

Hope Investing in Eternity

Sermon Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

Our Hope is Our Investment in Eternity

In the mist of the longest Psalm, Psalm 119 we read this verse, “Remember Your Word to Your servant, in which You have made me hope (119:49).” We are reminded here that it is God who gives us His Word and actually through that Word He gives us hope. We have hope only because God always remembers His Word. So we can be confident in all He says to us. We can count on what He says. You might call it our investment. Our hope is our investment in eternity. We can hear it all through these verses in 1 Peter.

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” 1 Peter 4:12

Now here comes the investment part—our hope.

“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:13

Hope Invests in Future Glory

That’s right! When suffering comes we can rejoice and be glad that we are sharing in Christ’s sufferings that will all be over when Jesus comes again in glory. Our hope for the future in Jesus Christ actually allows us to rejoice and be glad when fiery trials come because when Jesus comes, all suffering will end and we will spend eternity in heaven.

“Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:19

Why can we entrust ourselves to God in a time of suffering? Because our hope is based on His Word that tells us of future glory in Jesus Christ.



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Responding to Suffering

We hear it again,

“Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:6-7

What do we usually do? We fight against suffering. We don't like it a bit. We worry, fret, lose sleep, feel awful all over things we can do nothing about. Our lack of faith shows. But here Peter says that we should humbly accept the suffering under the hand of God. Further, the cares and worries we do have, we are to cast on the broad shoulders of God. Cast them on the shoulders of our Savior who carried all burdens and cares to the cross. He defeated them there. This is our hope, once again based on God's Word which He always remembers and keeps.

We are Spiritually Vulnerable

We are warned however. When we are living in this world and especially in our times of suffering we are spiritually vulnerable.

“Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” 1 Peter 5:8-9

Satan knows us well. He will tempt us to fear, worry, concern, hopelessness. He loves to get us to have an old fashioned “pity-party” because we think we are the only one suffering. We fall into his traps over and over. Yet, we are told right here that everybody suffers at some time. How true that is right now? The whole world is caught up in this pandemic. Not just you. How do you resist? You look to God who always keeps His Word and in that Word you will find hope. In that hope given you by God, you resist Satan.

Suffering Will End

Still God gives us more hope.

“And 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. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:10-11

The suffering in this world is going to end. The suffering of sickness is going to end. The suffering from the death this pandemic is causing is going to end. The sin and death in this world is going to end when Jesus Christ comes a second time, just as He promised to give us eternal glory. God's Word says it and in His Word we hope. The Word shows His love for us and that this grace abounds.



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The Word Points Us to a Faithful God

You see Peter's letter was written to Christians who were suffering. But Peter keeps bringing us back, pointing us in a different direction. He points us to a faithful God who by His Word gives us hope. Peter tells us the story of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not avoid the suffering. He was tempted by Satan but did not give in. He was tempted to stay on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration in all His glory, but He did not. Peter himself tempted Him to avoid the cross, but He did not. He went to Jerusalem and suffered and died on the cross of

Calvary. He humbled Himself under the mighty hand of God to save us all. The suffering comes before the glory.

The Resurrection Changes Everything

Six weeks ago we celebrated what has changed everything. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. All our enemies are conquered. Sin and death are defeated. Satan is toothless. The Good Friday of suffering breaks into Easter, eternal glory. That promised eternal glory is our hope. That promised eternal glory is ours through faith in Jesus Christ who won the victory for us all.

Our Hope: Investment for Eternity

The world is suffering during this pandemic for sure. Someday it will end. But we live in a sinful world. There will be other times of suffering in the world and in individual lives. This will not change this side of heaven. But there will come a day when all suffering ceases. We don't know when, but we know it will come. We know because God remembers His Word and always keeps it. We have been promised. Easter, eternal glory will break through. There will be no more death. No more suffering. There will just be Jesus and His victory. This is our hope, our investment for eternity. As the hymn says,

*"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last,
And our eternal home."*

(Isaac Watts, *Lutheran Service Book*, 733)

Amen!



Hope Investing in Eternity

Bible Study Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Introduction

“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:19

In this study we conclude with the final words of this letter overflowing with hope. The imagery of this lesson uses “investment” language. The world economies were devastated in a matter of days upon the advent of COVID-19. This week we will explore investing in eternity considering:

- God’s eternal love and investment in us;
- The joy of investing in eternity;
- The threats and tests to our eternal investments;
- Our stewardship of investing in others for eternity.

Checking In

1. Name one person who invested their time and energies in you and specifically impacted your faith. How are their efforts continuing to grow in your life today?

