

# Crowns

by Warren Wiersbe

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*As believers, we are born for glory, kept for glory, and being prepared for glory, and our trials are refining our faith and making it valuable for God's glory.*

**Duration:** 36:01

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:1

**Topics:** "Eternal Inheritance", "Living Hope"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that believers are born for glory. He explains that through God's abundant mercy, believers are born again into a living hope. This living hope is described as an inheritance, as believers are written into God's will through the blood of Jesus. The preacher encourages listeners to hold onto these truths when going through suffering, as they provide comfort and assurance of God's faithfulness.

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## Transcript

Reading the Word of God from 1 Peter 1, verses 1-9. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Born again to a living hope.

The doorbell rings, and it's the postman, and he hands you a special delivery letter, and lo and behold that letter is from the Apostle Peter. So you open it and you sit down to read it, and as you read it you begin to frown, and you're just a little bit troubled, because over and over again in that letter you find one word repeated, suffering, suffering, suffer. Some sixteen times in his writing, suffer.

And you say to yourself, I better read it again, and so you go back and you reread the letter, and lo and behold, another word begins to jump out at you over and over again, glory. And then you notice something, whenever Peter talks about suffering, he talks about glory. Whenever he deals with cross, he mentions crown.

Whenever he talks about fiery trial, he also talks about glorious triumph. And the first epistle of Peter reminds us that for the believer, suffering leads to glory. We have been discussing this problem of suffering for several Lord's Day mornings now, and we've come to the sixth of the answers that God gives to us, crowns.

There is awaiting the believer a crown of glory, and woven throughout the fabric of first Peter, you'll find that dark strand of suffering, and you'll find that golden strand of glory. He mentions it in chapter one, verses six and seven. The trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory.

He mentions it in chapter one, verse eleven. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. He mentions it over in chapter four and five.

In fact, he cannot close the book without talking about it. Verse ten, but the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you've suffered a while. Now, dear friends, suffering by itself does not produce glory.

You've got to add grace to it. When you know Jesus Christ is your Savior, and you're going through times of suffering, God can see you through if you'll just remember what Peter teaches about glory. The trouble with most of us is this, when we start to go through suffering, we forget what God teaches us.

Our minds get so wrapped up in ourselves and our own problems that we forget what the Lord has taught us. And so I would share with you today, to encourage you in that hour of suffering, four spiritual truths that Peter gives to us here in chapter one, verses one through nine of his first letter. When you find yourself in that time of suffering, go back to these truths and God will see you through.

Truth number one, verses one through four, we are born for glory. That's good news. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy have begotten us again, born again onto a living hope.

We are born for glory. Now, this is not true physically. While we rejoice and thank God for every new life that comes into our home, we have to confess that what Peter says at the end of this chapter is correct.

All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass. And the grass withereth and its flower falleth away. That's true, isn't it? There's something poignant, there's something that gets a hold of your heart when you pick up that little baby and you realize that it's flesh.

And flesh is not destined for glory. Only when God comes into the life will we know that there's going to be glory someday. No, we aren't born physically for glory.

We are born going astray. We are born rebels against God. We are born children of wrath and we become children of disobedience.

But thank God we can become children of God. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be born again. And he tells us how this happens.

Back in verse 2, he gives us God's part in this wonderful birth. And then up in verse 25, he gives us our part in this wonderful birth. Now, quite frankly, and this is no surprise to you, I had nothing to do with my first birth.

I was just there. I was one more burden as the depression started. But, oh, you have something to do with your second birth.

You see, God's part is given in verse 2. Chosen by the Father, purchased by the Son, set apart by the Holy Spirit. I had a letter this last week from a person over in England, why he chose to write me, I don't know, concerning the Trinity. He said, I don't find the Trinity in my Bible.

I don't know what Bible he has. Here it is. Chosen by God the Father, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Don't soften that. Don't dilute that. Purchased by God the Son, the sprinkling of His blood.

Set apart by God the Holy Spirit. If you read verse 2, it gives you the impression that God does it all. Well, He does do it all.

It's all of grace. It's His power. It's His purchasing.

It's His sealing. But verse 25 says, but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Oh, ho. You see, you have to have two parents to be born physically, and you have to have two parents to be born spiritually. And those two parents are the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

And the Word of God is preached. Someone came to these Jewish people and preached to them the gospel, the good news that their Messiah had come, the good news that Christ died for their sins and arose again, the good news that they could be forgiven, accepted. And they believed.

And in believing the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God in them wrought a miracle. And the Bible calls that miracle born again. We are born unto glory.

Now, He describes this glory for us. In verse 3, He calls it a living hope. Do you know why it's a living hope? It's based upon a living Christ, born again by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

A dead Savior can't give you a living hope. It's a living hope because it's based upon the living Word. And it's a living hope because as a living hope, it grows and gets bigger and better.

