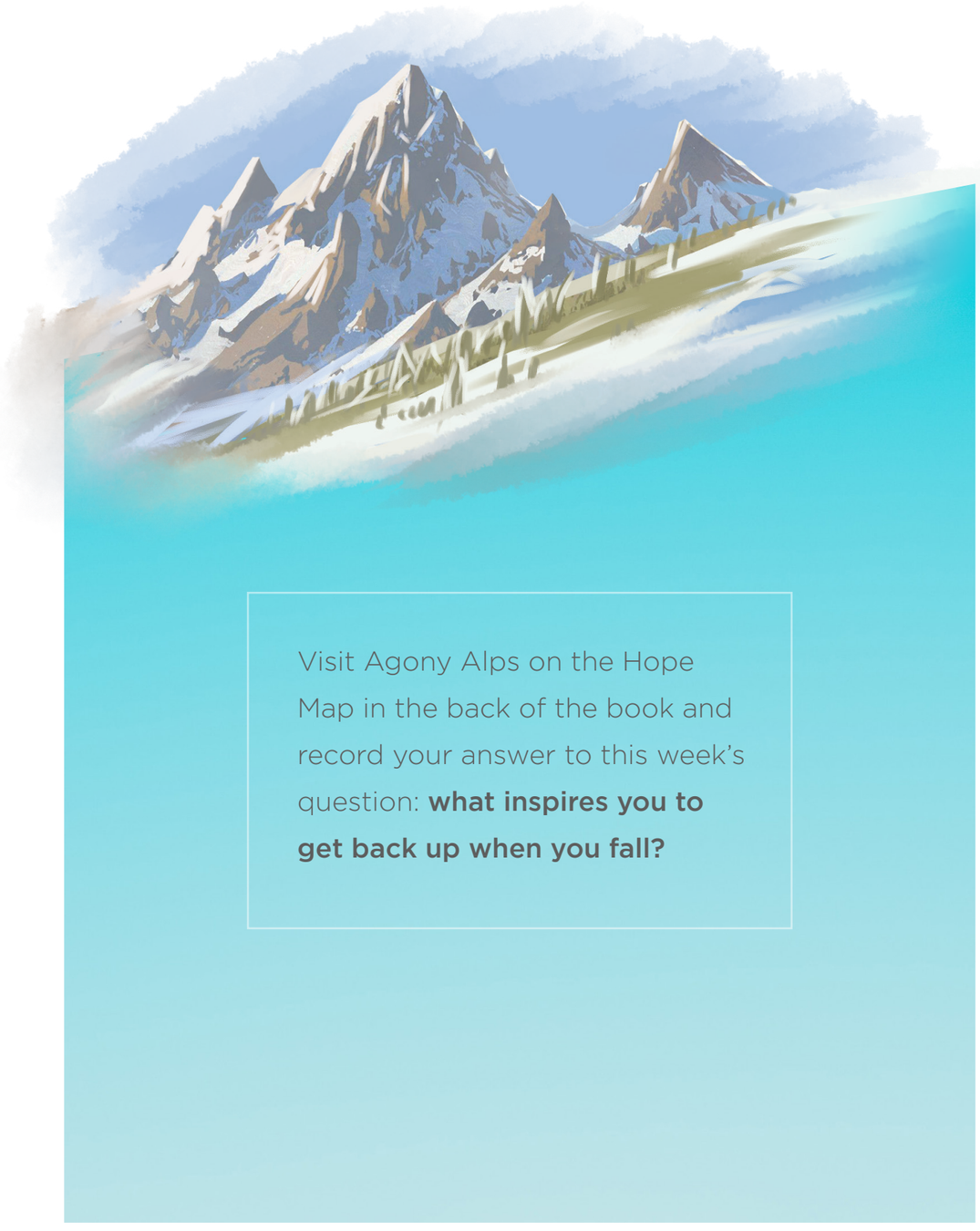
LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- In what ways do you see the world stumbling over Jesus?
- Do you remember what it was like to stumble over the idea of Jesus as the ultimate foundation for your life? What might those who are still stumbling be feeling and experiencing?
- How might you point them to the hope, stability, and community you've found in Jesus?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer

FAITH RHYTHM:

DAILY DEVOTIONS

What has helped you grow spiritually and satisfy your thirst for God's Word?



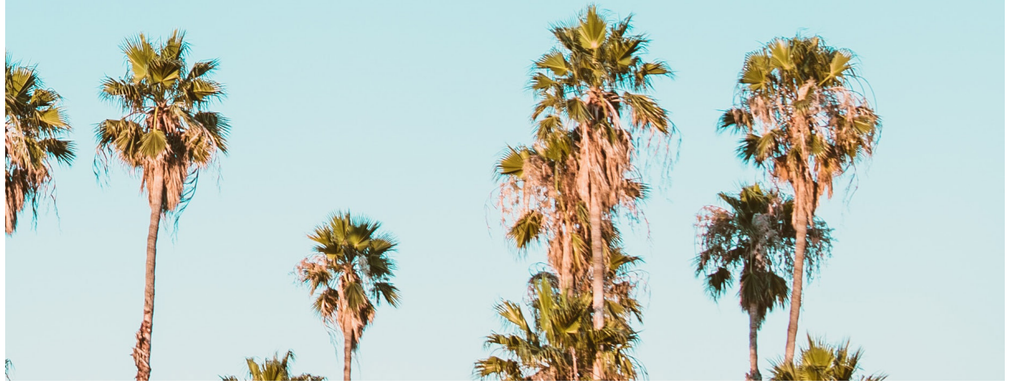
Visit Agony Alps on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **what inspires you to get back up when you fall?**

SINGLES SUMMIT

Connect with other singles and grow together in community.

July 24

Register Online | **marinerschurch.org**



From Paris to Berkeley

By Angelina Joseph

I grew up in a loving, Christian home in Paris, France. I was an outgoing and sociable girl, spending a lot of my free time in the youth ministry at my church. As I worked on completing my undergraduate degree, I felt a calling to venture out and attend UC-Berkeley for graduate school. When the time finally came, I was excited, but little did I know the depth this journey would bring, and the culture shock I would have to overcome.

It was early summer when I arrived in Berkeley. Coming from Paris which heats up in the summer, I was surprised at how cool the weather was here. The campus was nearly empty, but inviting. Equally inviting was the neighborhood I lived in. They both provided me with a sense of security and peace.

However, when school started, I quickly felt out of place, and that sense of security was gone. I had never seen that many distractions on the street before getting to the university's gate. In France, getting an education is held in high regard and therefore, the educational institutions favor activities that are conducive to the student's success. In a French nutshell, education is important and should be protected from outside influences.

What about classes? They were equally uncomfortable for me. I vividly recall how fast the students and faculty spoke, and it was far too much for me to translate in real time. Oh, how I wished they would speak more slowly so I could take copious notes. Even more importantly, I wished they would stop frowning their foreheads and being impatient when I'd speak or ask a question.

Both consciously and subconsciously, there were a lot of things I wanted out of my new life in America. I knew my thick French accent had something to do with people's attitude sometimes, but how could I correct it if no one was willing to converse with me? As I was trying to navigate different aspects of life in a foreign county, frustration set in which opened up a cohort of emotions ranging from pity to sadness, and ultimately ended in tears.

As an international student, I was not permitted to work. My small and limited budget forced me to live frugally, which also compounded the frustration. For instance, when I went grocery shopping, I found food to be too expensive to meet the needs of my dietary regimen. Furthermore, walking the massive supermarket aisles and staring at a zillion brand names I was unfamiliar with was straight out confusing. Believe me when I tell you, it was not easy.

I liked the outdoor markets, but the irregular frequency of buses was discouraging. If I were in Paris, I would have gotten on the metro/bus in a few minutes. All of this caused me to miss home even more, further compounding the slew of emotions I faced on a daily basis.

But one day towards the end of my first semester, God threw me a lifeline. As I was walking to class, there was a crowd gathered around two men. One of these men was preaching the gospel, the other was dressed up like a clown and mocking the preacher. It was quite the spectacle and repeated on a daily basis. The preacher, however, didn't waiver and continued evangelizing on the kingdom of God for believers, and the harsh reality of hell for non-believers. His courage was inspiring to me given that I had felt rather mocked by some of my classmates due to my strong French accent. The preacher was named Eddie, and after some discussions with him, I got connected with a local church. The congregation was loving, and the fellowship was exhilarating. I found a church that valued me, and their ministry exemplified the love of our Lord. Thank you, Jesus!

The following Sunday, I joined a young adults ministry. Because of my involvement at church, I made friends and was able to say goodbye to lonely days. I was submerged in God's love and faithfulness, and, as a result, my love for Jesus grew exponentially. I started a Bible study in French that became a bridge for me to learn about the vast diversity found in God's family. Diversity that could be a force through our love for one another. The other benefit I got from the fellowship was learning to navigate American culture and improving my language skills. While I had assumed going to Berkeley would be my gateway to getting settled in America, it turns out that Jesus had something else in mind.

My experience as a student in Berkeley taught one thing among others that, no matter what barriers we face, Jesus is able to help us cross over them.

"For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility." Ephesians 2:14

"God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land." Psalms 68:6 (NIV)

Jul 31-Aug 1

Living Where You Don’t Belong (2:11-25)

We are no longer citizens of this world, yet we live here. So how do we live? We see practical instruction for living honorably in a world that is not our ultimate home. We are to live with integrity, submit to our authorities, live honorably, and silence the criticism by doing good.

1 Peter 2:11-25

A Call to Good Works

11 Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that
wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so
that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will
glorify God on the day he visits.

13 Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as
the supreme authority 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who
do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. 15 For it is God’s will that you
silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good. 16 Submit as free people, not
using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God’s slaves. 17 Honor everyone. Love
the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

18 Household slaves, submit to your masters with all reverence not only to the good and
gentle ones but also to the cruel. 19 For it brings favor if, because of a consciousness of
God, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if when
you do wrong and are beaten, you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer,
if you endure it, this brings favor with God.

21 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an
example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 He did not commit sin, and no deceit
was found in his mouth; 23 when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he
suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He
himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live
for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep
going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Duel sin inwardly.

I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul (v 11).

Display your Savior outwardly.

Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits (v 12).

Submit.

Submit to every human authority because of the Lord (v 13).

Do good.

For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good (v 15).

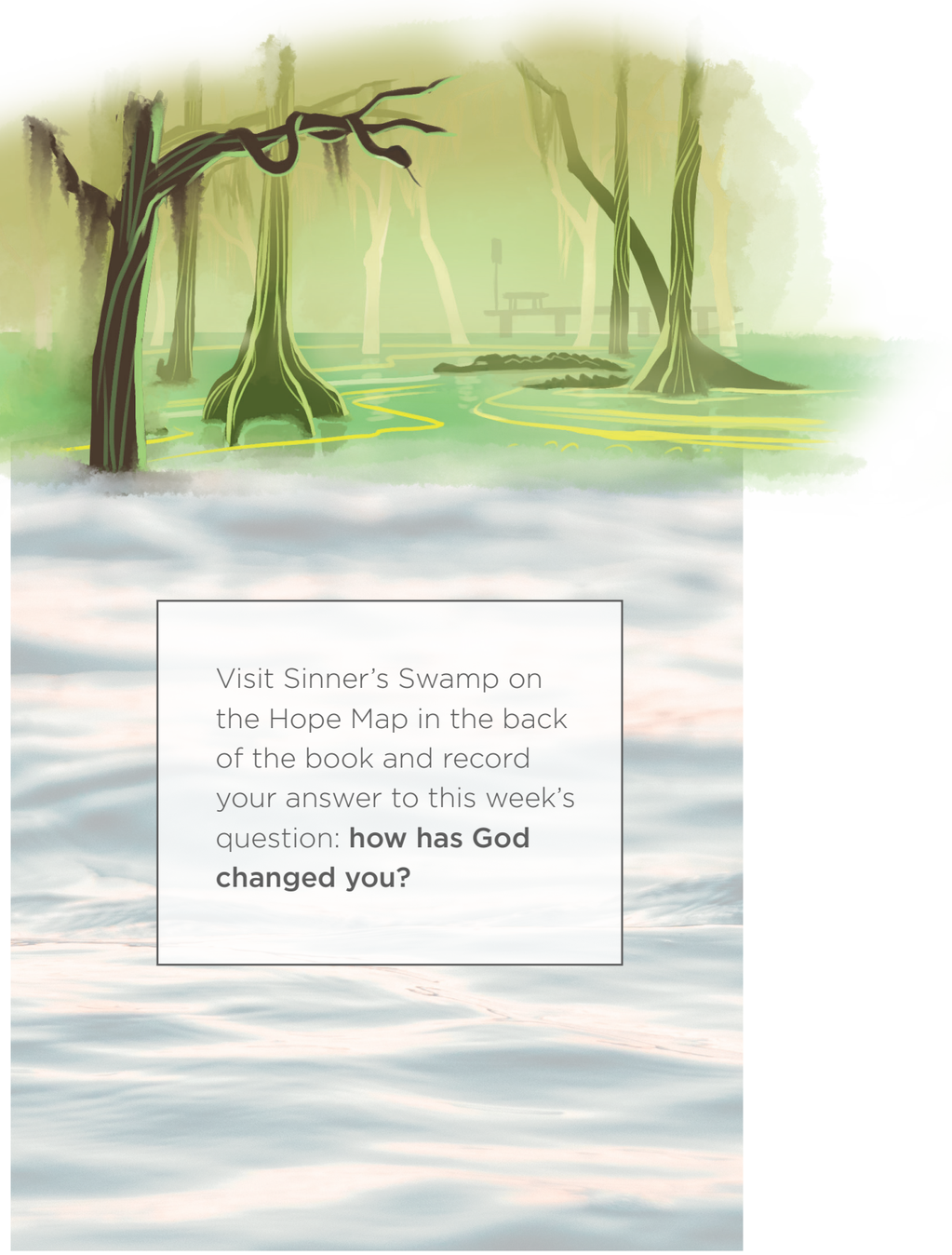
SERMON NOTES

Love the family.

