

## EASTER 2024: UNSHAKABLE: Unshakable Hope<sup>i</sup>

### 1 Peter 1:1-12

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Good morning, Trinity! Happy Easter! My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a first-time guest, I am so very grateful you are here. We'd love to connect with you and to get to know you more. You can help us do that by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me, and I look forward to following up with you.

If text messaging isn't your thing, feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

#### **OPENING:**

This weekend we are talking about what's most important to us as Christians; the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And today we are doing that by launching a new teaching series we are calling "Unshakable." Over the next several weeks we are going to study the New Testament book of 1 Peter as we look at how we can have an unshakable faith in what often is a chaotic world. I hope you will be a part of each week of this teaching series as we study this incredible book. This morning, though, we begin by looking at an Unshakable Hope.

I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 1. 1 Peter is located in the New Testament, right after the book of James and of course before 2 Peter. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, that's okay. The Scriptures will be on the screens. There are also Bibles located on the seat racks in the chair that is in front of you. And if you need a Bible, please take that as our gift to you today. We'd love for you to have that.

#### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Game Changers**

Have you ever experienced a game changer? A game changer is a new element that changes a situation in a significant way.<sup>ii</sup> We often experience game changers in our lives. New inventions can be game changers for us. I remember life before the iPhone. That device was a game changer. Medical research is often a game changer. New procedures and medications can bring

about healing and significant change for us. Sporting events are filled with game changers. A turnover, a big play, or a key time out, can change the momentum of a game in a matter of moments.

How many Texas Rangers fans with us here today? How about any Astros fans? We will pray for you. I'm just kidding. But this past October, we witnessed history as the Texas Rangers won their first ever franchise World Series. It was awesome to watch. They had been close before, and we watched the championship literally bounce off Nelson Cruz's head.

If you watched any of the ALCS between the Rangers and the Astros, you witnessed game changers. One I want to mention in particular. In the bottom of the 8<sup>th</sup> inning, Game 1 of the ALCS, in Houston, the Astros had a runner on first base with no outs. The Rangers were leading 2 to 0 when Astros 3<sup>rd</sup> basemen, Alex Bregman launched a ball deep to left-center field. Just short of a homerun, it would have most likely scored the runner and shifted momentum to the Astros.

But, 21-year-old, Evan Carter made a game changing play with this catch. **Show Evan Carter Graphic**. How awesome is that catch?! And you'll also remember in that same play, Altuve had rounded second and after Carter's catch, forgot to step back on second as he made his way back to first. That resulted in a double play. Game changer. And you know the outcome, the Rangers not only won the ALCS, but went on to become World Series Champions.

We could all probably name a game changer we have witnessed. Perhaps there has been a game changer that you can point to in your life where things either changed for the better or maybe for the worse. But game changers happen. They happen to all of us.

Well, the greatest game changer of all is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not only the most remarkable event in history, it also is the most profound. And this morning, as we talk about developing an unshakable hope, we are going to see four things the resurrection changes. Jesus' resurrection changes people, changes hope, changes perspective, and changes eternity. That is where we are headed this morning.

#### **MESSAGE:**

So, let's begin by looking at our first point this morning. The resurrection...

### 1) Changes people.

Look with me at 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 1 and 2. ***1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia [Kappa-Dough-Key-Ah], Asia, and Bithynia [Bah-Theen-Ya], <sup>2</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.***

Now there are a few things that we learn here in these opening verses. We see that Peter wrote this book to a church and a people whose world had been turned upside down.<sup>iii</sup> This was a group of people that had been changed by the gospel message, a message that was validated by the resurrection of Jesus.

This group of people were a part of "the Dispersion," Peter says. The term literally means the "scattered" ones.<sup>iv</sup> They were scattered due to persecution that they were enduring because of their faith. Now, it was not illegal at that day and time to be a Christian yet, but they were discriminated against, and mistreated for their faith.<sup>v</sup> Everything in their lives was uncertain and their communities had been shattered.

Now, I doubt that any of us have faced this kind of persecution. But as our culture continues, many of us feel like we are living in a time where we are often questioned because of our Biblical, Christian, worldview. Peter wrote this letter to that group to encourage them to stand firm while they endured suffering and distress. I think it offers us the same encouragement as well.

Now, think about the picture painted here in the opening verses. We see the power of the resurrection to change lives. The resurrection of Jesus Christ changes people. We see that in Peter who wrote this book, and in these incredible Christ Followers that held to their faith at all costs. Both examples are not possible without the resurrection of Jesus. Let me explain.

First, consider Peter. Peter's life was changed. You know, I think if there is one Bible character that we can most identify with, it's Peter. At least that's true for me. He had a big mouth and said dumb things and often acted rashly. He wasn't a polished guy. Peter was a fisherman, a blue-collar kind of guy.

In fact, Peter's name is mentioned in the gospels more than anyone except Jesus.<sup>vi</sup> No one speaks in the gospels as often as Peter did, and Jesus spoke to Peter more than any other individual. At least what is recorded.

