

UNSHAKABLE: An Unshakable Eternityⁱ **1 Peter 5:6-14**

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. Welcome to those of you that are guests today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday.

We would love to connect with you. We would ask you to text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you text that keyword to that number, you'll be sent a link back that will take you to a form to enter basic contact information.

If texting isn't your preference, I certainly understand that. You can stop by our information center located in the lobby, under the banner that says, "Hope is Here." We have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being with us this morning.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 5. Today we will land the plane in our sermon series we've called Unshakable and wrap up our study of 1 Peter. We've examined so many topics throughout this study that have helped us develop an unshakable faith in what many times seems like a very chaotic world. Today we come to the topic of developing an Unshakable Eternity.

Now, you might be wondering where we are headed next. I'm so excited to launch a new series next Sunday that we are calling "More to the Story." Jesus often taught in parables, in stories. Those parables communicated profound and powerful spiritual truths. He was purposeful in His stories and there was always more to what Jesus was saying than just the story itself. So, we are going to examine selected parables in our "More to the Story" teaching series. I hope you make plans to be a part of that. It will be a ton of fun.

But today we wrap up 1 Peter as we look at our unshakable eternity. We are going to see that our view of eternity results in a posture of humility, a perception of the enemy, perseverance in God's strength, and a profession of truth. That is where we are headed this morning.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: 5K

As you can probably tell, I am not an avid runner. I need to be, but I never have been. In fact, I'm pretty sure I'm the slowest human being on the planet. So, it was a big deal for me when I signed up to run in a 5K with my family.

If you've ever run a race, you know the drill. I checked in at the registration table and get my bib. I attached it to my shirt. I was filled with all kinds of anticipation. I didn't train for this. So, I was wondering... at what mile marker will I pass out?! Yes, it was just a 5K. Don't judge me!

So, as it came time for our race to begin the announcer called everyone to the starting line. Now, I don't know how this happened, but I wound up in the front on the starting line. If you know anything about these kinds of races, they put the really fast people in the front so they don't trample the slower people. I started looking around and noticed that I was surrounded by people that appeared to be experienced runners. They had all the right gear and I was lucky to have running shoes! Then, I looked back and saw a mob of people that were all in better shape than I. Needless to say, I felt like I was out of place.

And, before I could work my way to the back of the line, the starting gun fired. So, being up with all the fast people, I started out running at full speed just to keep from getting run over! And by the first turn of the race, which was about a tenth of a mile in, I had given everything I had! I was toast! Exhausted!

I spent the remainder of the race running a couple of feet and then walking a quarter mile. I kept hoping that the finish line was just around the next corner, but by the time you got to that corner the finish line was nowhere in sight. It was like they were changing the course as I was running! I thought I was going to see Jesus right then and there.

But, when the finish line finally came into view, I was filled with hope. You know, the best part of a race is when it's over. And seeing the finish line gave me the confidence that I was so close, I could finish, and finish strong.

So, I started running faster; I think just to get the agony over with quicker. And when I crossed the finish line, I felt accomplished. I know you marathon runners are laughing at me right now. But it was a big deal!

Once all the runners crossed the finish line, they gathered everyone together and began passing out awards. You know, there's the first, second and third

place overall winners. After they gave those awards out, they announced age division winners. Now, here's the crazy thing... to my surprise, my name was called because I had apparently placed 2nd in my age division! I brought the medal this morning as proof of that. Now sure, where there only two of us running? Yeah! But I placed second none the less!

But one thing I learned is that when you see the finish line, when you keep in perspective what is ahead of you, you are filled with hope, and that gives us the energy and desire to finish strong.

That, I think, is exactly Peter's point as he ends this letter to the early church. When we can keep the certainty of our eternal standing in view, we can press on and endure what comes our way. In other words, we can look forward to the finish line. And this is all predicated on a relationship with Jesus which is what secures our salvation, our eternity. Once someone is in God's hand, no one, or nothing can change that status. That's an unshakable eternity. And that kind of security has some amazing results.

MESSAGE:

So, let's begin our study this morning by looking at the truth that an unshakable eternity results in, number one, ...

1) A Posture of Humility.

Last week we talked about humility being a requirement for church leaders but a responsibility of all. Peter builds on that in verses 6 and 7 of chapter 5. Let's look at it together. ⁶**Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,** ⁷**casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.** A couple of things of note here. First, the command to humble ourselves.

The word in the original language literally means, "true lowliness by being fully dependent on The Lord."ⁱⁱⁱ That's humility. In the particular context of Peter's writing, he is urging believers to respond by accepting the suffering they were experiencing and give it all over God.

While we do not experience the suffering that the early Church experienced, I think the principle we can relate to is the same, we are to not depend upon ourselves but rather depend solely upon The Lord. We live in a "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps" kind of mentality. But self-reliance will ultimately run

out because of our limited strength. Besides, it would be way more beneficial to give it over to God. Because in the end, God secures for us eternity.