Love the brothers and sisters (v 17).

Fear God, honor your leaders.

Fear God. Honor the emperor (v 17).



Visit Sinner's Swamp on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **how has God changed you?**

Week 4: Living Where You Don't Belong

1 Peter 2:11-25

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

- We are no longer citizens of this world, yet we live here. So how do we live? We are to live with integrity, submit to our authorities, live honorably, and silence the criticism by doing good.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- Where were you born and raised? Who has moved from the furthest away? Who has grown up the most locally?
- Would you consider your "home" to be where you currently live, where you were born, or where you grew up? Why do you consider that your home?
- If you've moved, did you have to adapt to any new customs, language, or cultural differences? What differences have you noticed between where you live now and

where you have lived in the past—culturally, geographically, etc.?

- In today's text, we see practical instruction for living in a world that is not our ultimate home.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 2:11–25. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

A Call to Good Works

11 Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.

13 Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. 15 For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good. 16 Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God's slaves. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

18 Household slaves, submit to your masters with all reverence not only to the good and gentle ones but also to the cruel. 19 For it brings favor if, because of a consciousness of God, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if when you do wrong and are beaten, you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God.

21 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth; 23 when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He

himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds, you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

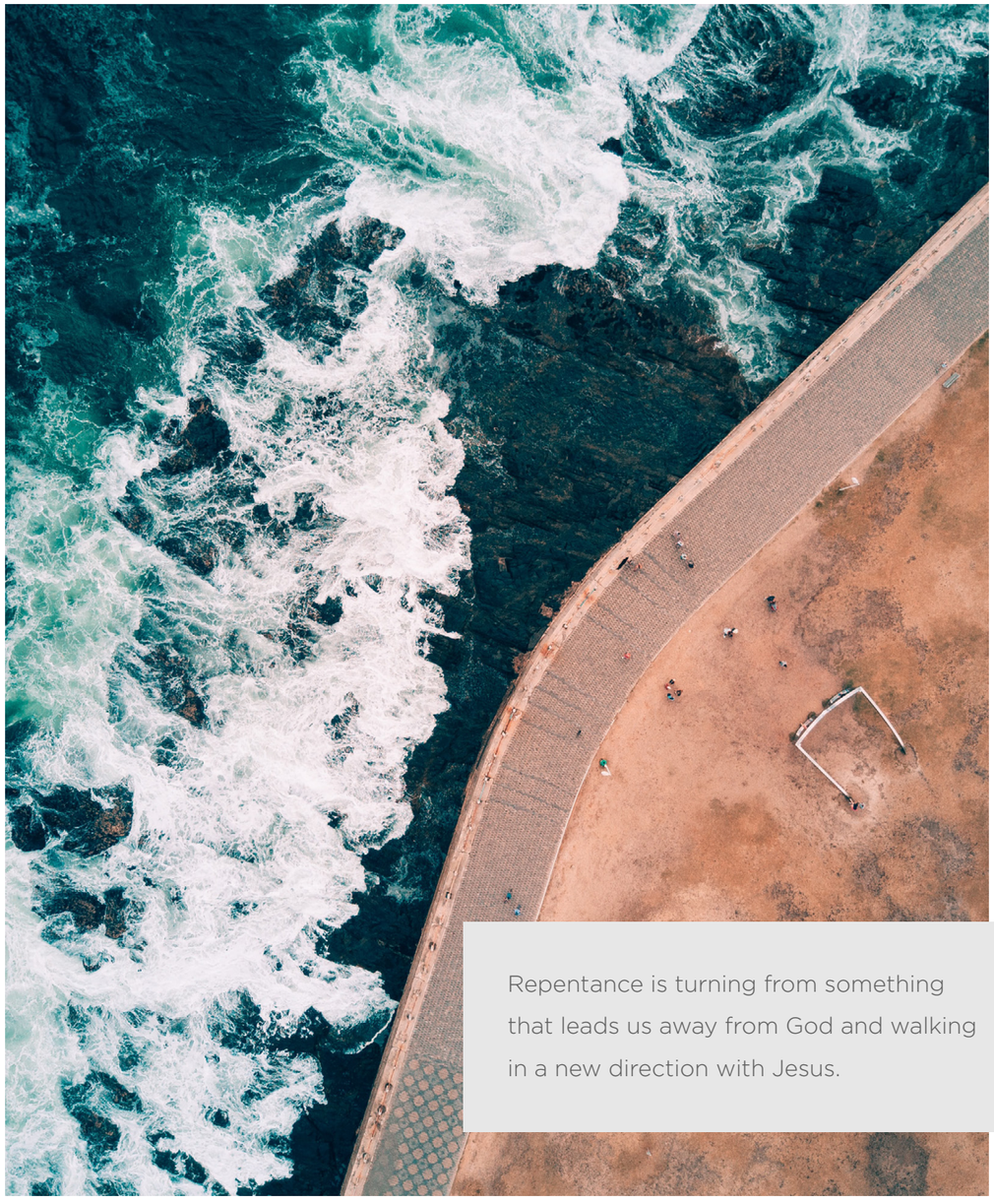
- What is the tone of these verses? How do these instructions relate to previous weeks on hope in Jesus transforming our perspective, identity, and character?
- In verses 21–25, what did Jesus' sacrificial death accomplish?
- Knowing that Jesus was sinless and therefore his death was uniquely able to bear our sins on the cross, what example does Peter encourage us to follow?
- How does the injustice of Jesus' wounds and the holiness of His character relate to the practical examples of government and labor?
- In addition to Jesus' example, how do verses 16–17 make it clear that Peter is not condoning earthly abuses of power such as human bondage and oppression?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- What is your reaction to words like "submit" and "authority"? Why do you think that you respond that way?
- Where do you struggle with submitting to authority? Be specific.
- Compared to the world, is your attitude noticeably distinct and Christ-like? If not, what needs to change in the areas mentioned in these verses:
  - » Authority
  - » Government
  - » Work
  - » People
- How does this description of Jesus challenge or encourage you today?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- How would our world be different if people with power behaved like Christ? If people without power behaved like Christ?
- What dynamics and objectives would change in your workplace if the example of Christ were followed?
- How can we use our freedom in Christ for good in this world? What would it look like for us to live as free people in the midst of broken structures and power dynamics?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer



Repentance is turning from something that leads us away from God and walking in a new direction with Jesus.

FAITH RHYTHM

REPENTANCE

What is a step you can take to change direction and build a closer relationship with Jesus?

“Hopeless”

By Boroka Nagy

“Yet LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we all are the work of your hands.” Isaiah 64:8.

Hopelessness steals my words. In my state of agony and suffering, all I can do is cry to God. Even in my darkest days, God is there. While I am mourning shattered things, God creates new beginnings and breathes new life into me.

I have kept my faith through hopelessness because God creates beautiful things out of dust.

This dance is the expression of this emptiness. When my words end, my body speaks.

"...There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."
1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)

Babylon

By Jordie Poblete and JC Villafan

Based on the reference made by the Apostle Peter of the ancient city at the end of his first letter. We dedicate this poem to all who are living within the borders of their Babylon right now.

You are not alone. One day, God will lead us home.
Until then, we wait in this home with hope.

You know that feeling when you feel at home?
You can be yourself no matter where you go
But traveling from place to place
Those spaces where they know your face
It's even there where you can feel alone

And that's just how life is in Babylon
Where feeling lost are journey days
And those roads are long

I hope one day to find true rest
Even though it seems so far
For now the homesick stays right where we are
Right here in Babylon

I try hide the pain so no one sees
When loved ones hurt it feels like eternity
I pray for hope on my cut up knees
That You'd be strong through my unbelief
But showing strength makes living feel so numb

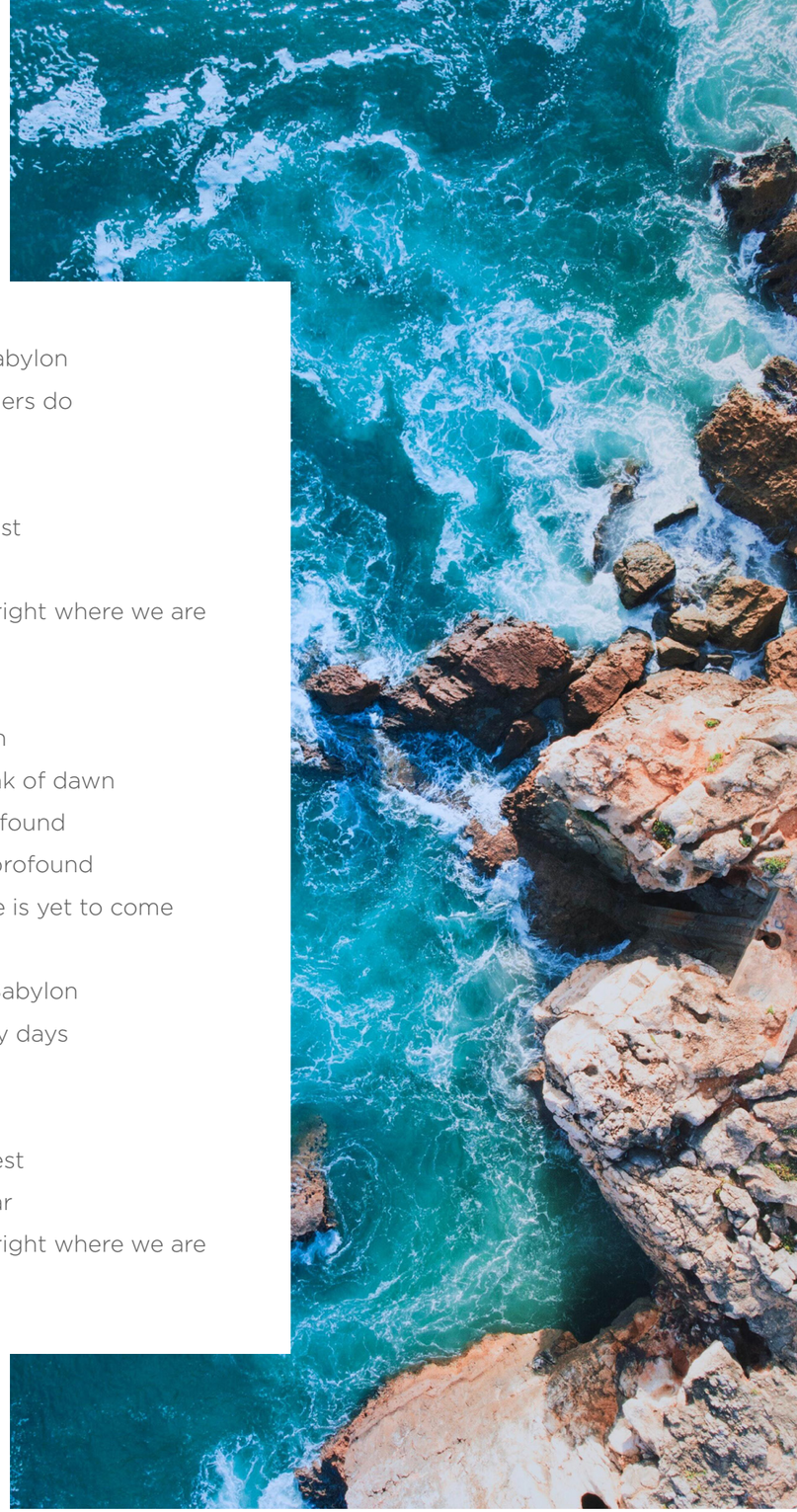
Yet that's just how life is in Babylon
Where kids know hurt as fathers do
And it all seems wrong