There have been many dead hopes in this world. Many people are like those two downcast disciples in Luke chapter 24 who didn't know that Jesus was alive. And these two men were walking along the road to Emmaus, and a third joined them.

It was Jesus. They didn't recognize Him. They said, what are you talking about? And they say, are you the only one who doesn't know what things have happened? And Jesus very quietly says, what things? Imagine, He'd been in the very middle of all of that.

What things? Oh, and they told Him. He said to them, don't you know the Scriptures? Let me open to you beginning at Moses and all the prophets. I want to show you something.

The Christ had to suffer and then enter into His glory. He's alive. They said, would you stay with us? And He went and sat with them.

And as He broke the bread, He revealed Himself. And they said, He's alive. And it changed them.

They now had a living hope. They had been walking downcast saying, we had hoped, we had hoped. Now they looked up and said, we know we have a living hope.

My dear friend, if you've been born again, you have been born unto glory, you have a living hope. Now, this living hope is described in verse 4 as an inheritance. This means that God wrote us into His will.

The Lord Jesus said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. I'm writing a will. And I'm going to seal this will with my blood.

And I'm writing you into my will. It's shed for the remission of sin. And if you'll trust me, I'll save you.

He wrote us into His will and then He died. And then He arose again and He's gone back to heaven and He's probating His own will. He's alive today and He is executing His own will, His own inheritance to an inheritance.

What kind of an inheritance? I suppose if you got home today and you got word from a lawyer or a banker that you had inherited X number of dollars, it would make your day. Oh, you'd say, just think of it now. We have all of this money.

We don't have to refinance the aquarium now. We have all of this money. Blue Cross cannot reclaim the children.

We have all of this money. But I want you to know, you could inherit a lot of money and it'd create more problems for you than you've ever had in your life. For one thing, all your relatives will come crawling out of the woodwork.

And something else, you have taxes to think about and this and that and how are you going to protect it? More than one person has come into an inheritance to have it wreck his life. We have an inheritance that is incorruptible. That means the armies cannot come and ravage it.

No one can get his hands on it and corrupt it. It is incorruptible. It is undefiled.

There's no stain. It never has to be marked out for urban renewal. That fadeth not away.

That word fadeth not away means it never gets old. It never gets tiresome. I've had people say to me, you know, when I think of eternity forever and ever in glory, won't it be tiresome? You bet your life it won't be.

Because it's an inheritance that never fades away. It never loses value. It never gets stale or old.

A child says, oh daddy, if I had this I'd be so happy. And so he gets that for him. And within a week he wants something else.

Why? The old toy got old. Our inheritance isn't that way. He calls it in verse 5, salvation.

He says the same thing down in verse 9. The salvation of your soul. You say, wait a minute, I already am saved. That's right.

When you trusted Jesus Christ, you were saved from the penalty of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And right now as you walk with the Lord, you're being saved from the power of sin.

Yield yourselves to God. Yield the members of your body as the instruments of righteousness. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

But oh dear friends, one of these days the Lord is going to come back and deliver us from the very presence of sin. Give us new bodies and new minds and God is going to change us to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what he's talking about.

That's the inheritance. He calls it our salvation. And he links it in verse 7 with the appearing of Jesus Christ.

That's a beautiful thing. We are born to glory. So the next time you find yourself suffering, instead of looking up and saying, dear Lord, why did this happen to me? Say, dear Lord, thank you that I'm born to glory.

Now, Peter gives us a second truth and that's in verse 5. We are kept for glory. In verses 1 through 4, we're born to glory. And in verse 5, we are kept for glory.

Who are kept by the power of God. Someone says, oh, but I may not make it. I have told this story before because I delight in telling it about the lady who stopped Dr. Ironside one day and said to him, I don't agree with what you've been preaching that we are saved by faith and by faith alone.

I think we are saved by faith and we keep ourselves saved by our works. He said, oh, she said, it's like a rowboat. If you have one oar in a rowboat, you just keep going around in circles.

If you have two oars, faith and works, then you get somewhere. And he said to her, madam, that's a very interesting illustration. There's only one thing wrong with it.

She said, what's that? And Dr. Ironside said, I am not going to heaven in a rowboat. Now, faith does lead to works. We know that.

But Peter is telling us here that we have protection. We are kept for glory. Kept by the power of God.

This word kept is a military term. It means a garrison is around you. It's the same word that's used over in 2 Corinthians where Paul is telling about his escape from Damascus.

He says that the king put a guard all around. That's the word. When you get saved, God guards you, kept by the power of God.

Why? Through faith. Now, if it were through works, we'd never make it. But thank God it's through faith.

By grace are you saved through faith. Now, unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. I'm not able, but thank God He's able.

We are kept for glory. Now, he gives us a third truth here. Next time you find yourself going through difficulty and trouble, you remind yourself, I am born for glory.