He goes on to say that when we humble ourselves before God, He will, ***"at the proper time... exalt you."*** The focus here is not so much on humbling as it is on our exaltation. Our exalting as co-heirs with Christ, in Glory, for all of eternity, serves as the motivation to submit to whatever the will of God is here and now.

And Peter intentionally uses the phrase, ***"mighty hand of God."*** That expression ties what Peter is saying back to the Old Testament. When God delivered the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, He did so by His, quote, "mighty hand."ⁱⁱⁱ

So, what Peter is saying is that when we humble ourselves, giving everything over to Him, yield to Him, we do so before a mighty and all-powerful God who has worked for the people's good. And what that means for you and me is that the tribulations we face are nothing compared to the God we serve.

I don't know what you are dealing with today, but I can tell you with absolute certainty, God is bigger than your trial. You might say, God can't possibly heal my marriage, but He is the great reconciler! You might be consumed by a recent diagnosis; God is the Great Physician. What about challenges with kids? God stirs in hearts and replaces hearts of stone with hearts of flesh. And even if we face the ultimate hurdle, death, we rest in the certainty of eternity.

It is that context that Peter wrote verse 7. ***"casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."*** The word, "casting," means, "to throw upon." Peter says, "Throw, hurl, launch, all your anxieties, worries, doubts, and difficulties on God." Isn't that, by the way, the ultimate expression of humility. To come to the end of yourself and your abilities and allow God to take your anxiety.

You know, worry is the ultimate expression of pride. And listen, I'm a worrier. But when we worry, we are telling God we don't quite trust Him with everything. So, we need to carry it instead of allowing Him to do that. But if we believe God can secure our eternity, don't you think He can handle our concerns? It's our pride that keeps them from Him. But when believers throw their worries upon God, they express trust in His mighty hand.

An unshakable eternity results in a posture of humility. Secondly, the reality of an unshakable eternity results in...

2) A Perception of our enemy.

Let's examine that in verses 8 and the first part of verse 9. Peter says, *"⁸Be sober-minded; be **watchful**. Your **adversary** [or opponent] **the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith."* Peter's teaching here is pay attention, to wake up. Spiritual darkness is very real. To be sober-minded means to have one's wits about them.^{iv} Watchful means to be on the alert.^v And he says that the reason we are to be alert is because the enemy, the devil, is on the prowl.

What does this have to do with eternity though? Well, because eternity is at stake. And because the stakes are high, the enemy works to thwart the advancement of God's Kingdom. And anyone who joins The Lord and His work will encounter the devil. Peter knows that the struggle his readers are facing is not just social and physical.^{vi} They are those things, but it is also a spiritual battle where God's Kingdom is at stake. Thus, the need to be alert.

Peter portrays the devil as a roaring lion. While I don't think we need to over analyze the analogy, it is very fitting. There seems to be two objectives that Peter mentions is the aim of the devil; roaring and devouring.

ILLUSTRATION: Roaring Lion at a Zoo

I don't know if you've ever been to a zoo when the lion in that zoo starts roaring and howling. You can hear it from far away. And it is very intimidating. I think that's the picture Peter is drawing here.

The devil roars like a lion to try to instill fear in God's people. For these early believers, the persecution they were facing was the roar by which the devil tried to intimidate them, hoping it would silence them. For us, we hear the devil's roar in various ways. The roar of a lack of knowledge, or the roar of reminding us of our failures, or even the roar of the fear of being cancelled, the roar of struggles. But in the end, it's just a roar. I don't want to under play the devil's work here. We should expect it but know that our eternity is secure in Christ.

The other objective of the enemy is to devour. That word means to destroy and consume.^{vii} If the devil cannot intimidate you, he will attempt to destroy and ruin your testimony. If a believer is silenced, the devil has devoured them.

Notice the stark contrast between the devil and God. In verses 6 and 7, God cares for His people, even inviting them to cast their worries on Him. In verse 2,

God promises to protect His flock. But the devil's aim is not to comfort but to terrify and devour believers.^{viii}

So, what is a believer to do when the devil roars? Verse 9 says to resist him and remain firm in the faith. The word, "resist" is active tense. It is not a passive resistance. It's a military term. In other words, we are to stand firm against the devil by engaging and advancing the work of God. We do that by sharing the gospel relentlessly. And listen, the louder the devil roars, that should fuel our commitment to the Great Commission.

So, Peter says that an unshakable eternity results in a posture of humility and a perception of our enemy. Thirdly, our unshakable eternity results in...

3) Perseverance in God's strength.

Trials and tribulations are a part of life. Everyone experiences suffering to some degree. But the difference for the Christian is a perspective that God uses our pain for His purpose. God never wastes a hurt.

Look at the second part of verse 9 through verse 11. *⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your **brotherhood** throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered **a little while**, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, **strengthen**, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.* Two things I want to point out here.

First, there is strength in knowing you are not facing things alone. Peter says, "Know that your brothers and sisters in Christ, all around the world, are enduring suffering, too. While it may not lessen the pain we experience, it is comforting to know that there are others walking the road with us.