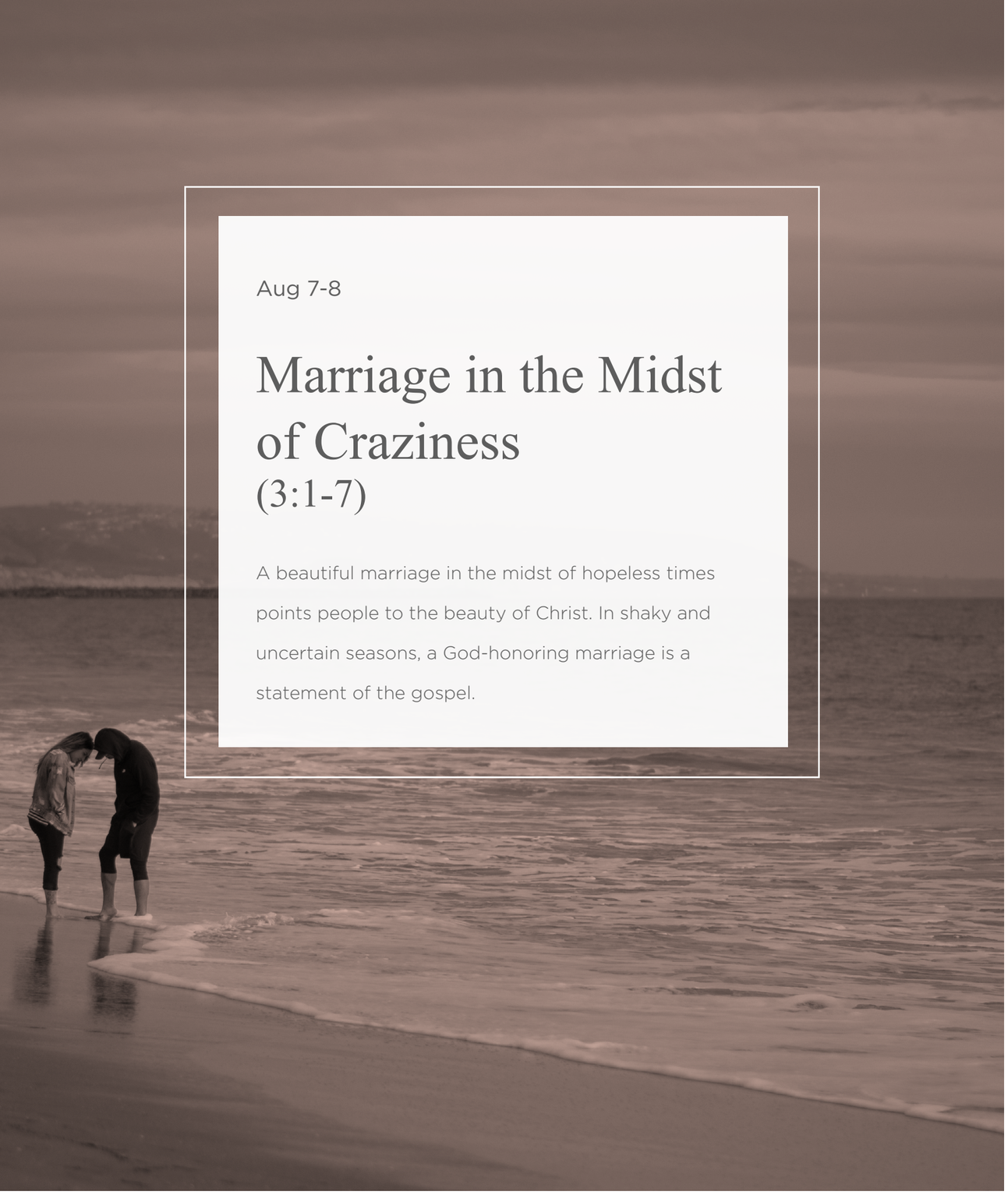
I hope one day to find true rest
Even though it seems so far
For now the homesick stays right where we are
Right here in Babylon

I lie awake at night in Babylon
Still waiting for the early break of dawn
When broken heals and all is found
The lights lead home are so profound
But the dream of what will be is yet to come

For now that's how life is in Babylon
Where feeling lost are journey days
And those roads are long

I know one day I'll find true rest
Even though You seems so far
For now the homesick stays right where we are
Right here in Babylon





Aug 7-8

Marriage in the Midst of Craziness
(3:1-7)

A beautiful marriage in the midst of hopeless times points people to the beauty of Christ. In shaky and uncertain seasons, a God-honoring marriage is a statement of the gospel.

1 Peter 3: 1-7

Wives and Husbands

3 In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.

7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

SERMON NOTES

1 In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.

7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:1-7

SERMON NOTES

Week 5: Marriage in the Midst of Craziness

1 Peter 3:1-7

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

A beautiful marriage in the midst of hopeless times points people to the beauty of Christ. In shaky and uncertain times, a God-honoring marriage is a statement of the gospel.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- Growing up, what show, story, or example did you look to as a relatable or ideal depiction of family and marriage? Why?
- Who is currently your favorite fictional, historical, or celebrity couple? Why?
- This week, we continue looking at earthly relationships but Peter now brings things closer to home and more personal than last week's discussion on authority, government, work, and society in general.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 3:1–7. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

Wives and Husbands

1 In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some
disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2
when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward
things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather
what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of
great worth in God's sight. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God
also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah
obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is
good and do not fear any intimidation.

7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a
weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers
will not be hindered.

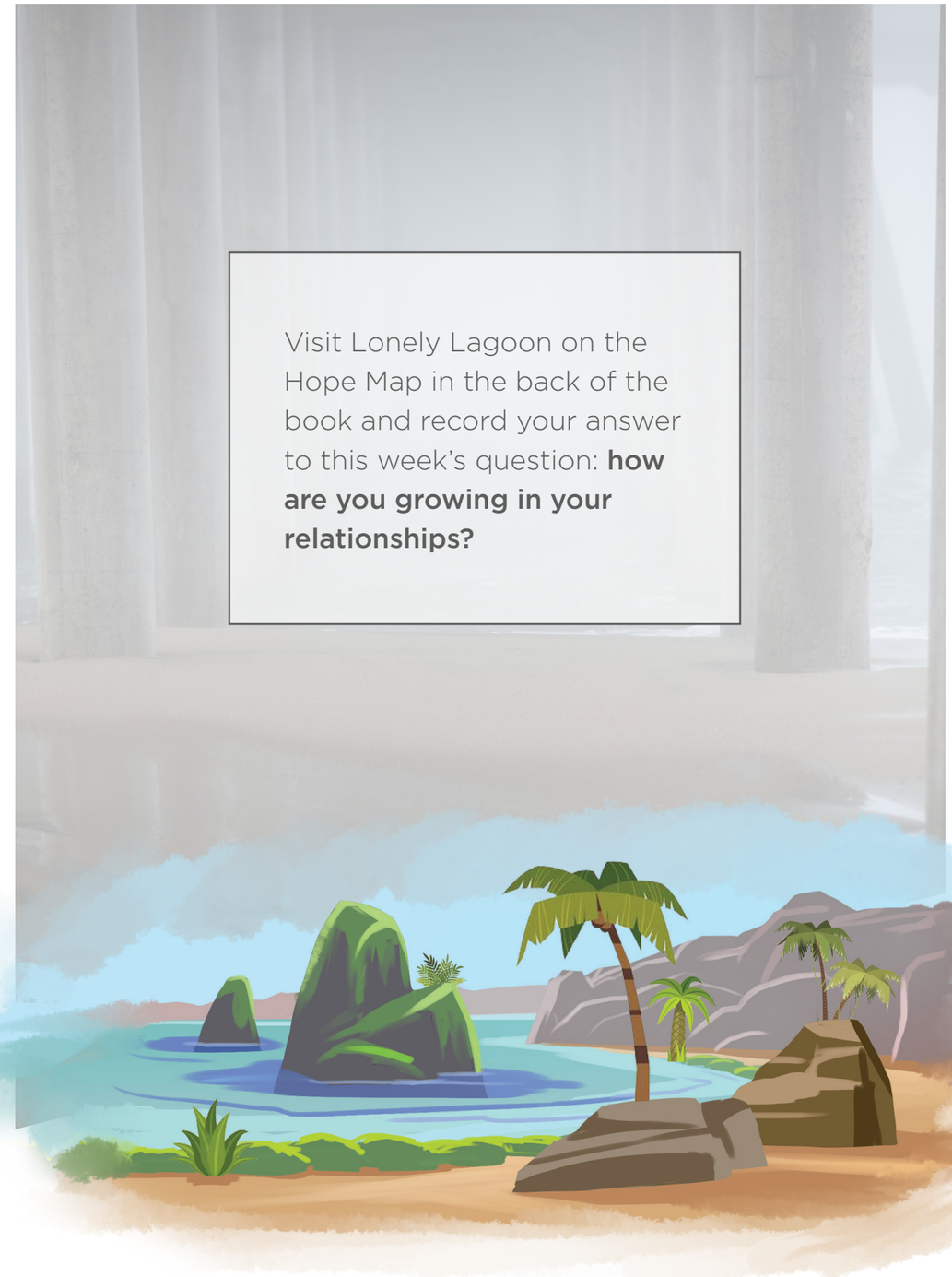
- Verses 1 and 7 use the phrase "in the same way," referring back to the end of chapter 2 where Peter discussed Jesus' holy, humble, and selfless love. How does Jesus' example apply to husbands and wives since he was never married?
- How does verse 6 provide a clue for context in understanding what and why Peter was previously writing about power dynamics in society and now about marriages?
- What counter cultural behaviors does Peter instruct for women and men?
- What is the main point of today's text?

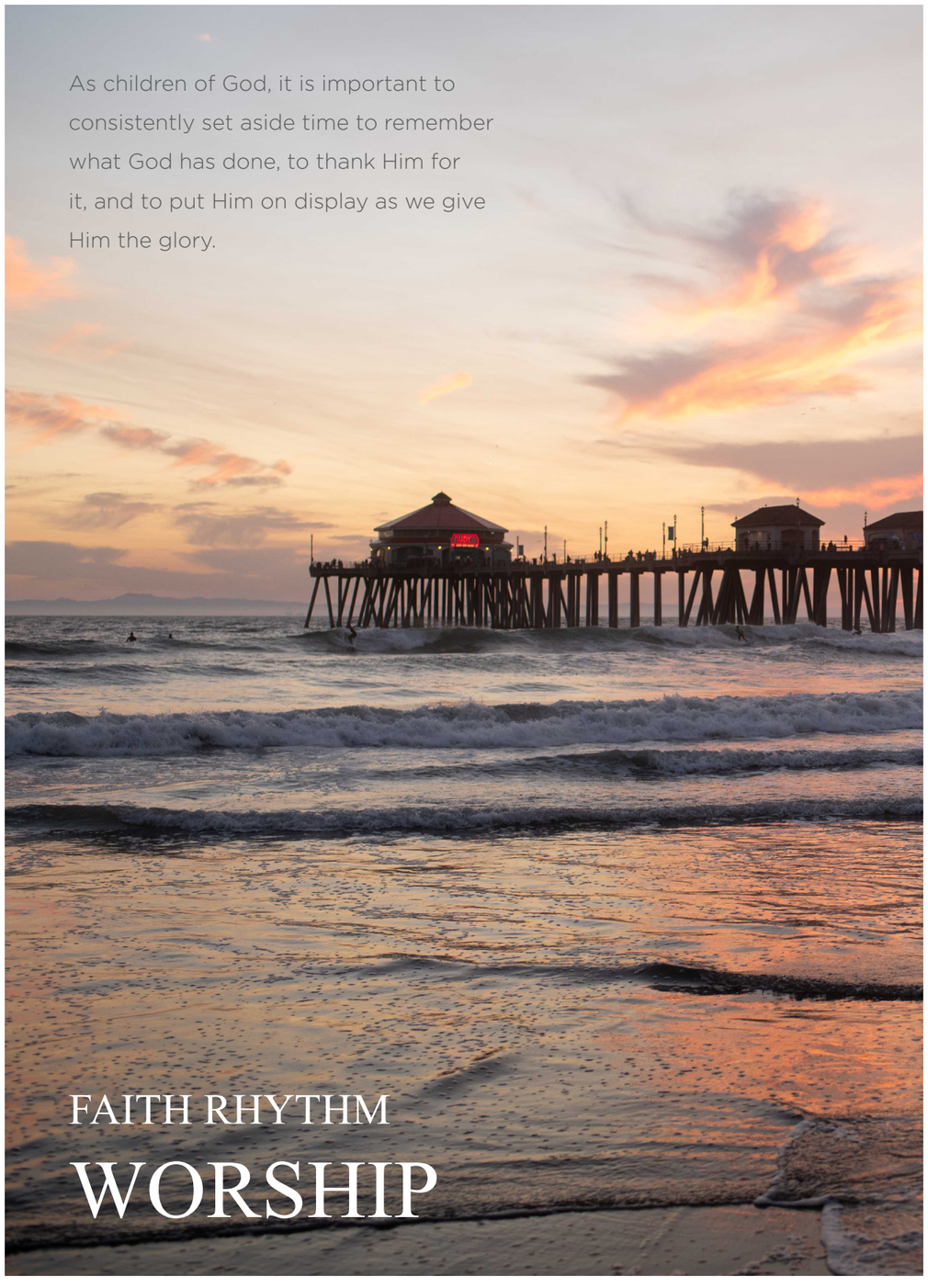
LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- If you are married, how is this challenging, encouraging, or convicting? If you are single?
- What can unmarried people learn about the gospel from godly marriages? What can married couples learn from singles about a personal identity in Christ?
- What cultural norms are you most tempted to imitate in being a good man or woman?
- Do you think there is too much emphasis on marriage or singleness?
- In the church?
- In our culture?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- What does the world say makes a woman or man attractive, respectable, or valuable?
- How does this text offer a deeper and more satisfying hope than outward appearances and stereotypical gender roles?
- How can relationships within the church model dignity, value, and mutual respect for our culture?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer





As children of God, it is important to consistently set aside time to remember what God has done, to thank Him for it, and to put Him on display as we give Him the glory.