Word: Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

2. The fiery trials and testing expressed by Peter can be descriptive of both challenging times to faith and/or times that brought clarity and refinement to faith. Be honest and sympathetic with each other as you explore this double-edged question: **How has suffering tested your hope?**

3. Even in suffering, verse 14 says, “you are blessed.” How has God invested His spirit and His glory in your life? *(Be specific drawing from both from the promises of God in the Bible and your personal experiences with His grace.)*

4. Share practical ways that you can recall and draw upon from the promises and grace of God when fiery trials come?

5. Read verse 19. How is your hope invested in eternity?



Hope Investing in Eternity

Bible Study Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Household Activity (Review)

In last week's activity you did "PREP for FRANK." This was an exercise to identify people God may be preparing for you to share the hope that is within you. Share with your group the following from your "prep work" exercise last week:

- Give the first name of one person on your "FRANK" list.
- How do you know them?
- From the PREP exercise, practice sharing one of the PREP exercises you did for homework (See Home Activity 5)

Household Activity (New)

Read: 1 Peter 5:1-5

6. How can your household or group specifically show gratitude to a spiritual leader that has impacted this group? Make plan to share an expression of gratitude this week.
7. At the beginning of this study you shared the name of someone who was a spiritual leader or mentor of your faith. Peter calls us now to invest in someone else as their spiritual leader. Look at your FRANK list (or add to it). **Who is the person most accessible and open to your spiritual support, care, encouragement, mentoring?**



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Bible Study Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

8. Eternal investments are long term commitments. Furthermore, they are not age/experience dependent. Everyone—children or adults, male or female, varied educational and vocational backgrounds—has people that look up to us. God desires that so that we invest in their eternity.
- a) What is one step you can take to invest and buy-in deeper to a Christian relationship that invests in their eternity?
- b) How will you continue to do this beyond the study?
- c) What support or resources would you need from this group, your church or pastor?

Word: Read 1 Peter 5:6-14

Video

St. Paul's Lutheran (Des Peres) H.I.S. Puppeteers have produced a video puppet show to compliment this study. Youth and adults will enjoy watching it. Before you turn on the video, read aloud 1 Peter 3:15 at the top of this study. Simply go online to <https://mo.lcms.org/week-6-puppet-show-our-hope-for-years-to-come/>

9. What was the boy worried about?
10. What worries have been occupying your thoughts this week?
11. How does the devil use anxiety to withdraw, rather than invest in your hope?
12. What gifts and means does God provide for our defense against the devil's attempts to drain our hope?



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Bible Study Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Prayer Journal

This week's prayer journal is about casting our anxieties on God's shoulders, because he cares for us!

- Start finding all the qualities of God's big shoulders in 1 Peter 5:6-11 that show him more than capable of carrying our anxious thoughts and problems. Write them in a sentence that where each begins, "My God..." (eg. My God strengthens!)

- Next, write down some of the anxious thoughts that you've had this week. They are probably short sentences because the devil is good at throwing them over and over. Some familiar ways they begin, "I can't..." "I don't know how..." "It won't work..." "I'm missing..." "I wish I could fix..." "I'm afraid that..."

- Now take your sentences and draw lines to one of the qualities you listed above. Then turn them into investment prayers, putting them on God's shoulders.

Here's For example:

- If you found in 1 Peter: "My God strengthens" and
- You worried, "I don't know how I will finish my work this week."
- You now can pray: "I don't know how I will finish my work this week, but my God strengthens!"



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Bible Study Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Blessing

If you haven't done so already, make use of the Daily Reading and Reflections provided with this study to help you listen to the Bible more. It will help you grow deeper in your hope, a hope freed to serve.

Close by taking turns using 1 Peter 5:4-11 bless one another. An example of how you can modify it to be a blessing might go like this:

{Name} Jesus is your hope!

Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Now be sober-minded;

Be watchful.

Resist the your enemy the Devil

Stand firm in your faith,

knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced
by all your brothers and sisters in Christ.

May the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ,

restore,

confirm,

strengthen, and

establish you.

To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen!



Hope Investing in Eternity

Household Activity Week 6 1 Peter 5:1-5

Note: This activity is also included in the Week Six Bible Study.

Review: In last week's activity you did "PREP for FRANK." This was an exercise to identify people God may be preparing for you to share the hope that is within you. Share with your group the following from your "prep work" exercise last week:

- Give the first name of one person on your "FRANK" list.
- How do you know them?
- From the PREP exercise, practice sharing one of the PREP exercises you did for homework (See Home Activity 5)

Read: 1 Peter 5:1-5

Activity: How can your household or group specifically show gratitude to a spiritual leader that has impacted this group? Make plan to share an expression of gratitude this week.

