

Scripture:

- Mathew 16: Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah: 13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[c] will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[loosened in heaven.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. Jesus Predicts His Death: 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.
- Hebrews 13:5 - 8: 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” 6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?
- Romans 5 New International Version (NIV): Peace and Hope: 5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Pastor Steven Furtick’s “The Potential of Pain” - Sermon notes:

- This is the “This is US - Jack Person flashback” effect – when we see an encounter that Peter had with Jesus while he was still living – while he was still with us in bodily form – that still echoes with ramifications for our lives today.
- Now let’s share the word of God – and listen with reverence and respect – because the grass withers and the flower fads – and our outfits go out of style – but the word of the Lord endures forever.
- This is a conversation between Peter and Jesus.
- Peter always had something to say – He was always that guy – he was that dude – and many times other people benefited from his ignorance – because Jesus would correct him – and Peter would be the one that would be embarrassed by all of his stupid questions and remarks – he would be that kid in class that would always raise his hand in class to ask a question – where the teacher would say – now what Peter?.

- See Mathew 16: 13 to 16 - we see that Peter for once gets it right – because he does not identify Jesus merely on the basis of the miracles – or the mechanics – or the cosmetics – but rather he sees the potential for what Jesus is as the true messiah - and only the spirit of God could have shown Peter this. In fact, when he said this – Jesus knew that this was not merely Peter talking – but a higher power – not something that comes for the head or mind that tries to figure everything out.
- And When Peter says in vs 16 that Jesus is the Messiah – or the Christ (depending on the translation that we read) – knowing Jesus at a deeper level – Jesus says to Peter: Blessed are you Simon – Son of Jonah – for this was revealed to you by flesh in blood – but rather by my Father in Heaven.
- From that time on, Jesus would explain to his disciples – that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hand of the elders, priests, and the teachers of the law – and that he must be killed and rise on the 3rd day.
- Today I want to speak to you about the “Potential for Pain.”
- Opening Prayer: God we pray for open hearts – we pray for focused minds – we thank you in advance for changed lives – where your spirit is here, there is freedom and liberty – I pray that chains would fall to the floor today – and I pray that people would leave this place with a much different perspective on You and themselves - that would enable them to overcome in your name – by power of your blood and the word of our testimony – we give you praise today in Jesus’ name – Amen.
- I probably should not tell you this today while you are attending church today with your grandmother – But, I have two tattoos and did not get them before I became a Christian. However, they are biblical. One is in Hebrew and the other in my ring finger with my wife and my initials – to make sure that she is locked in.
- When I went to get the first Tattoo that translates to word Honor – it was on a painful spot and when the process was painful when I got it.
- And I probably will not get any more tattoos because I have a low pain tolerance.
- Someone told me that that place that I got the tattoo is one of the most painful places to get a tattoo. Whereby I asked: Why did not tell me that before I got the tattoo? The other person said that I did not tell you this because you probably would not go through with it.
- I wonder if the reason that Jesus waited until this point in his ministry to tell his disciples the truth about what was going to happen to him in Jerusalem – to really start to explain to them what it was going to be like to follow Him – because He knew that if they really knew what it would mean to follow him – they probably would not have gone through with it.
- **I wonder how God works in our lives in stages – only showing us what we can handle at that point in time – because of his infinite wisdom.**
- There is a real tendency to judge Peter – in what we are about to read – as if it was the first time that they heard Jesus talk with such honesty. Prior to this they heard Jesus say things like bring me the bread and heal them - and they had watched Jesus do things like multiply the bread – and heal the lame.
- And as much as we give credit to Jesus for the seeing the potential in Peter, I think we should take a moment to recognize that it took Faith for Peter to see the potential in Jesus - Peter was able to see the undistorted view of Jesus - at a deeper level - that there was something special about this miracle worker - that was unlike the others.
- There was something about the way Jesus moved - not only the way that he spoke but - the way that he prayed - the way that he lived - the way that he led - that drew Peter to believe that this was the one - and he conveyed this not in a way for one of us would say “I believe in you” - it’s very easy to say this if are not invested in someone’s potential - merely only a form of flattery.
- When Peter let Jesus uses boat - his livelihood - and it is unique to me that Peter was the one that saw the potential in Jesus to change everything - in the same way that that Jesus saw the potential in Peter that no one else saw.
- We know this because Jesus called Peter “the rock” - yet there are indications that Peter was a little unstable.