FAITH RHYTHM

WORSHIP

WORSHIP

How have you grown closer to God through worship?

AVOIDING THE CRASH:

What to Do When Marriage Gets Tricky

By Doug Fields | Youth Ministry Pastor

Several years ago, a big-city commuter train crashed, killing several people and seriously injuring hundreds more. The train was traveling too fast in a location that required it to go slow. When investigators looked into the accident, they made three observations that should have prevented the devastation:

- A comparable crash had already taken place in a similar location and the lessons it offered were ignored.
- The warning lights that informed the conductor to slow down were working, but the driver didn't give it the proper attention.
- The conductor was apparently distracted by his phone.

Sadly, this crash didn't have to happen. It's really not all that different from what we experience when we see a marriage crash. Too often couples …

- Don't take the time to learn from their past mistakes.
- Ignore the warning lights that their marriage is in danger.

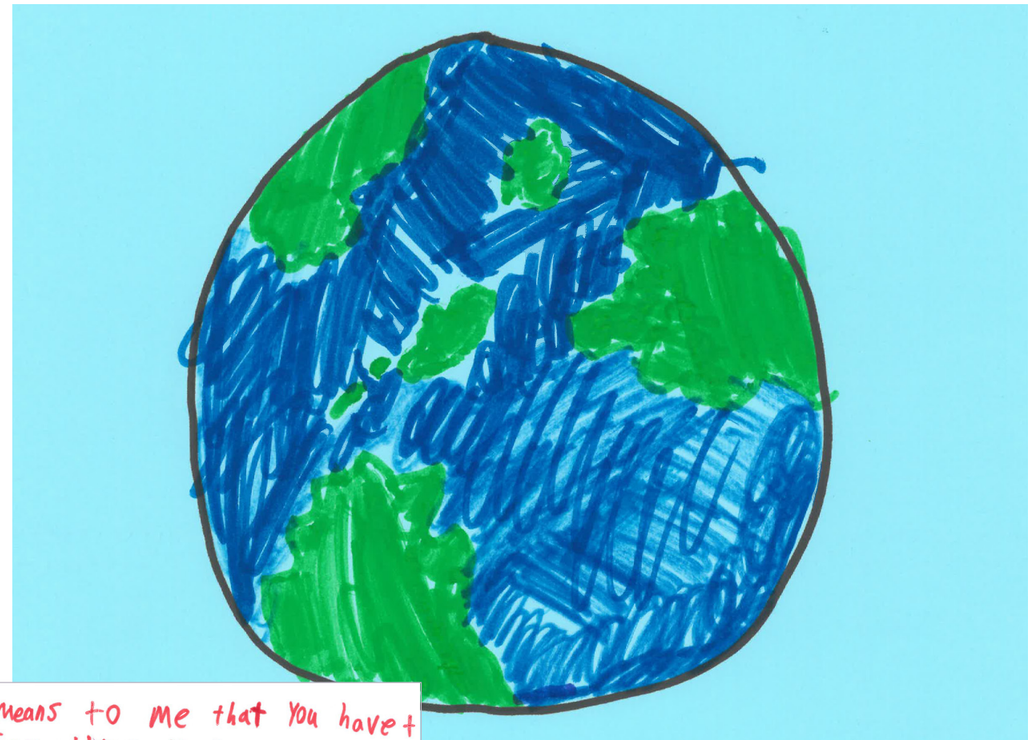
- Are distracted by “other priorities” that keep them from giving needed attention to their marriage.

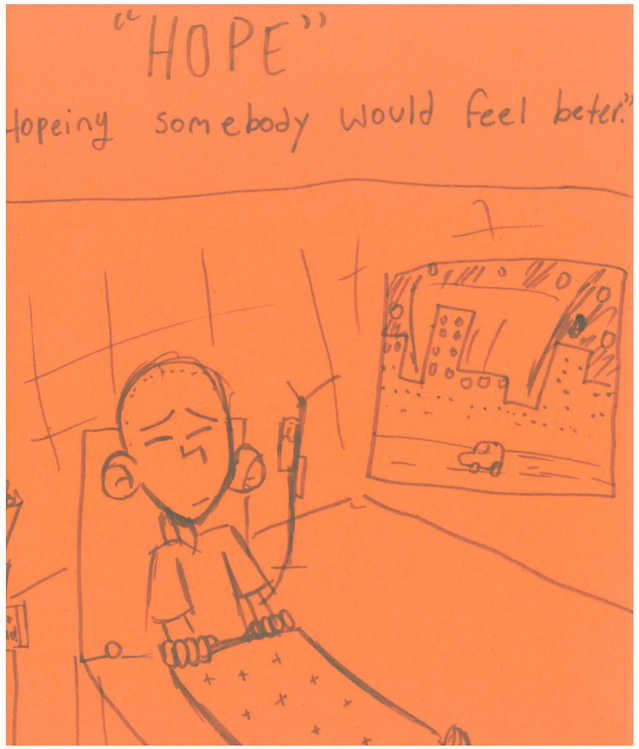
All marriages experience seasons where the relationship gets tricky. No couple is immune from times of tension and conflict. But you can learn to recognize the warning lights and make tough choices that will keep your marriage on a healthy course, headed toward your intended destination. You’ll have to choose to say “no” to important options so you can say “yes” to what’s most important. If you have no time for your marriage, you must move to crisis mode and make immediate course corrections. You can’t just make more time for your marriage. As fun as it would be, making time is impossible. All married couples, regardless of income, region, religion, upbringing, and personality, all have the same amount of time: 1,440 minutes a day. You have the amazing ability to choose how those precious and fleeting minutes are spent. It’s both a privilege and a burden. If you don’t learn how to use those minutes to breathe life into your marriage, your relationship may run off the rails.

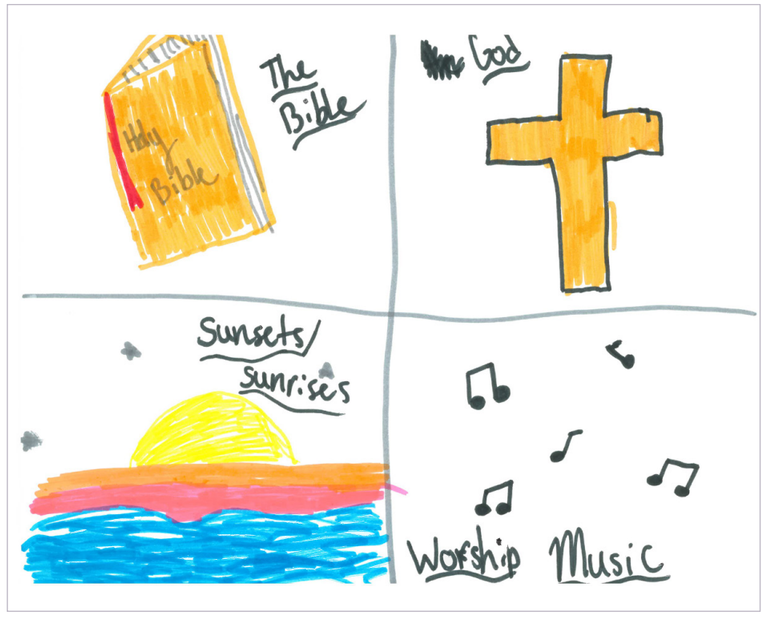
For you to experience a long-term marriage filled with refreshing time margins and a deep intimacy, you have to seek to understand the cause of your busyness as well as the consequences. It’s easy to simply cast blame on busyness without looking within your own heart to see why you actually might be so busy. In an attempt to help me escape busyness, I’ve identified three questions I regularly ask:

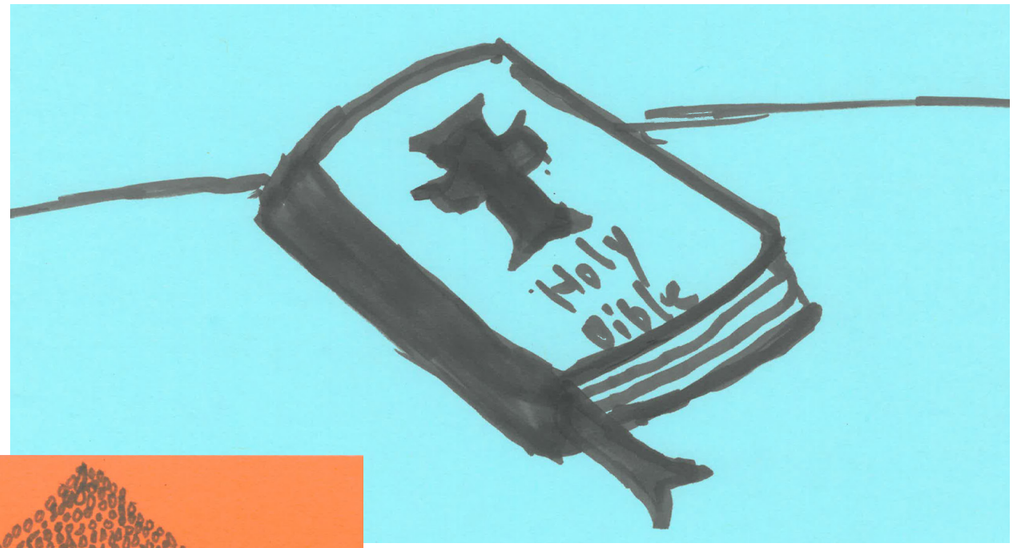
- Is my pace of life really sustainable over a long period of time?
- Do I like the person I am becoming as a result of my pace?
- Am I giving my wife, Cathy, and my family my best self during this season?

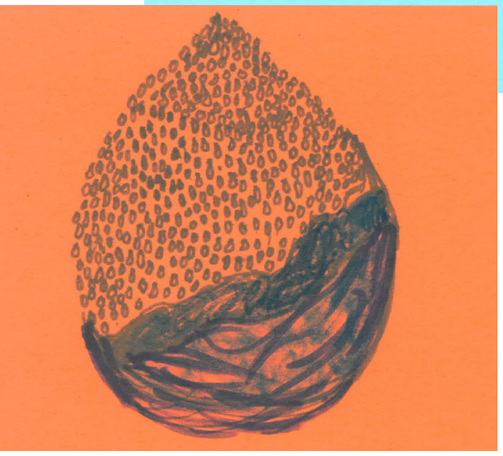
We asked our Mariners Kids to draw what hope means to them. These are some of the pieces they created!