But it was Jesus that rebuked Peter. Peter denied Jesus more forcefully and publicly than another other disciple<sup>vii</sup>. Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan." Peter stepped out and walked on the water but his fear, and lack of faith got the best of him, and he started to sink. It was Peter's speak first, think later mindset that cause him to boldly say, "Lord, I'll die for you." Yet moments later denied him three times. And it was Peter that was hiding with the other disciples in the upper room after Jesus was crucified.

But when you fast-forward to the book of Acts, it was Peter that stood and preached the sermon at Pentecost. It was Peter, after healing a guy, that stood before the council of high priest and said, "We will not stop speaking the name of Jesus."

What was it that caused Peter to go from coward to preacher; from disarrayed to leader of the early Church? It's simple. The resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter saw, firsthand, the empty tomb. He ate a fish breakfast with the risen Christ on the beach. Jesus publicly restored him and told Peter to feed His sheep. Peter's encounter with the resurrected Jesus was a game changer. So much so, that Peter would literally give his life for his faith in Jesus. The resurrection changes people.

What about the people Peter is writing to? The Dispersion. These were people that were so bought into their faith in Jesus that they were more willing to uproot their families, leave their jobs, and live in foreign lands instead of giving up on their faith. Why? If it's all a hoax, if there's any shred of evidence to suggest the resurrection was concocted, then why uproot your life? It's because the resurrection is the most certain event in history. And their encounter with the resurrected Jesus changed their lives. Many of them would also give their lives for their faith. The resurrection changes people.

What about you? Has the resurrection changed you? Have you encountered the risen Lord Jesus Christ? What Jesus did and began 2,000 years ago, He's still doing in lives and hearts today. Maybe today is the day the resurrection truly changes your life. The resurrection changes people.

Secondly, the resurrection...

## 2) Changes hope.

Look at verses 3 through 5 of 1 Peter 1. *<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* The key words here are “living hope.” What is a living hope?

Well, fact that Peter put the word living in front of hope points to the hope that he is talking about being different from any other kind of hope. You might wonder, “What’s the difference? Hope is hope, right? No, Biblical hope, living hope, is completely different.

We might hope for many different things. We might hope for a better job. Or hope for a different circumstance. We might hope that someone would come through for us. We hope to get a certain gift on our birthday. But that kind of hope is not guaranteed.

Biblical hope, though, is certain. It’s a hope that is rooted and focused on something that guarantees it. Peter is saying in verse three that we have this “living hope” because Jesus Christ lives, and He lives by way of resurrection from the dead.<sup>viii</sup> In other words, the hope we have in Christ is backed by a living Savior.

And for the people that are reading this letter in the first century, the people that are scattered for their faith, a living hope gave them the ability to live above their circumstance; to look to the future with absolute confidence.<sup>ix</sup> The fact that Jesus has risen from the dead means that their inheritance in heaven is not an idea, but a fact.

See, a living hope is stronger than death. It is a hope that extends beyond death. Peter says in verse 4 that we hope in an inheritance. That is an eternity in heaven. And he describes this inheritance as something that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, secure and guarded. And that kind of assurance is only found in the resurrection of Jesus, which is the greatest display of God’s power.

Now, in our flesh, we have a tendency to focus on a worldly hope. But the resurrection changes hope. It changes the confidence of our hope. In the resurrection of Jesus anything that could possibly threaten, destroy, or defeat our peace is crushed.

Now, that’s real hope. There are so many folks looking for this kind of hope. Easter is proof that it’s available. The resurrection of Jesus is a testimony to the world where true hope can be found.

We see how the resurrection changes people and changes hope. Thirdly, the resurrection...

## 3) Changes perspective.

The resurrection changes our perspective. Look at verses 6 and 7. *<sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Peter is writing to a group of people that are feeling the pressures of persecution. And it is interesting that Peter says that we can quote, “rejoice,” in them. The literal translation of that word “rejoice” means to rejoice greatly. It is to be full of joy.<sup>x</sup> These words are also echoed by James when he says to consider it all joy when we face trials of many kinds. How is this even possible? Well, the resurrection of Jesus changes the perspective by which we view trials and persecution.

Peter explains in verse 7 that the trials we face are achieving something great in our lives. The example he uses is a refiner’s fire. He says, “Just like gold is purified in the fire, so also our faith is purified through trials.” For the Christian, various trials are actually a strange gift. How so?

When we face trials and persecution in our lives, we keep at the forefront the guarantee that is ours in the resurrection of Jesus. The trials we face, like a refiner’s fire, burns away false hope and reminds us of our true home and our ultimate hope.

**ILLUSTRATION: Auschwitz<sup>xi</sup>**

As I was studying for this message, I came across an article mentioning Victor Frankl. He was a Jewish-Austrian doctor who was imprisoned at Auschwitz during WW2. He survived and later wrote a book entitled, *Man's Search for Meaning*. And in his book he talked about how various people dealt with the hopeless situations of a concentration camp. Many, he said, became brutal and cruel themselves as a sort of survival of the fittest mentality. Some just gave up, they lost all hope. Others, he said, held onto the hope that if they stayed alive, their health, family, careers, fortunes and positions would all be restored. That was where they placed their hope.