Peter calls us now to invest in other people as their spiritual leaders and mentors. Look at your FRANK list (or add to it). **Who is the person most accessible and open to your spiritual support, care, encouragement, mentoring?**

Eternal investments are long term commitments. Furthermore, they are not age/experience dependent. Everyone—children or adults, male or female, varied educational and vocational backgrounds—has people that look up to us. God desires that so that we invest in their eternity.

a) What is one step you can take to invest and buy-in deeper to a Christian relationship that invests in their eternity?

b) How will you continue to do this beyond the study?

c) What support or resources would you need from this group, your church or pastor?



Hope Investing in Eternity

Daily Readings & Reflections

Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Introduction

Have you heard this sentence before? “Past performance is no guarantee of future results.” Every investment commercial and website gives this predictable disclaimer. Investments involve risk. In January we were celebrating a great economy and strong workforce. COVID-19 struck and it was erased in hours.

Past performance is, however, indicative of future results. No achievement, building or investment is eternal. “Do not be surprised,” opens the homestretch of our journey. Peter tells us to expect suffering and tough tests. They are a certainty in uncertain times.

Peter is also an outrageous investor. He’s got one investment. It doesn’t come with a disclaimer. He’s invested everything in an eternity with Jesus. Now he’s investing in you.

The funny thing about financial investments is that they are just numbers and paper unless you buy in or sell out of them. Peter puts the stewardship of our lives in the same context. He reveals a hoax going on. The devil is working every angle to get people to sell out. He’s pitching investments that will drain accounts with suffering, fiery trials, anxious thoughts, shady deals, false glories, power grabs, self-preservation and quick exit strategies.

Peter knows this cruel predator will be out there till Jesus returns. He can’t stop him, but he exposes the lies and protects us with the joys of buying in and investing in eternity.

This week you’ll see God’s investment in you. Jesus is your hope for eternity. You have that investment backed by the full guarantee of the One who created all. You have this because someone invested in you. There are likely dozens of godly men and women who have invested their hope in you by caring, teaching, suffering and dying beside you with God’s true wealth. Peter strips away vanity and challenges Christians everywhere to start judging, not the world, but themselves. The judgement question: how are you investing in eternity? This is how Peter defends us against false investments.

Set aside at least five minutes for these daily exercises—a small investment in eternity. You have laid foundations for holy habits these six weeks. I pray you will continue to grow in them. And I pray you will be a spiritual leader who invests this in others. Share what you have read, discovered, and invested in through these daily disciplines. Repeat the journey with someone who needs a spiritual mentor. Resist the devil’s schemes. Invest in eternity where Jesus is your hope for years to come!



Hope Investing in Eternity

Daily Readings & Reflections

Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Monday

Read: *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.* 1 Peter 4:12-13

Reflect: Do not be surprised! Our enemy is relentless. What "trial" is testing, even tempting, you to a negative and disobedient spirit? How will this scripture be your defense? What is one way you can "invest" in this verse, depositing it into your thoughts when testing strikes? (Examples: memorize, keep a note card, have a visual or audio.)

Tuesday

Read: *If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.* 1 Peter 4:14-16

Reflect: Examine your life and search for the many places, circumstances, worship experiences, sacred teachings, miracles and people where you see "the Spirit of glory" resting on you? How is God investing and revealing His glory in you today? How will you confidently and unashamed glorify God's name today?

Wednesday

Read: *For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.* 1 Peter 4:17-19

Reflect: We are forgiven in Christ! Why in the midst of suffering is there a call for judgment to begin now in our homes and churches? What poor investments of our time, talent and treasure are stripped away by such judgement? What will be the outcome of God's investment in you? How can suffering realign your investments in a faithful Creator and your witness to the world?



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Daily Readings & Reflections

Week 6 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:1-14

Thursday

Read: *So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:1-5*

Reflect: Who are the spiritual leaders and shepherds in your life? Who looks up to you as a spiritual leader? What investment of love, mercy, or encouragement is Christ calling you at this time to offer in humble oversight by caring for someone who needs grace? Who is that person? How will you continue to invest in new believers and future generations?

Friday

Read: *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And 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. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11*

Reflect: What issues is the devil using to drain your accounts right now? How does anxiety compound suffering? The devil tempts you to imagine many fears. Turn the tables, resist his false images, and visualize what it looks like to put your anxious thoughts on God's shoulders. Find all the qualities of those divine shoulders in these verses? Where are the best investments for time and energies right now?

Saturday

Read: *By Silvanus, 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. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. 1 Peter 5:12-14*

Reflect: How do these closing words offer you hope when you feel separated and lonely? How has reflecting on First Peter been an investment in hope for you? Identify one person you will invest in this weekend with a visit, call, or letter of encouragement and love in Christ. How will you continue the practice, investing in things eternal?