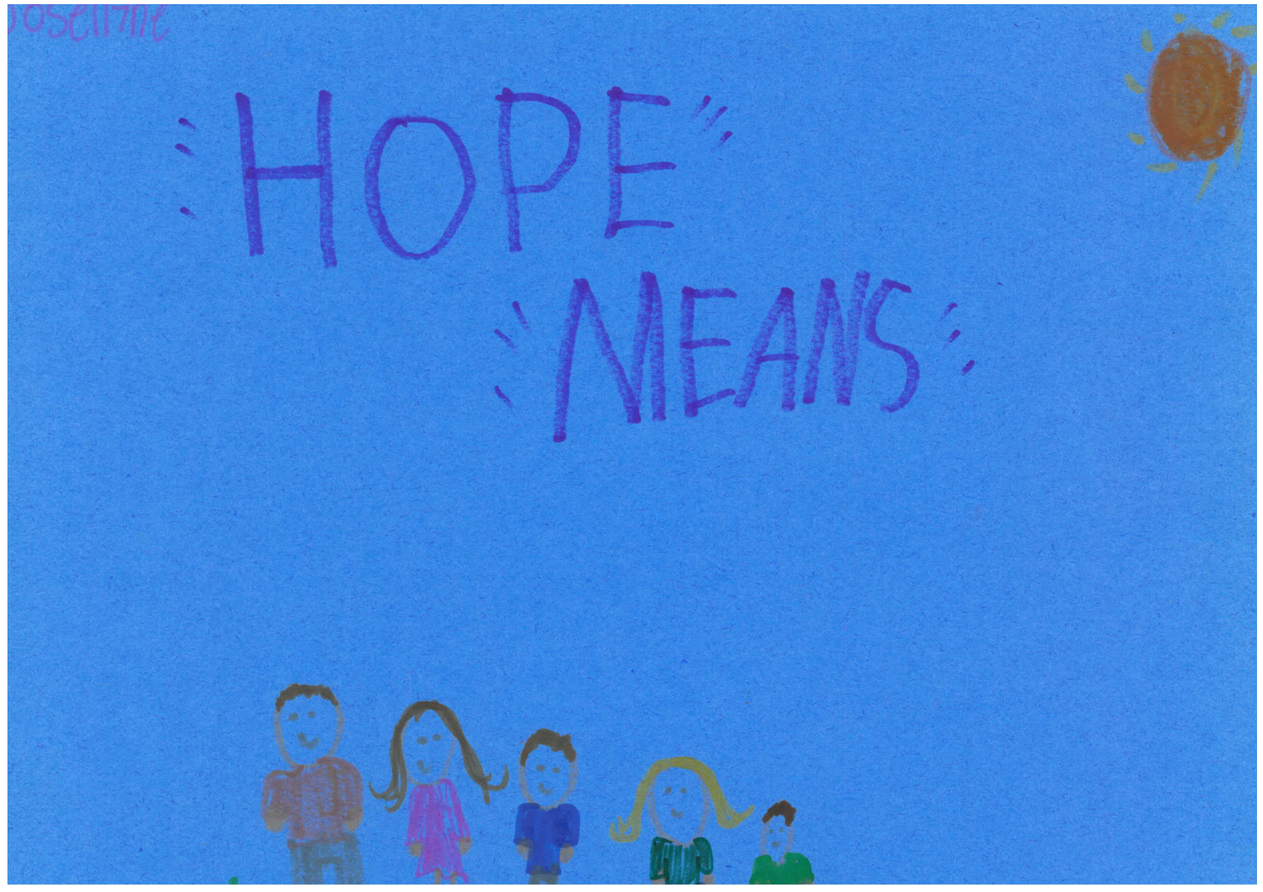












Create a Hope Timelapse!

Kids, check out this video to learn how to create a fun project at home with your whole family—a timelapse video spelling out the word “Hope”. Post your completed videos on social media and tag us **@marinerschurch** to share them with us!

Aug 14-15:

Holding on in Suffering

(3:8-22)

In the midst of suffering, how shall we live? We should be devoted to what is good (verse 13), be gentle and respectful (verse 16), and compassionate and humble (verse 8). In hopeless times we have amazing opportunities to point to the Hope that is within us (verse 15). How can we get through suffering, even suffering that is undeserved? By looking to the One who has suffered for us and in our place. He is our Hope and our example.

1 Peter 3:8-22

Do No Evil

8 Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble, 9 not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For the one who wants to love life
and to see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit,
11 and let him turn away from evil
and do what is good.
Let him seek peace and pursue it,
12 because 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 what is evil.

Undeserved Suffering

13 Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 16 Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who

disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison 20 who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

In your heart, set Christ as Lord.

...in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy (v 15)

In your speech, be gentle.

... do this with gentleness and reverence (v 16)

In your mind, keep a clear conscience.

... keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. (v 16)

In your actions, do good.

For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (v 17)

Week 6: Holding on in Suffering

1 Peter 3:8-22

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

In hopeless times, we have amazing opportunities to point to the Hope that is within us. How can we get through suffering, even suffering that is undeserved? By looking to the One who has suffered for us and suffered in our place. He is our Hope and our example.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

What's the dumbest thing you've ever said? When have your words gotten you into a lot of trouble?

This week, Peter digs deeper into a Christ-like example in the midst of suffering. As he does, we'll see the power of our words as a testimony of hope in hopeless times.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 3:8–22. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

Do No Evil

8 Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble, 9 not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For the one who wants to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, 11 and let him turn away from evil and do what is good. Let him seek peace and pursue it, 12 because 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 what is evil.

Undeserved Suffering

13 Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them, or be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 16 Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit, 19 in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison 20 who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was

being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

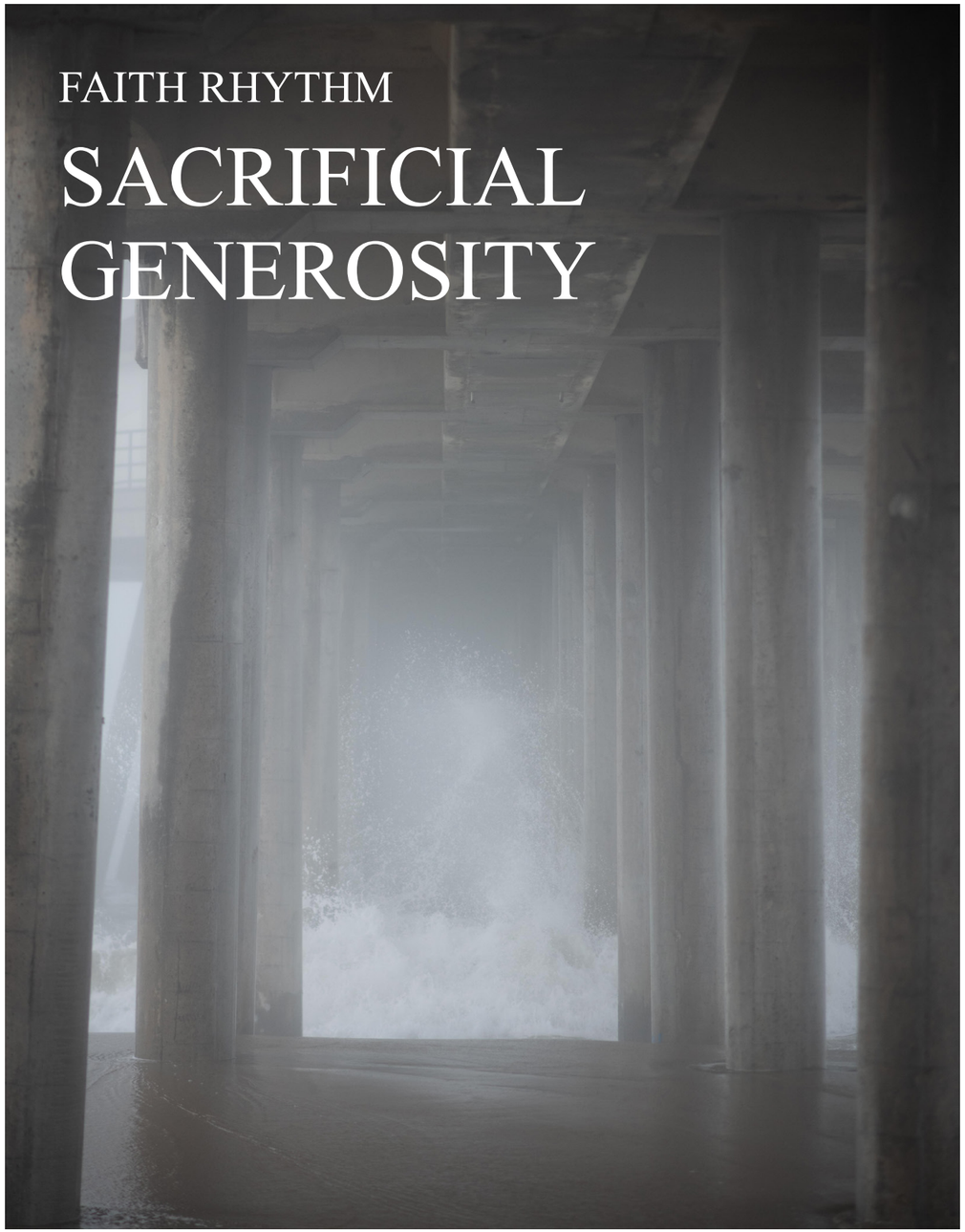
- How does the "finally" in verses 8–9 build on the previous topics of marriage, society, labor, and government? How would you summarize Peter's main point throughout this line of reasoning?
- What outward characteristics of a hope-filled life are emphasized in verses 10–12? How does this quote from Psalm 34:12–16 relate to verses 8–9? To verses 13–22?
- How is the story of Noah an example of hope in hopeless times? How is Noah an example of salvation and God's blessing even in the midst of suffering and intimidation?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- On a scale of 1-10 (1 = No problem, 10 = Constant problem), how hard is it for you to control your tongue in general? What kind of trouble have your words caused?
- What motivates your speech when it isn't Christ-like? Fear? Retaliation? Pride?
- When you interact with people who have different beliefs or values do you tend to avoid points of disagreement or engage them? If disagreements come up, are your responses more like Christ or the culture?
- When have you felt isolated or even attacked for what you believe? What happened and how did you respond? Did your response make things better, worse, or no difference?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- Peter had hinted at intimidation and pressure in previous verses, but now he's explicit in verse 14. Where do you feel pressure to conform to society rather than to Christ?
- Reread verses 15-16. Do you feel prepared to show Christ in the midst of unfair or intimidating circumstances? Why is it important to always share your hope in Christ (your testimony and the gospel) with "gentleness and reverence"?
- How might the relationship between our church and our culture be improved if we always demonstrated gentleness and reverence toward people who disagree with or even disparage our faith? What might God do with Christ-like boldness and humility?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer



FAITH RHYTHM

SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY

God invites us to experience the blessing of giving generously in response to His generosity toward us.

What's one way you can give sacrificially to others of your time, talents, and treasure?

Visit Calamity Canyon on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **how have you relied on God during difficult times?**

BREATHE

By Annette Gross

Amid deep suffering, when hurt is so piercing it paralyzes, when it feels like there is no end and no resolution, how many times do we ask God why?

Why me? Why now? Why this?

I asked these questions as I wept, curled up in a ball of anguish in the corner of a rented room. My forty-year marriage was over and though I asked the Lord to change him or free me, my freedom was terrifying. The loss of the family unit I cherished and counted on was gone.

While praying my heartache out to the Lord, the song, "The Hurt & The Healer" by Mercy Me began playing on the radio. I began singing these lyrics from that song whenever my brokenness threatened to defeat me, and instead I received comfort and hope:

> "So here I am, what's left of me. Where glory meets my suffering. I'm alive. Even though a part of me has died. You take my heart and breathe it back to life. I'll fall into your arms open wide... Jesus come and break my fear. Awake my heart and take my tears. Find your glory even here. When the hurt and the healer collide."

What a beautiful message of restoration, hope, and promise that victory is ours!

As I continue to struggle through each day, I wrote my own version of the song as a poem to reflect on, and encourage my growth through the healing process:

Lord, I no longer ask "why?" and instead ask "how?"
How do I recognize in myself what you need to heal so I move on without fear and guilt?
I am open to you, Father.
I need to hear your Spirit guiding each step I take...help me hear you.
Give me clarity to identify each wound and forgive it, eliminating anger so I love like you.
Heal my hurt enough to let you point out areas I must change in myself to be your light in this world, and especially in any relationship you bring to me.
Mold me into who you need me to be...so I am receptive to your grace and love...so I see a way forward, a life at the end of this battle that will be worth the pain and struggle.

PAUL'S STORY

By Brandon Gross

For many of us, this past year has been filled with trials, sadness, loss, and an overall weight that is at times unbearable. As I've navigated the spectrum of emotions that these hardships have caused, God has opened my eyes, more now than ever before, to the wonder He can curate in the midst of trying times. And in my case, the greatest wonder thus far has been watching Him place people in the right place, at the right time. It may be to witness, it may be to support someone in need, or, in this case, to hear a story so powerful that it takes hold of your soul and permanently shifts the pendulum.

We all process pain in our own ways, just as the pain of others resonates with us differently. As you read Paul Black's story, I truly believe that in the midst of our darkest hours—the times of severe pain—God can have His greatest impact on our lives

Q: Before we jump into this past year of your life, let's get to know you first. Who is Paul Black, and where does this story begin?

A: I grew up in Vancouver, British Columbia with my mom, dad, and brother Josiah. We were a pretty close family, rooted in faith from the beginning. My dad was practically Bear Grylls, so you can imagine we spent a lot of time outdoors learning how to live and survive in nature, and British Columbia was the perfect place for it.

Josiah and I loved the excitement of nature from day one. We were so

adventurous and fearless, that around the age of 3 (Josiah would've been 7 at the time), we formed the Daredevil Club with another friend of ours. The three of us were a little crazy...It started with skateboarding and the outdoors, and by the time I was 8, we were snowboarding. And by snowboarding, I mean taking it to the extreme on a board on snow-covered mountains. We would jump off cliffs and survive 60+ foot drops.

