

**1 Peter 1:3-9**  
Hope After Christmas  
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Immanuel: <http://www.immanuelchurch.com/>

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\*See next page for preaching outline.

## Introduction:

1. A few weeks ago I asked the children, “How many more days till Christmas?”
2. They shouted “11” but now there’s “362” more days till Christmas 2015!
3. The excitement of Christmas is gone and the long and dark winter is coming.
4. We have to go back to school, back to jobs, and back to trials, anxiety, and stress.
5. Christmas Song "Have yourself a merry little Christmas. Let your heart be light. Next year all our troubles will be out of sight."
6. Where do we find our hope after Christmas—in our every day?
7. The hope of Christmas points forward to the hope of Easter and a final Holiday. (\*Read 1 Peter 1:3-9)

### I. We find hope after Christmas through faith in Jesus. (v. 3-5)

(What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?)

- A. We find hope after Christmas through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. (v. 3)
  1. What does it mean that “[God] has caused us to be born again to a living hope?”
  2. John 1:12–13 (ESV) “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
  3. God shapes us, forms us, and gives us the faith needed to believe.
  4. What I’m about to tell you is too fantastic to believe without God’s help.
  5. Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the grave three days later (Easter).
  6. We find hope after Christmas through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- B. I’m going to give you one and only one reason to believe in Jesus’ resurrection.
  1. The German Philosopher Karl Marx once said, “Die Religion ... ist das Opium des Volkes.”
  2. In English that means “religion... is the opiate of the people.” (Read more in the ASB)
  3. Marx believed religion causes many of society’s problems and that we use religion to feel better about ourselves.
  4. Peter and the early church were persecuted and suffered. (62-63 A.D.)
  5. Lee Strobel writes in The Case for Christ “People will die for their religious beliefs if they sincerely believe they’re true, but people won’t die for their religious beliefs if they know their beliefs are false.”

(The early believers were looking forward to the reward of eternity.)

- C. We find hope after Christmas through faith in the rewards of heaven. (v. 4)
  1. The inheritance we receive through Christ is a “place” and a “person.”
  2. We get to spend all eternity in a renewed creation with Jesus. (imperishable, undefiled, unfading)
  3. “Kept” is a perfect tense that emphasizes a past action bringing about a present state.
  4. Jesus won our inheritance through his death on the cross and it’s ready for us.
  5. We find hope after Christmas through faith in the rewards of heaven.

### D. Monica and I celebrated our first Christmas in our new home.

1. We spent the morning at our home and then spent the afternoon with my in-laws.
  2. On Christmas we spend time in the places we enjoy and with the people we love.
  3. The reward of heaven is spending eternity in a place you enjoy with the one you love—Jesus.
  4. Some travel thousands of miles to get home for Christmas—this life is a journey home.
- E. We find hope after Christmas through faith in the return of Jesus. (v. 5)
1. We talked about Easter but now we're focusing on the final Holiday—the return of Jesus.
  2. Until Christ returns again, God is using our faith to protect us from falling away.
  3. This faith belongs to us, but God insures this gift.
- F. I recently transferred Monica's car insurance onto our home insurance policy.
1. The insurance company guarantees Monica's car even though the car belongs to Monica.
  2. God guarantees the faith of his people even though the faith belongs to us.
  3. We pay for our car insurance, which is a reminder that we need to work at our faith.
  4. God is the one who pays for our salvation through the death of His Son.
  5. We find hope after Christmas through faith in Jesus.

(The reason we need God's assurance that our faith will last, is because hard times come.)

(We can expect that this new year things aren't going to always go our way.)

(How can we find hope even when we experience failures and hurts?)

## II. We find hope in the trials of the new year through trusting Jesus. (v. 6-9)

- A. We find hope in the trials of the new year through trusting Jesus. (v. 6)
1. I know this year is going to have problems because that's how life is.
  2. We find hope, and can rejoice, because of the salvation we have in Jesus.
  3. This doesn't make us better than anyone else.
- B. We look to the Son Jesus in the midst of our winter for hope.
1. In New England 10-20% of the population suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
  2. The apartment I lived at in seminary had a sun lamp that I used.
  3. We need to focus on the Son of God in our darkness.

(When we focus on Christ, its easier to see what God wants to do with them.)

(Believe it or not God wants to use these trials for our good.)

(God uses our trials for two things:)

- C. First, God uses our trials to refine us. (v. 7a)
1. One version says "gold, which perishes even though refined by fire..." (NIV)
  2. One encyclopedia explained that the Egyptians taught the Israelites how to refine gold. (AEHL)
  3. Back then gold nuggets were first smashed with hammers and then ground into a pile of dust.
  4. That was then put on a slanted table and water poured over it to wash away all but the gold.
  5. Another commentary explained that to melt gold, you have to heat it to 1,900 degrees Fahrenheit.
  6. Once the gold is molten, the impurities rise and are skimmed off the surface.

7. I quote, “A goldsmith knows the gold is ready to cast when the liquid gold becomes mirror-like and he can see his face reflected in the surface.” (HNTC, pg. 9)
8. God uses trials to refine us so he can see his character in us.

D. Second, God uses our trials to bring him glory. (v. 7b)

1. Our trials bring God praise—How we handle our problems makes Jesus famous.
2. Our trials bring God glory—God’s power is revealed when we trust him through it all.
3. Our trials bring God honor—When it our faith costs us something, it values Jesus.
4. Don’t you want a faith that brings God praise, and glory, and honor?

(First, God uses our trials to refine us.)

(Second, God uses our trials to bring him glory.)

E. In the 1700s the skeptic David Hume would go and hear George Whitfield preach.

1. He didn’t not believe in God, but didn’t think there was enough proof to believe in God.
2. George Whitfield on the other hand was a famous Christian preacher.
3. Hume’s friends made fun of him for going to hear Whitfield preach.
4. They asked, “Why do you go to hear Whitefield preach if you do not believe the things he preaches?” (Theology of Preaching, pg 247)
5. Hume replied, “Because he believes it.”
6. Our authentic witness can bring God praise, glory, and honor.

F. We can’t avoid trials this year, but we can love Jesus and trust him through them. (v. 8-9)

1. A good translation is “You have not seen him, yet you are continually loving him. Though you do not see him now, you are continually believing.”
2. God is honored when we love and believe in him through faith.
3. God rewards us with “joy that is inexpressible” when our hearts are satisfied with him.
4. New Year’s resolution—Lord help me love and believe in you every day.”

(We find hope in the trials of the new year through trusting Jesus.)

Conclusion:

1. One of the toughest months of my walk with God was January 2010 when I lived in DC.
2. I co-lead a college Bible study with a friend who walked away from Jesus. (depressed and sad)
3. I found hope by continuing to follow God and trust him (wasn’t quick).
4. He used this experience to help call me to seminary to become a pastor.
5. God used one of the darkest winters of my life to help bring me here.
6. God can use what you’re going through to change your life.
7. We find hope after Christmas through faith in Jesus.