This is the beauty of the church and the beauty of living in community. But not only are there others walking the road, God promises His presence. 37 times throughout the Bible^x God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The truth of that presence gives us the ability to face whatever may come our way. So, we do not face our struggles alone.

Peter also says that what we face has an expiration date. He says we will suffer for just a little while. Our difficulties are temporary, we have something eternal coming. What we are dealing with is just for a little while, it's not permanent.

Now, you might say, “it’s been decades!” But remember our unshakable eternity. Decades are nothing compared to eternity. We can endure many things when we know that there is an end to it.

The second thing Peter points out is there’s a purpose behind the trial. Just like fire produces pure gold, trials and tribulations produce perseverance. Peter says, in verse 10, that Jesus will, “*restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*” Each of those words are synonyms. What Peter is doing is stacking up the verbiage to make a point. The point is that God really does use suffering in our lives to bring real benefit. What the enemy means for evil, God means for good. That results in divine strength. And as a result of this truth, Peter comes to the conclusion in verse 11, that God is worthy of worship.

So, we’ve talked about an unshakable eternity resulting in a posture of humility, a perception of the spiritual, and perseverance in God’s strength. Fourthly, finally, an unshakable eternity results in...

4) A Profession of truth.

Peter ends the letter in a way that is typical for the pastoral epistles. But in this signing off, Peter summarizes the purpose of the letter and reminds his readers that in light of eternity, keep proclaiming the truth. Look with me at verses 12-14. *¹²By Silvanus [Sill-van-us], a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. ¹³She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.* A couple things of note here.

First, who is Silvanus [Sill-van-us]? Most scholars agree that this is Silas, whom we read about often in the Book of Acts. Silvanus is probably his real name.

And when Peter says, “By Silvanus,” I believe he is talking about a couple roles this man played. It was not uncommon for the writers of the New Testament to use what is called an amanuensis, or a secretary. That is that they would dictate the letter and a secretary would write it out. 1 Peter is known for its grammatical genius, and Peter, a fisherman, would probably have benefitted from a secretary.

I also think Silvanus is the one that delivered this letter to the churches in the region. Not only did he help Peter pen it, he carried it to all the believers.^x

While that is interesting to talk through, the point of emphasis here is to stand firm in the truths contained in the letter. We are to declare it as it is the means by which we are encouraged and strengthened.

In verse 13, Peter says, “She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings.” Who is this person? Most scholars I read believe this is in reference to the Church, the bride of Christ.^{xi} So, I think Peter is saying, the members of The Church, in exile, because of persecution, all send you greetings. This strengthens Peter’s urging to stand firm in the Word of God. It is truth, God’s Word, for the purpose of edifying The Church, believers in Jesus.

Peter goes on to include Mark in that and the encouragement to greet one another with a holy kiss. This is an urging to continue to gather together in corporate worship and community. You cannot greet one another with a holy kiss if you are not in their presence. This again speaks to two major functions of the local church: corporate worship and discipleship in community. And these two functions are vitally important, especially in the culture in which we live. We, like these early believers, need to be gathered in community with one another for the purpose of being edified and strengthened in our souls. We do that by holding fast to the profession of truth in God’s Word.

So, our unshakable eternity results in a posture of humility, a perception of the enemy’s work, perseverance in God’s strength, and a profession of truth we hold onto.

CONCLUSION:

Today we see the peace and comfort of having an unshakable eternity. But maybe you are here this morning, and you are not sure you have eternal life. For you, your eternity is uncertain. You are not sure if you were to die that you’d be in heaven. You are not certain you have a relationship with Jesus. If you’re here today and that’s you, I want to encourage you to settle that today and invite you to visit with our elders about what it means to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. In a moment we are going to close our service and our elders will be here at the front ready to visit with you about what it means to make Jesus the Lord of your life.

Maybe you’re here today and you need prayer. The challenges you are walking through have you needing the people of God surrounding you, lifting you up in prayer. Our elders would love to pray with you and over you as well.

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ 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; William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1976; Max Anderson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude*, Holman Reference: Nashville, 1999; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 5*, published by Enduring Word Ministries, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-5/>; Troy Rackliffe, *Stand Firm in Your Faith: Message 10*, preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Skip Heitzig, *Rock Solid: A Rock Solid Finish*, sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, June 29, 2014, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/175/sermon/2396>.

ⁱⁱ Helps Word-studies, 5013, tapeinoó.

ⁱⁱⁱ Exodus 32:11.

^{iv} Strong's Concordance, 3525, néphó.

^v Strong's Concordance, 1127, grégoreó.

^{vi} McKnight, page 285.

^{vii} Strong's Concordance, 2666, katapinó.

^{viii} Schreiner, page 242.

^{ix} <https://biblescan.com/search.php?q=never+forsake>

^x For a detailed discussion on this, see Schreiner, pages 247-249.

^{xi} Ibid, page 250.