As brothers, we pushed each other in every way. As you can imagine, we incurred several injuries; it's impossible for kids like us not to. But through the broken bones and knocked out teeth, we were together and had each other's back no matter what.

Q: What brought you to California?

A: Our journey started after Josiah and I graduated acting school in Vancouver. Josiah was already producing his first film, and I was preparing to move to California for work. It was a strange time for us as we had never been apart. A few days before I was set to leave for Los Angles, I overheard Josiah listening to the song "Facedown" by Matt Redman. At that moment, the Holy Spirit took over and Josiah fell to the floor, facedown, in the presence of God. He was waiting for an answer as to what he should do since his heart was burdened at the thought of this new reality. With tears in his eyes, he came out of his room and said his calling was to move to California with me.

Six months after moving to L.A., we began serving those in need. We would go into the darkest areas to serve those in need of food, water, clothing, you name it. We didn't view it as just serving either; it was sharing the love of God with others. Josiah thrived in these moments. He had a way with people like I've never seen...everyone he encountered saw it. When someone was struggling, regardless of the situation, Josiah would pray with them on the spot. He touched every life we encountered together, all in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Q: What else can you tell us about your brother?

A: He was my best friend. Josiah was so deeply rooted in his faith and relationship with God. He was full of life on every level, and an inspiration to his coworkers, friends and family. He was a firefighter when he was younger. A professional, traveling comedian. He was part of a $100 million grossing film.

He had his challenges in life like all of us do. ADHD made school difficult for him. When he was younger, he had knocked out his two front teeth and the replacements were never quite right, which was a bit awkward at times. Being at peace with his purpose was a reoccurring challenge as he didn't always know what that was or how he could best serve the Lord; that was always his goal. But when he got knocked down, he got back up stronger.

When his daughter Peyton was born a couple years ago, he obsessed with being the best father to her that he could. In fact, one of his big-

gest challenges was the thought of falling short in parenting. As a result, he moved his wife and Peyton back to British Columbia.

Q: This past year has been really tough for you and your family. In fact, many times you have struggled with finding hope in hopeless times. What can you tell me about that?

A: Spion Kop is a beautiful mountain range above Lake Country, British Columbia. It was Josiah's favorite place to go hiking, and where he felt the closest to God's presence and peace. It was common for him to spend time up there praying and reconnecting with God. On June 15, 2020, however, Josiah didn't come back from his hike. I got a phone call from his wife letting us know he had been out longer than normal, and she was concerned. Knowing how experienced my brother was outdoors, I was sure he just spent a little more time talking with God and was fine. It wasn't until I decided to lift him up in prayer that my perception of the situation changed. In that moment, I saw my brother on the mountain top, down on one knee, in pain. As he looked up, his face illuminated by the sun and now smiling, I could vividly hear him saying "yes" to God. I began praying "Satan, you can no longer attack my brother as he's been bought and paid for by our Savior."

The next morning, I was uneasy and had a heavy heart, but tried to jumpstart my day. I went to the beach to work out and could feel Satan attacking me. After reciting the Lord's Prayer, I went home. Something wasn't right... And that's when my world came crashing down. My wife opened the door in tears, my brother's wife was on FaceTime and in tears...My brother was gone. I was overwhelmed with shock, rage, and the worst heartache I've ever experienced. I vividly remember collapsing face down and going into prayer. That's when God said to me "remember what I showed you last night..."

I don't know if Josiah could've survived his fall and subsequent injuries, and God showed him the grace of choosing life or death. Maybe it was the blessing of going home that so many Christians have pondered. Maybe it was just the comforting vision and closure that God knew I needed to get through this experience.

Q: How did you find hope through all this?

A: I still think about Josiah every day, and the only time the loss comes close to making any sense is when I'm in worship. That going home to meet his Father was not in vain, but a blessing. And that he is free of pain and smiling bigger than ever with perfect teeth.

My brother touched so many lives, and the thought that his legacy will continue to influence others, instills hope within me. I have seen that everyone can relate to pain, whether on a deeper level or not. So, it gives me hope when I share with non-believers, knowing that when God's in charge, there is always hope.

Aug 21-22:

Hope in the Fire

(4:1-19)

In the midst of suffering we can look with great joy and hope to our future (verse 13). Our suffering is not unusual. Christ suffered too. We share in His sufferings and we share in His glory.

1 Peter 4:1-19

Following Christ

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin— 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. 3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards.

End-Time Ethics

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

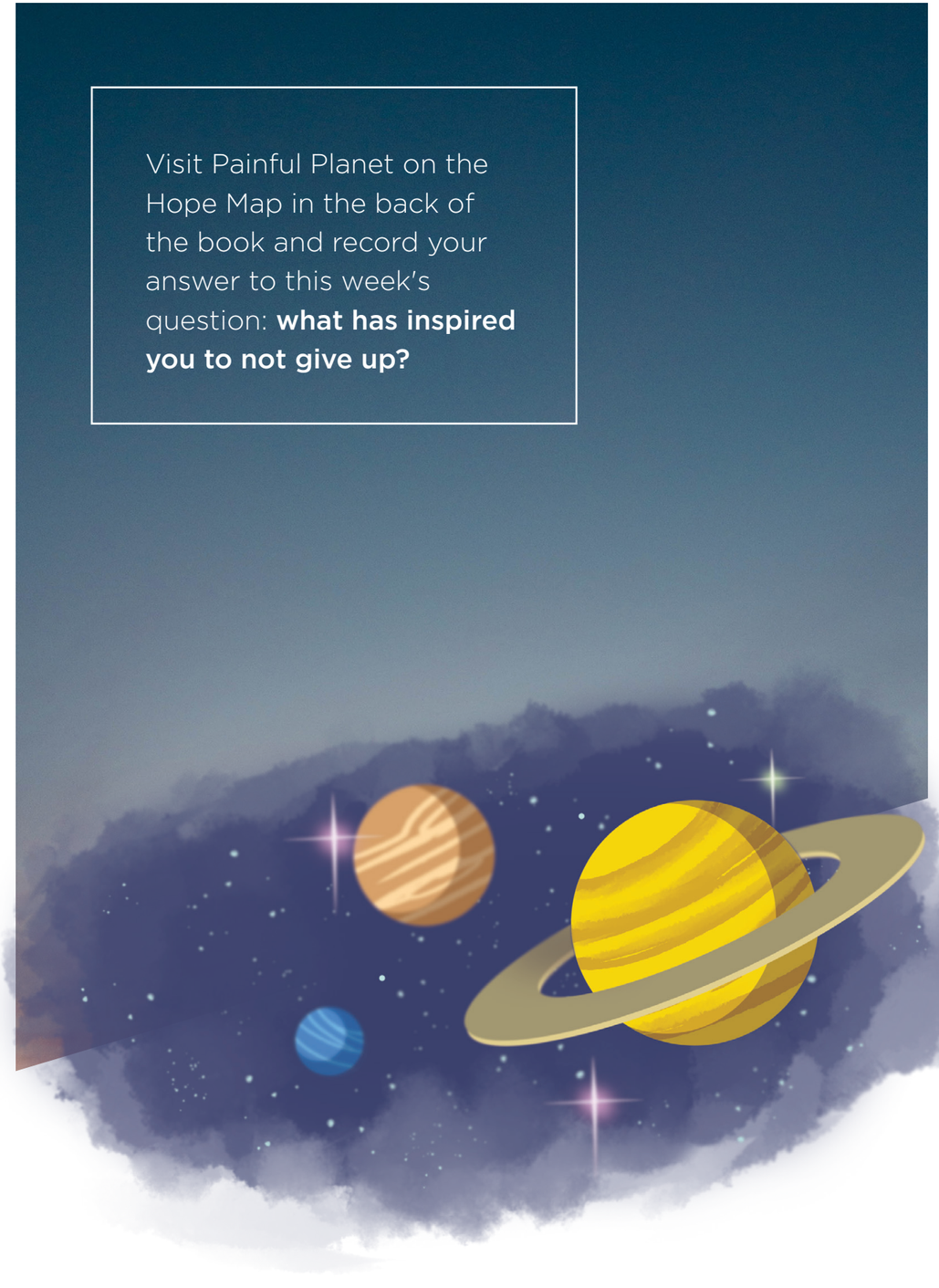
Christian Suffering

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. 13 Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. 16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

18 And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

19 So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

Visit Painful Planet on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **what has inspired you to not give up?**



Suffering conforms our character.

Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding — because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will (v 1-2).

Suffering clarifies our focus.

The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God (v 7-10)

Suffering connects us to Christ.

Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ … (v 12-13).

Suffering creates future joy.

Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed (v 13).

So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good (v 19).

Week 7: Hope in the Fire

1 Peter 4:1–19

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

In the midst of suffering, we can look with great joy and hope to our future. Our suffering is not unusual. Christ suffered too. We share in His sufferings and we share in His glory.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- When have you been frustrated, thinking that something must be wrong or broken, but discovered that you simply were doing or expecting the wrong thing?
- We can be tempted to quit or needlessly lose our cool when we have the wrong expectations for what we should do or for how things should work. In today's text, our look at Jesus' example for the right way to deal with suffering, temptation, and pressure comes to a clear conclusion. It's important for us to have the right expectations for life as followers of Christ.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 4:1–19. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

Following Christ

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin—2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. 3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards.

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18 And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

19 So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

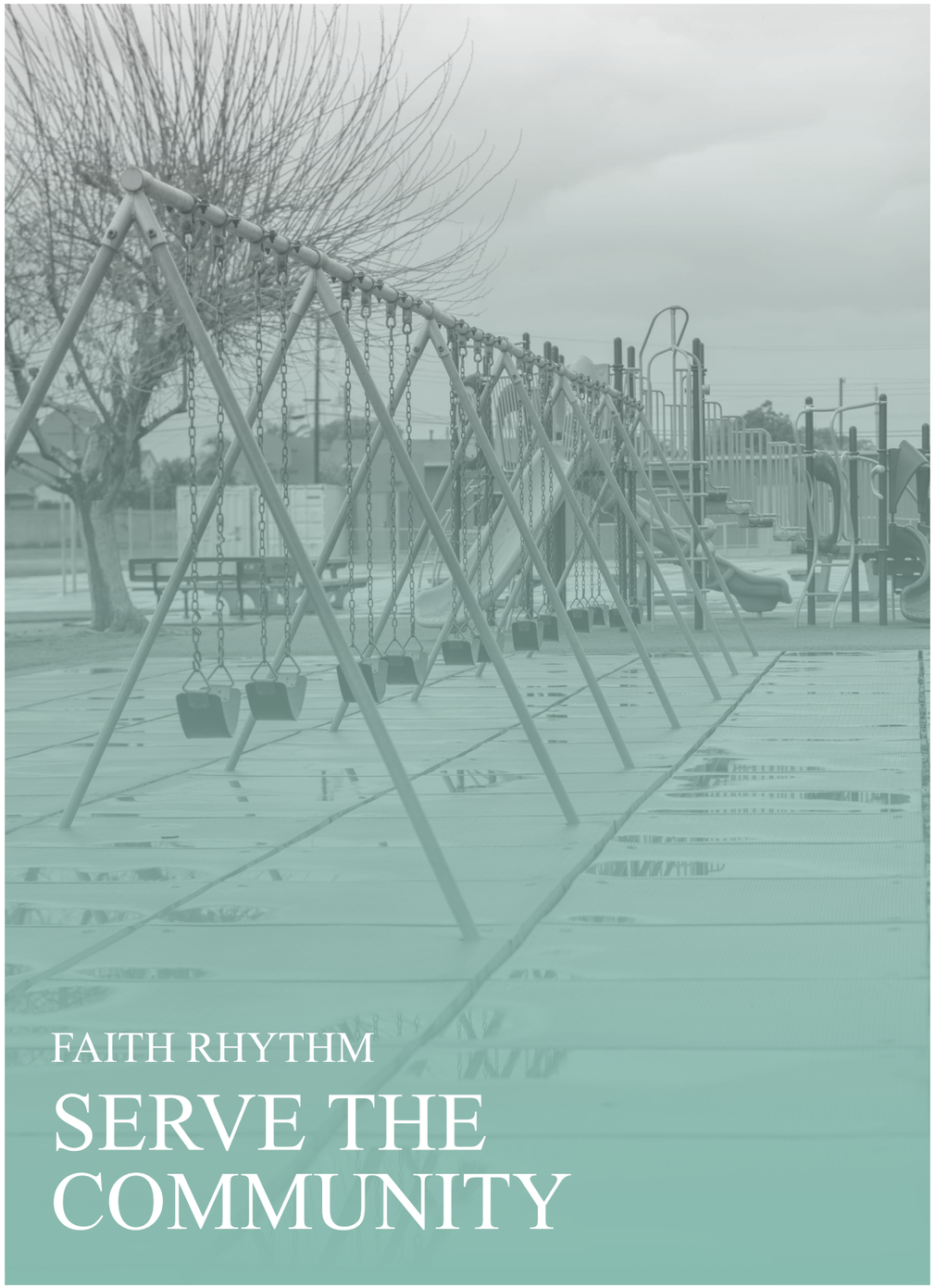
- In verse 12, what does Peter say should not surprise us?
- In verse 3, what does he mean by "there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do"—indulging selfish desires? While still calling out sin for what it is in the following verses, how does Peter provide a helpful perspective toward the lifestyles and identities of non-Christians?
- What sobering reminder does Peter provide to give perspective on other people's lives and on our own?
- Rather than simply reading lists of "do" and "do not," how do the positive instructions for Christ-followers compare and contrast to the negative descriptions of non-believers?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- How is focusing on the person of Christ and life with Him more powerful than a list or moral and religious rules?
- When you first started following Jesus and seeking to honor Him, did your life get easier, harder, or a combination of both? What got harder? What got easier?
- Do you feel like your church and other Christians prepared you for the trials in life or did you expect life to be "pretty good" as a follower of Jesus?
- When has someone been surprised that you would not (or would no longer) join them in sinfulness that they considered normal? How did they respond? How did you respond?
- When you've experienced tough times, have you also experienced the love and prayers of brothers and sisters in Christ? If so, how did it help? If not, how might it have helped?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- Even if people wouldn't say it this way, how do you see a belief in our culture that there are no real consequences for our actions?
- What would change in our world if everyone (even people who didn't know Jesus) simply believed there were true, moral consequences for their lives?
- How does knowing that our hope is eternally secure in Christ free us up to address suffering, injustice, indulgence, and brokenness in the world?
- What specific needs can we meet in our community?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer
  - » Worship by playing or sharing this week's song from the Mariners Current Series Spotify Playlist.