No matter what may happen to me down here, I am destined for glory. I have been born again unto a living hope. And remind yourself you're being kept for glory.

Oh, the devil's going to say, God has forsaken you. Here you are in this hospital room. Here you are by this graveside.

Here you are crushed by a disappointment that is so heavy you can't breathe. God must have forsaken you. You say, oh no, 1 Peter 1 and verse 5 says, He's keeping me by the power of God because I'm trusting Him.

And He's keeping me unto that salvation. But remind yourself of a third truth. Verses 6 and 7, we are being prepared for glory.

I want to read these verses to you. In this, this coming salvation, ye greatly rejoice. You rejoice at what's going to happen in the future, but what about right now? Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials.

Uh-oh. We're not there yet. And Peter tells us that there are trials that Christians go through.

Would you notice what he says about these trials? He says these trials are preparing us for glory. Look at verse 7. That the trial of your faith, now I'm going to skip the intervening words. We'll come back to them.

That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory when at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The wounds of today are going to be the crowns of tomorrow. The tears of today are going to be the jewels of tomorrow.

Someone says, I have not gone through any trials. Then you're going to miss a little bit of glory when you stand before the Lord. We are being prepared for glory.

Now notice that Peter says that this trial we go through is for a season. We aren't always going through trials. Thank God for that.

I think when we look back, we have to confess we've had more joy than sorrow. We've had more happiness than heaviness. And I think when we get to glory and look back, we're going to see why God did many of the things that He did.

And then we'll rejoice. He also goes on to say, if need be. God knows what we need.

If need be. Here's a Christian who needs trials. God knows this.

And so God sends the trials. God permits the trials. Here's a Christian who doesn't need the trial.

God knows. These trials are not something haphazard. They're not accidents.

They're appointments. And God in His grace and His love appoints our way for us if need be. Peter calls them manifold trials.

That's a beautiful word. It means variegated. When I was a little boy, my mother often sent me to the store to do minor shopping.

And I remember one day she said, I want you to go and get me some variegated thread. I didn't know what variegated thread was. She was doing some embroidery work and she needed variegated thread.

I said, what is that? Well, she says many colored. That's the word Peter uses. Though now for a season, if need be, you're in heaviness through variegated trials, many colored trials.

You've had your blue Mondays all week long. You've had days when it's been dark. You've awakened with a dark brown taste in your mouth.

You know what Peter is saying here? Peter is saying God is the master artist and He's painting your picture. And He knows how to mingle the darks and the lights. He knows how to put the brights and the somber.

You've gone to the art gallery and you've stood before some paintings and they haven't touched you. You've gone before others and something has reached out and grabbed your heart. It's the way the colors are balanced and life is this way.

Peter says we're being prepared for glory. Now how does God prepare us for glory? He brings heaviness. That's the same word that's used of Jesus in the garden.

He began to be very heavy and He fell down and He prayed and He sweat great drops of blood and He cried out to His Father. That's the same word. He says you're going through your Gethsemane.

My friend, every life has its Gethsemane. But thank God every Gethsemane has its glory. And Jesus went from suffering to glory, from heaviness to happiness.

Now Peter tells us in verse 7 that these trials have a two-fold purpose. Number one, they are refining us right now. It's like the refining of the gold.

You come into the jeweler and you bring the gold ore and he puts it in the furnace and all the dross and the ugliness, the cheap stuff rises to the top and he skims it off and leaves behind the pure, beautiful gold. And he can make something out of it. It's worth something.

Peter says the trying of our faith is far more valuable than that. When you're finished with that gold, all you have is the gold, but when your faith has been tried, you have a faith that can accomplish anything. There is more in the Christian life than just believing and being saved.

There's walking by faith. There's fighting by faith. There's building by faith.

There's praying by faith. And God wants to purify that faith. And so God is purifying us.

But Peter goes on to say, when you stand before the Lord, what He did for you today will bring glory to Him tomorrow. That's what he's saying. That the trying of your faith might be found under praise and honor and glory.

Whose praise? Not yours. Not mine. God's.

You see, when the church stands before the Lord in glory, when all of the angelic hosts see this purified people without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, when we stand before the Lord, the angelic hosts are going to say, praise and honor and glory to Jesus Christ. If He could do that with those pieces of clay, we

must praise and worship Him. You know why Jesus saved us? To the praise of His glory.

That's why. Not just to take the drink out of our lives or the lust or the meanness. Not even just to rescue us from hell.

Those are all good things. He saved us to the praise of His glory. To the praise of the glory of His grace, says Paul in Ephesians 1. And that's what Peter is saying.

We're not robbing Paul to pay Peter or robbing Peter to pay Paul. They're both saying the same thing. That when you go through the difficulties of life, on the other side, there's a crown and it brings glory to Him.