But, when the Nazi's were defeated and people were released from Auschwitz, they went home and found that many of the things they dreamed about and placed their hope in – their homes, their jobs, their families, and their communities – were destroyed by warfare. If not destroyed, it had changed drastically. And Frankl mentioned that resulted in many experiencing extreme depression. Their hopes had been shattered.

But he went on to say that the ones that truly survived and overcame Auschwitz were those who had a fixed reference point beyond the world. Something they held onto that was beyond the grasp of death and destruction. He wrote, "Life in a concentration camp tears open a soul and exposes its depths and its foundations." In other words, trials expose where our hope lies.

That's Peter's point as well. Rejoice in what you face, because you have focused your sights on a living hope, secured in the resurrection of Jesus, that nothing in this world can touch. Talk about a changed perspective.

The resurrection changes everything. It changes people, changes hope, and changes perspective. Fourthly, finally, the resurrection...

#### 4) Changes eternity.

Look with me at verses 8-12. *<sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, **the salvation of your souls.** <sup>10</sup>Concerning this **salvation**, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup>inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but*

*you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, **things into which angels long to look.*** When Peter is talking about salvation, he's talking about eternity. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is what purchases and secured our eternity.

Peter says that these very things were mentioned by the prophets. The person and work of Jesus Christ is something that was long foretold and the fulfillment of God's promise to bring salvation to His people. And those who believe and trust Jesus as Lord and Savior are given eternal life in Christ. Peter is pointing out that we are incredibly blessed to be living in a time where the predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled.<sup>xii</sup>

And look at how Peter ends this long run-on sentence. Verses 3 through 12 is one long sentence in the original language. And the last phrase is powerful. He says, "**things into which angels long to look.**" Peter is trying to say, consider what has happened from the perspective of eternity. Angels are blown away.

That means that the angels in heaven reflect on what God has done with absolute amazement. Angels don't experience the gospel the same way we do. God created a certain number of angels, and they remain in glory. As a result, they have never experienced what it means to be a sinner saved by God's grace. Instead, they see it as an overwhelming act of God's love for you and me. WOW! God loves them so much to save them even though they've done nothing to earn it.

Today, angels are looking in from Heaven. Watching, yet again, God touch the hearts of people. They are seeing the Holy Spirit stir in your heart, revealing to you that you are a sinner in need of the forgiveness of God. The angels of heaven are longing to see God change eternity by saving your soul. And they rejoice greatly, singing with shouts of worship, over the one that comes to saving faith in Jesus as Lord.

The resurrection changes everything! It changes people, it changes hope, it changes perspective, and it changes eternity. Has the resurrection changed you?

#### **CONCLUSION:**

I love Easter because it is an opportunity to reflect on the truths of Scripture. The Bible says that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That

means that we are all in the same boat, we are sinners. But the good news of the gospel doesn't stop there. That would just be bad news.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Romans 5:8 which says, "But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God didn't wait for us to get our act together before He showed His love for us! Instead, He met us, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, in the midst of our sin and rescued us from our sin.

Romans 6:23 says that, "The wages of sin [what we earn for our sin] is death." An eternal death, separated from God for eternity. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Easter is all about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Which in that most certain event, Jesus proved that He is indeed God. He backed up every biblical claim by overcoming sin, death and the grave. Scripture tells us that we are saved when we confess with our mouth and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. And upon that confession, that profession of faith, we are forgiven, saved, rescued, and born again unto a relationship with Jesus.

The question that confronts us all this Easter is, "Have you been born again? Have you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Have you bowed the knee to King Jesus?" If you are here today and you either have not done that, or you are confused about that, we want to visit with you today. That you might leave here today knowing for sure that Jesus is your Lord and heaven is your home.

In a moment, we are going to stand and sing and reflect on what our unshakable hope is rooted in; the fact that the resurrection is a game changer. And I want you to listen to what The Holy Spirit is saying to your heart. Perhaps today is the day of salvation for you.

If you need to talk to someone about trusting Jesus as Lord or if you have a prayer need, our elders will be here at the front following the service. We would love to visit with you about what it means to be saved and we would also love the opportunity to pray with you and over you.

Let's pray together. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003; Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicators Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Books: Waco, 1984; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2004; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 1 – Living Like You Are Born Again*, Enduring Word, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-1/>; J.D. Greear, *Together We Endure: The Letter of 1 Peter #1*, preached at Summit Church, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/not-an-immigrant-not-a-tourist>; Troy Rackliffe, *Stand Firm in Your Faith: Message 1*, preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Skip Heitzig, *Called Out of Darkness: 1 Peter 1:1-7*, sermon taught at Calvary Albuquerque, July 6, 1989, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/129/sermon/1718>.

<sup>ii</sup> Dictionary.com

<sup>iii</sup> J.D. Greear.

<sup>iv</sup> Schreiner, p. 51.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>vi</sup> Enduring Word Commentary.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Schreiner, p. 62.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>x</sup> Strong's Concordance, 21, agalliaó.

<sup>xi</sup> Illustration taken from J.D. Greear's sermon.

<sup>xii</sup> Schreiner, p. 75.