FAITH RHYTHM

SERVE THE COMMUNITY

What specific needs can you meet in your community?

FINDING HOPE THROUGH COMMUNION

By John Thomas | Community Pastor

When we think about suffering, we are not working through an abstract, ethereal concept. The conversation is personal and often agonzing as we attempt to reconcile how a God who we believe to be both powerful, and loving, can seemingly allow for so much pain in our world and in our lives.

Yet, for the Christian, there is hope. Firstly, we have hope because God, through Christ, is present in our suffering. Jesus was made vulnerable. Jesus willingly experienced relational, physical and even spiritual suffering. When we approach Him with our pain, we are not praying to a detached, unmoved consultant, but to a God who enters in. God doesn't drop us an article like "5 things you can do to combat suffering." He gives us a person. He gives us Himself in the person of Jesus who is with us to offer in a very real sense, His peace and comfort.

Secondly, we have hope because God works through our suffering. Generally, our culture offers three responses to suffering. First, detachment. Rise above your loves and desires so that when you experience loss, no injury will be incurred. Secondly, fatalism which says all suffering is random and unavoidable, so power through any way you can and play the hand you're dealt.

Thirdly, and sadly most prevalent in the church, is to ignore the reality of suffering all together.

The Jesus follower is offered another way, and fair warning it's as countercultural as it gets. We are invited to rejoice in suffering (Romans 5:3, 1 Peter 4:13). We don't rejoice in what is causing our suffering, but we can rejoice because we know that through it, we are uniting ourselves with Christ. It is in that unique and intimate union where we are being made more like Him and where His glory is revealed. Consider the cross. It has been said that through it, God took the greatest of evils and used it for our greatest good. Nothing is lost, nothing is beyond redemption.

Lastly, we have hope through suffering because our greatest enemy has been defeated. Death does not have the last word. On the cross, Jesus cried out "It is finished." The payment for our sin has been paid in full and through the Resurrection. Jesus becomes the "first fruit" of the new creation, where the joy, peace and glory that awaits us far outweighs our present afflictions.

In reflection of these truths, John Stott once said... "I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross." Yes and amen! But how quick are we to forget these profound truths in the middle of a storm?

Enter the practice of communion.

We are physical beings and we often need physical, tangible, reminders that point towards a greater reality. Communion is much more than a "memorial." It is a family celebration of thanksgiving, where we are united with Christ in His suffering and in His victory. It is the place where the past and present, in whatever state they appear, are rightly secured in the future hope of the new creation, quite literally a "foretaste." The elements we share become a tangible truth, and every time we partake, we acknowledge the all-sufficient, satisfying supply of the grace of God in Christ for us. Jesus took the cup of suffering so that we may drink from the cup of His righteousness. Simply put, communion celebrates the gospel! The gospel which frees, sustains, and empowers us as the children of God.

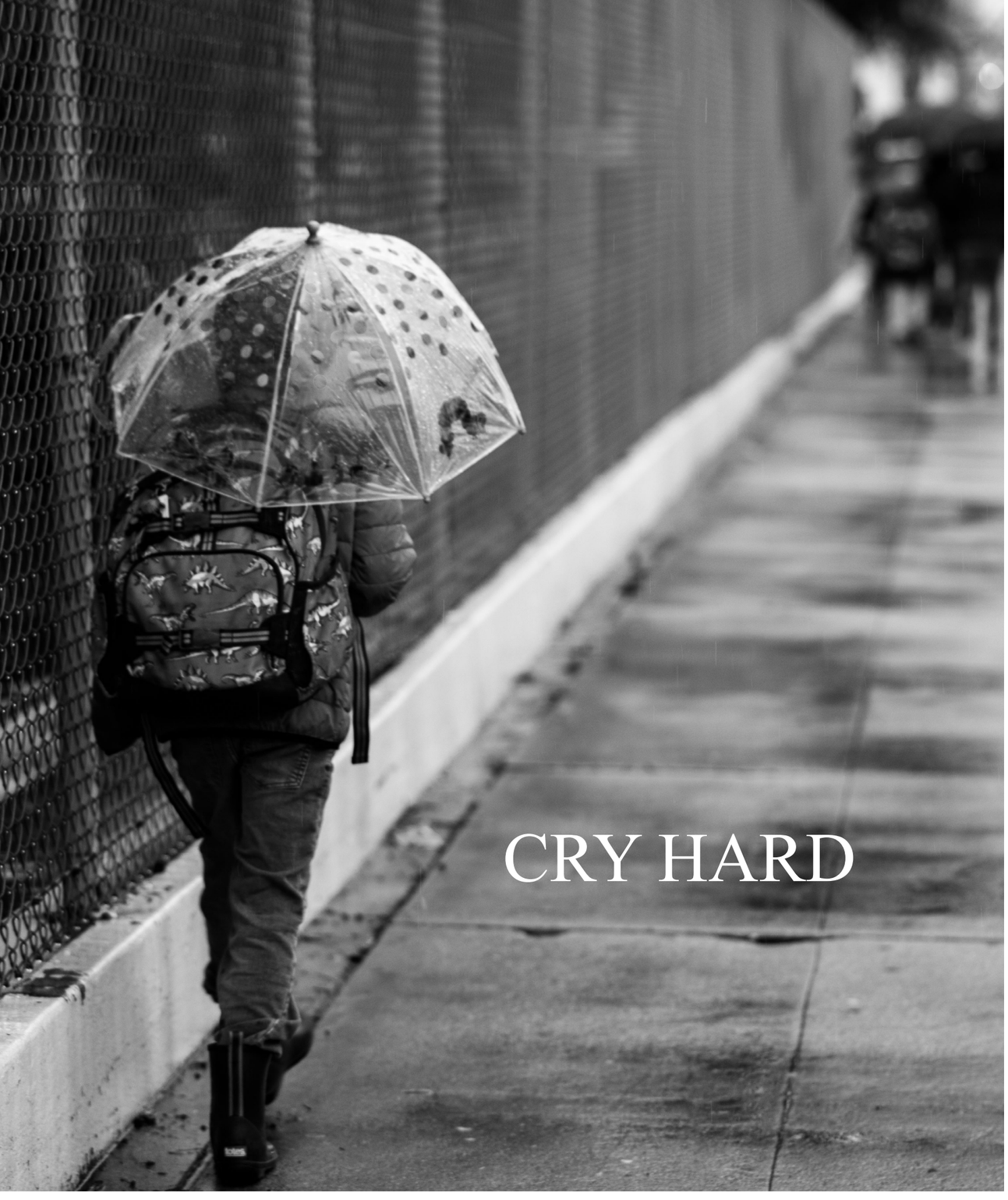
Amanda's Story

Raised in the church, Amanda Anderson learned how to tell the story of her life for the benefit of others. It went something like this: before Jesus, I was sinning; after Jesus, I'm not! Before Jesus, I was worried; after Jesus, I have peace!

But after a few tough seasons in her adulthood—wrestling with anxiety and depression, and struggling with some broken relationships—she found herself discouraged and confused. Following Jesus hadn't resulted in all the joy, comfort, and peace she had hoped it would—even after trying to convince others it would do the same for them.

Finally, Amanda learned to engage with her faith story in a new way. In the Mariners Care and Recovery ministry, Remedy, she learned that Jesus wanted her to understand the story of her life, not only to witness to others, but to receive the deep compassion and love of Christ for herself. Watch this video to hear how Jesus met Amanda not in one dramatic conversion experience, but in a series of "before and after" moments that left her confident that God saw, believed, knew, and loved her.

Scan the QR code below to hear her full story.



CRY HARD

By Amanda Anderson

I just had a fight with a friend who said she wouldn't be my friend for much longer. She said some cruel things: echoes of all the worst things I'm afraid I am, and am trying my hardest not to be. I was feeling unglued, so I called my friend Terry and began to tearfully stammer out what had happened.

Her warm voice came through the phone, "Wait. Stop talking. I want you to cry hard." So, I did. The kind of cry that makes a lot of noise and produces a snot mustache. Neither the timing nor location was ideal: five minutes before school pickup, and on the curb outside my daughter's school, hiding behind my parked car. But after a minute of ugly cry, though I was still hurting, I was calmer, and able to tell Terry more fully about the conversation. She gave me words of comfort, and some solid advice on what to do next.

I love what Terry didn't say in that moment: "Calm down," or "Take a deep breath," or even "I can't understand you when you're hysterical." Instead, her instruction to me was, "Cry hard."

It made me feel so very safe, and very loved. Terry came into my life in a time when I was deeply in need of a mentor and friend because one of my long-term friendships was falling apart. Terry gave me the courage to grieve—rather than minimize—the loss of the relationship, and also the loss of identity that went with it. We talked about the amazing, healing power of tears. Science has shown that there are several types of tears. Psychic tears, those triggered by emotion, contain a neurotransmitter that acts as a natural painkiller when the body is under stress. Other types of tears, like those triggered by allergies and onions,

don't have it. God made specific tears to physically ease our pain.

Over the last few years, I've come to treasure the friends in my life who let me—even encourage me—to cry. Among them is Jesus, the dearest friend of my soul. Jesus Himself wept when His friend Lazarus died, despite the fact that Jesus was going to resurrect him from the dead moments later (John 11). The implication in the text is that Jesus didn't just cry over Lazarus's death, but also over the existence of death itself. Jesus modeled for us that expressing emotion is a healthy part of being human, and that it is in fact extremely rational to grieve loss.

Through His Spirit and the scriptures, Jesus invites me to grieve deaths of many kinds: the death of dreams, the death of relationships, loss of identity, the end of a life stage. "Blessed are those who mourn," He says, "for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4 NIV)

Because I volunteer in the Care and Recovery ministry, I've studied grieving to help myself and others. One source I've gone to is the book *How People Grow* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, where it says: "Grief is the toughest pain we have to deal with. It is not the worst human experience, because it leads to resolution, but it is the most difficult for us to enter into voluntarily, which is the only way to get into it. The rest of our human experience just happens 'to' us. Hurt, injury, anxiety, alienation and failure all break through, and we suffer. Grief does not 'break through.' It is something we enter into."