That's why we sing, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Earth's trials will seem so small when we see Him. We are being prepared for glory.

Now, that leads me to drop this little thought into your mind. Don't criticize God for the unfinished product. God's not through with us yet.

Oh, I've met these people who say, well, look what God did. This baby was born deformed and look what happened here and there. Wait just a minute.

God's not through yet. You don't judge Mr. Ford by what you see on the assembly line. You judge Him by what you see coming off of the assembly line.

And if you're watching a painter or a carver working, you don't judge Him by the shavings and the mess. You wait until He's through. I recall walking up and down the aisles in an auditorium down in Gatlinburg, Tennessee during a mountain crafts festival.

And all the folks would come out of the hills with their crafts and they were making things out of walnuts and out of wood and you name it, they were making it. And I stood there watching a man carve. And it was amazing, out of that piece of wood came the most beautiful, beautiful little horse.

But you don't judge Him when He's halfway through. Don't you look at yourself or anyone else and say, God, you don't know what you're doing. He said, just hold off.

You're not off the assembly line yet. Just wait. We're being prepared for glory.

Finally, in verses 8 and 9, He reaches the pinnacle of His lesson. We're born for glory. We are being kept for glory.

We are being prepared for glory. But in verses 8 and 9, He says, we can experience glory right now. Do you see that? Whom having not seen, ye love.

He didn't say we, He said ye. He had seen Him. Peter had seen Him.

He was a witness of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that followed. Whom having not seen, ye love. In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving.

You see those two words? Believing, receiving, and in between you have joy unspeakable and full of glory. Mr. Spurgeon used to say, little faith will take your soul to heaven. Great faith will bring heaven to

your soul.

Oh, you're going through difficulty. You're between jobs. They pull the rug out from under you.

And life is rough. And Peter says to you, my friend, you can experience the glory right now. A joy unspeakable and full of glory.

You've got an empty chair in the house. And every time you look at that empty chair, your heart's broken. And Peter says, you can have joy unspeakable and full of glory.

You failed. You failed miserably. You made a mess of it.

You botched it up. And Peter says, wait just a minute. Just a minute now.

Give yourself to God. You can have joy unspeakable and full of glory. Not only are you born to glory through faith in Christ and kept for glory because you have faith in Christ.

Not only are you being prepared for glory, but Peter says you can experience that glory right now. Now, how do you do it? Number one, love Him. Oh, the trouble is when we start going through suffering, we think of ourselves.

Self-pity. Self-pity. He says, no, no, get your eyes off of yourself and by faith look to the Lord.

And love Him. And then trust Him, believing. And as you trust Him, reach out your hands and receive what He has for you.

Love Him. Trust Him. Receive from Him.

And before you know it, you'll start rejoicing in Him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Peter calls it a joy unspeakable because you can't describe it. The psychiatrist cannot analyze it.

It's one of those experiences of life that is so precious and so worshipful, you can't even talk about it. But it's real. Many of you know what I'm talking about.

You've gone through difficulty. You've gone through sorrow and suffering. And you've believed and you've looked and you've received.

And God has put within your heart joy unspeakable and full of glory. I've marked in my Bible, believing, receiving. And I've drawn a line between the two of them.

I want to remind myself of that. It hurts, Lord, believe, receive. How will you say believe, receive? How are you kept? Oh, believe.

How are you prepared for glory? Believe. How does glory come to your own heart? Believe, receive. Joy unspeakable and full of glory.

That's the difference God's grace makes. Please understand, suffering by itself never produces glory. I have seen suffering produce bitterness.

I have stood by the bedsides of people who hated God. But when suffering is mixed with grace and faith, then there's glory. We're born for glory.

And we're kept for glory. And we're being prepared for glory. And right now, we can experience that glory because we've met the Lord Jesus Christ who is the glory.

And He is the hope of our glory. And He went from suffering to glory. And He gives grace and glory.

Oh, do you know Him today? Do you know Him? Have you trusted Him? Are you born for glory? Or are you born for judgment? Are you being reserved for glory or reserved for judgment? Are you being prepared for glory or are you preparing yourself for judgment? I'm glad Peter wrote this letter and sent it to us. I'm glad that he wove into this letter suffering and glory. Suffering and glory.

He's reminded me and I'm reminding you that the cross leads to the crown. The tree leads to the throne. The heaviness leads to that heavenly happiness.

And the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Gracious Father in Heaven, who are we to deserve such a glorious destiny? I pray in Jesus' name for anyone here who has heard the Word, who is not prepared for glory. Save that soul.

May that one come and trust Christ. For that one, O God, who is going through sorrow, remind them, Father, of Your glory. Thank You, Lord, that glory is not some ethereal abstraction of the future.

It is something we experience with joy unspeakable right now. We rejoice. We give thanks.

We worship. We yield ourselves to You, O Lord, to accomplish Your purposes in our lives. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

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