So, if it's true that grief is one of the processes by which God heals our hearts, and also one we can only do willingly, then consider the great encouragement it is to tell a friend, "Go ahead. Cry hard." In the immediate moment, their body uses the act of crying as a mechanism to heal pain; and in the larger picture, we've created a loving space for them to bravely face sadness and be healed. "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit," says Isaiah 34:18. (NIV) Moving toward those who are brokenhearted and "mourning with those who mourn" is to be like our loving God. (Romans 12:15, NIV)

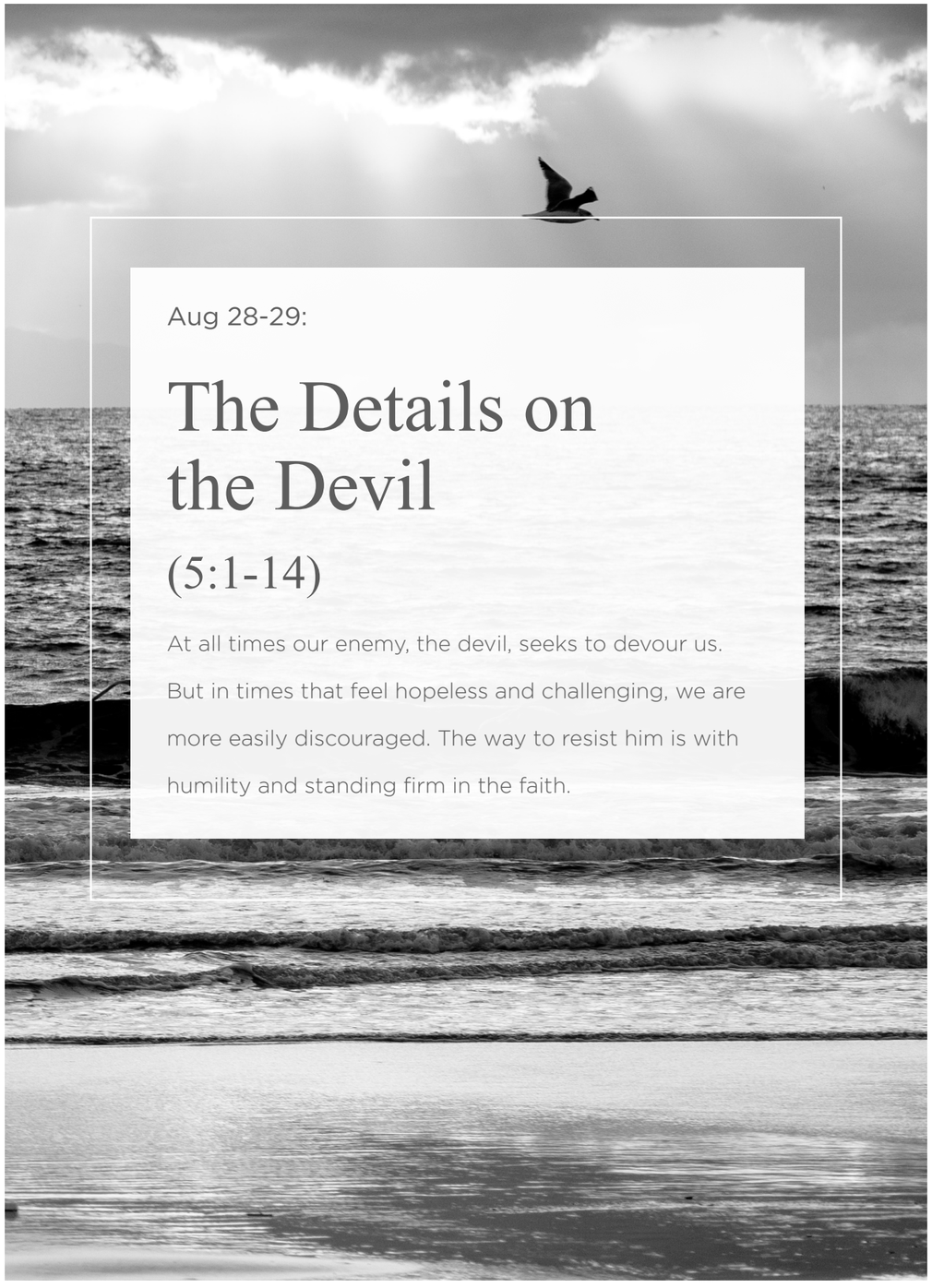
As believers in Christ, we can be the ones least likely to accept other people's grief –and our own. There are so many commands in the Bible to rejoice in the Lord. And in 1 Peter, he tells the church to live as though this world is not our home, and to consider the hope and joy of our eternal salvation. But we must put these instructions in perspective as we deal with the emotions of our hearts: because this world is not now our home because of sin. But God's original plan didn't include all this loss and suffering. So, our souls cry out against what is and shouldn't be. It's not unspiritual to see and feel that gap between what is supposed to be and what is – just as Jesus did at Lazarus' tomb.

So as we point each other to the hope of eternity, we don't have to whitewash the soul groaning we're experiencing on this side of eternity. God is not asking that of us, but in fact promises to groan for us through His Spirit. (Romans 8:26)

Last spring, I shared Terry's advice with my 11-year-old daughter after she spent six weeks in a full leg cast.. Her injury kept her from playing on her all-star soccer team for a whole season, and she was unable to perform in her hip-hop recital she worked for all school year. As mamas do, I've tried to help her focus on gratitude- and all the other talents she can express and enjoy while immobilized.

But there comes a point in almost every day when she is worn out from physical pain, inconvenience, and the reality of what she's lost in this season of her young life. I see her eyes fill with tears, and I see her try to hold them back.

"Go ahead and cry hard. It will make you feel better," I tell her. She does, and then she feels better. Even more significantly, she feels, as I always pray that she will, that she is safe and loved.



Aug 28-29:

The Details on the Devil

(5:1-14)

At all times our enemy, the devil, seeks to devour us. But in times that feel hopeless and challenging, we are more easily discouraged. The way to resist him is with humility and standing firm in the faith.

1 Peter 5:1-14

About the Elders

5 I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: 2 Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because
God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Conclusion

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. 8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen.

12 Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

…Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour (I Peter 5:8)

How do we resist the devil?

Humble yourself.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time… (v 6)

Hurl your cares on Christ.

…casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. (v 7)

Hold your ground.

Be sober-minded, be alert… (v 8)

Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world. (v 9)

Week 8: Resisting The Devil

1 Peter 5:1-14

PREPARE

Remember that the following resources are available to you:

- Online message series
- Spotify playlist
- Leader podcast
- Leader Guide with notes

MAIN POINT

At all times, our enemy, the devil, seeks to devour us. But in times that feel hopeless and challenging, we are more easily discouraged. The way to resist him is with humility and standing firm in the faith.

LEAN IN | BREAK THE ICE

- What is the scariest animal?
- Have you ever been attacked, bitten, stung, or escaped from a wild creature or scary animal? Do you have any advice for others on what to do or not do around such an animal, insect, or creature?
- In the last week of this series, Peter offers a final warning and encouragement using one more word picture. Hidden behind the suffering and trials in this life is a very real and dangerous enemy waiting like a predator for its prey.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 5:1–14. Choose someone to read the passages aloud.

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13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

- What imagery is used for each of the following and how are they helpful descriptions?
  - » Christians and the church community?
  - » Elders and leaders within the church?
  - » Jesus?
  - » The devil?
- Verse 5 quotes Proverbs 3:34. How does it relate to the spiritual dynamics of the devil's schemes? How does it summarize the countercultural hope of Christ followers?
- How is Peter's closing sentence a fitting conclusion to the themes of this letter?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- Have you experienced a renewed sense of peace this summer while looking at 1 Peter?
- Reread verse 10-11. How does this truth give you hope? How does it help you resist the devil?
- Where do you need help from this group and your church community to resist the devil and to stand firm in Christ? How can we help one another?
- Peter addresses the character of leaders and relationships within the church (verses 1-5 and 12-13). In our church, Mariners, for whom are you grateful? Whom has

God used to "shepherd" you? What can we do to encourage our leaders and foster unity among "the flock" of Mariners?
- How has this series, Hope in Hopeless Times, been timely for you? How has it helped you see your own life with a new perspective? Which word picture was most helpful?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- How has this series helped you see the world with a new perspective?
- What can we do to spread the "peace" of Christ and the hope we have in Him?
- Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
  - » Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
  - » New prayer requests
  - » Prayer

Visit Peasant Palace on the Hope Map in the back of the book and record your answer to this week's question: **how has hope brought freedom to your life?**

THE SPIRAL

By Julie Francis

Never mind the quarantine 15. Let's talk about the quarantine 25. That is the 25 lbs. I gained in one year of the pandemic. I'm an emotional eater but this is ridiculous. According to the Ideal Weight Chart, I was obese. I was already 30 lbs overweight before the pandemic; now I was 55 lbs. overweight. I had no self-control with eating during the pandemic. Being at home with restaurants only offering take out or were closed, I cooked, I baked, and I ate more. Subconsciously, I was justifying eating more as I wanted to try new recipes, learn to make bread, or try to duplicate my favorite Indian restaurant recipes. But it was really a hidden anxiety with a new food addiction that sprung up during COVID lockdown.

When my pants were getting too tight, I just started wearing more maxi dresses, skirts, and leisure wear. No one said anything to me nor did I speak of the weight I was gaining. I pretended that if I didn't mention my anxiety about the pandemic or my depression about not going to social gatherings or restaurants, then my food addiction didn't exist. Coping with what I didn't want to face met with mindless eating. I would open a bag of Lays potato chips and eat them in front of the

computer or while I was watching television. I would have one or two sodas to wash down the chips. It didn't even occur to me that I was eating half the entire bag in one sitting.

At the same time, I had lost my job in sales management for a luxury golf resort in the hospitality industry as the world stopped traveling . With my new weight gain, I felt God urging me to let go of my work dresses that I was not wearing any longer and give them to charity so that others truly in need could wear the dresses right now. I didn't want to part with these dresses as they brought back memories of when I wore them to events while entertaining clients. But I was holding onto superficial body armor instead of my faith that God will get me through this tough season.

I haphazardly exercised each morning but no weight came off. I felt sluggish, cranky, and edgy. I started to think about food all the time. Even after just having breakfast, I was already planning what I wanted for lunch. It seemed like all I was doing was eating. I had to reach out to God to stop because I knew I couldn't do it without His help. In 1 Peter 5:6–9, it states: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares to Him, because He cares about you. Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world." The more I resisted the Holy Spirit who lives in me, guiding me to stop overeating, the more self-pity I had about myself. I never intended for my lack of self-control to get this far.

The turning point came when my sister wanted to lose 50 lbs. as well. She went on a program which included a health coach. In sharing her journey, she inspired me to join along with her. She is holding me accountable each day through a text or a phone call to discuss our new healthy eating habits, our measurements, drinking the right amount of water, and relying on more of a plant-based meal plan rather than a junk food meal binge. Since we both were having anxiety about the pandemic, we could talk about anxiety to ease the emotional element of why we were eating out of control in the first place. God wants everyone to lean on Him during uncertain times, always. I knew I needed help but was too ashamed to even speak out. If God hadn't aligned me with the right motivation like sharing this journey with my sister, I would be headed for some real health problems. I needed to listen to God and trust Him with what was bothering me. Left up to my own, I would have spiraled out of control with food.

I am four weeks into my weight loss agenda, and I have hope now. So far, I have lost 12 lbs. and counting. I feel so much better, I sleep so much better too—and I don't even miss potato chips.

Contributions

This book would not have been possible without the amazing team of people who created it. When we set out on this project, we wanted it to be a piece created by talented volunteers from our church family who wanted to use their passions, gifts, and experiences to serve others. We hope that as you've gone through this book and this series, their work has inspired you in your walk with Jesus and encouraged you to take the next step in your faith.

For some of you, your next step might be to jump in and begin serving at Mariners. If you'd like to use your creative gifts to serve others, we invite you to visit the serve page on the Mariners website and fill out a Creative Arts interest form to get started. We'd love to have you on our team.

We're so grateful for everyone who contributed pieces, edited, and informed the contents of this book, including our Senior Pastor Eric Geiger, whose vision inspired this entire project. Thank you for using your gifts to serve the church. Thank you for giving God your best. Thank you for inspiring all of us to follow Jesus and fearlessly change the world.

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Volunteer with the Mariners Creative Arts Team and use your gifts, passions, and talents to inspire others in their journey of faith.

Scan the QR Code below to download the Mariners App and fill out a connect card to get started!

This map represents your journey of Hope in Hopeless Times. It was designed to serve as a visualization tool and for you to journal throughout this teaching series. Each week, record your answer to provided prompt in the “My Hope” scrolls, and spend some time in prayer allowing God to speak as you reflect.

Each week, place a proclamation sticker over each station—intentionally declaring Jesus' victory in your life and over the current challenges you might be facing. Through Christ “Hopeless Harbor” turns into a “Hopeful Harbor”, “Sinners Swamp” becomes a “Salvation Swamp”, and the “Lonely Lagoon” can be a “Lovers Lagoon”, as God teaches us to love as He loves us.

You can journey through this Hope Map on your own, with a friend, or with your whole family. Our prayer is that when you look back at this map, you'll be reminded of where God brought you from and what He has done in your life. We pray He reminds you of where your hope comes from and how you can keep that hope alive in your heart.

Let this map serve as a testimony of your journey of hope.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

YOU KENDU It

MY JOURNEY OF HOPE

HOPELESS HARBOR

What is something you're currently hoping for ?

What fear is God helping you overcome ?

FEARFUL FALLS

AGONY ALPS

What inspires you to get back up when you fall ?

How has God changed you ?

SINNERS SWAMP

PEASANTS PALACE

How has hope brought freedom to your life ?

What has inspired you to not give up ?

PAINFUL PLANET

CALAMITY CANYON

How have you relied on God during difficult times ?

How are you growing in your relationships ?

LONELY LAGOON

DAVY LIU

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of 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 is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”

1 Peter 1:3-4

Summer 2021

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