- And we see that Jesus was judging Peter not according to his performance but rather his potential.
- If I were to grab your cell phone right now, I would not be able to use it to its full capacity - I could have a lot of fun with your phone but I don't know all of your contacts - and I can create interesting text messages that could trigger weeks and weeks of interesting conversations – but it is true for the person that possesses the thing – that has an intimate knowledge of its potential - that is unique to the one who possesses it.
- **In the same way there are things that God knows about your potential - that your mother doesn't know - that your father doesn't know - that your best friend doesn't know - I believe that God knows things about your potential that - even in your greatest moments of triumph - you can only imagine - where God speaks not from the vantage point of our performance but rather from a vantage point of your potential.**
- How many people are how many people are grateful today that God sees your potential - when other people want to hold you down to the level of your past - when other people want to hold you down to your worst moment.
- So, Jesus calls Peter a rock even though at this point he is a little bit unstable.
- And we know he is a bit unstable because he just got his “Goldstar” for recognizing Jesus for who he is - as the Christ - the son of the living God - and no sooner does it correctly state who Jesus is that he makes a move that is well above his pay grade.
- See Mathew 16: vs 22 – 23.
- It's amazing how fast Peter goes from a high to a low in one moment – Peter goes from so faith filled - and so accurate in his assessment of Jesus - to making a statement that completely contradicts the purpose of God.
- And this gives us hope - because some of us have vacillated even this morning in the amount of faith that we have.
- You were a different person in the crowded parking lot than you were at the start of the Elevation worship set today.
- And please don't ask me what you are like when you get home - because I only see you in one condition.
- **While we have the greatest potential for power and purpose – we also have the same potential for pain and failure.**
- **And Peter demonstrates this in the text.**
- Right after Peter hears the explanation of what is going to happen to Jesus in Jerusalem, the Bible says that Peter takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him.
- And this is always a bad idea - to explain to the God of the universe as to why His plan is not correct - because it does not conform to our imperfect agenda.
- Peter says “Never Never Lord will this happen”
- the Greek word for never is a strong word. It's an emphatic never - the Greek word is **ou mé**. Phonetic Spelling: (oo may) - Definition: anymore, at all, neither, never.
- It's a double negative and not even grammatically correct.
- Peter is so confident that he knows what God is going to do - where he says never - no never.
- I used to say this all the time about parenting – before I had kids.
- Pastor Steven Classic humorous sarcasm: *“I will never be the kind of dad who screams at his kids that way – never - I would never because what good would that do? To discipline my kids from a station of anger will only create fear and God has not given us a spirit of fear - is only given us power love and a sound mind - and I would never discipline my kids in the spirit that contradicts the very nature of God they seek to represent - I want to be a good father - and I want to project to them an accurate presentation of our father in heaven - so I always correct them from the posture of love - and I would never raise my voice - I will correct them in the same spirit that I'm trying to correct - and always discipline them in a way - while their behavior may be unacceptable - their identity in my love for them are eternally secure.”*
- Now I yell at my kids so much. ☺
- **We can all get this kind of false confidence – and life will challenge our concept of never.**

- I'm well aware that there are people gathered here today that never expected to be found in the situation are in - other people's marriages will fall apart - but not my marriage – never - we will wash one another's feet in the name of the risen Lord. ☺
- I would never talk to my husband that way – never - I would never struggle with that.
- I just don't understand how someone could get hooked on that substance I would never do that - I would never – never.
- Ou me' – however you may. ☺
- Me - I don't get people who struggle with depression – **The bible says to rejoice in the Lord always - give thanks in all things - in all circumstances - this means all things Steven - rejoice in the Lord always - I will rejoice - this is the day that the Lord has made - until something happens in your life that knocks you off balance - and you find yourself in a place that you never expected to be.**
- **Be careful what we judge of people today - it might be knocking on your door tomorrow.**
- I never thought that I would be the one that had to deal with anxiety - and now I can't catch my breath - I never thought that I would think a thought that dark - I didn't have to and I didn't struggle with that in my teens or 20s - however it came out of nowhere.
- Recall the Passover meal - where Jesus says "this is my body is broken for you" talking symbolically about what he's going to do - in about 24 hours - in the disciples cannot comprehend it - and he's telling them not only am I going to die - and none of you will be able to process this information and your faith will fail you - one of you is going to betray me - and the rest of you will not be at the cross when it happens. The disciples were present when they were feeding with bread – and the disciples will be present when the bread of life is broken - and what did Peter say about that? "Even I even if I have to die with you, this will never happen."
- When I first became a pastor, I found that some of the stuff in the Bible was hard to accept at face value – there is really crazy stuff in here like dead people coming up from the ground - so I asked a pastor - do you ever have doubts? In this pastor responded by saying never - I never doubt the Bible – and in two years later he was out of ministry.
- **Is the those people that will not acknowledge their weakness - that are the most susceptible to it.**
- God put on my heart today to preach to people who were in a situation where they never thought they would be struggling - with the thing that they're struggling with.
- We watched other people struggle with something, but we never thought it was going to affect us.
- What do you when you find yourself in a situation that you swore you'd never be in? - That you never imagined?
- **What resurrection does is that it challenges our concept of the word never - It challenges our expectation of never - although I've never seen anyone get up from the ground after being buried - when God says never is very different from when we say never.**
- **And so what God wants to challenge us with this Easter Sunday is our understanding of what is possible - our understanding of what could never happen - because there are many of us have that if given up on our hope - and the word of your life now is never - you will never be happy like they are - you'll never be free from this - what makes you think it is possible for you? - Some of us have reached a point where we say we will never connect - we will never love again - we will never recover from this - we will never heal from this - we will never rebuild - we will never recover from that fall - we will never recover our reputation.**
- **But heaven speaks a different never - I want to show you another never - this never does not come from the mouth of Peter - This never comes from the mouth of God – and is found in Hebrews 13: 5.**
- **And I need all of the Easter people to get ready to shout on this - because after you've been through all that hell has thrown at you - after you have survived the worst possible assault on your faith - in your mind and your sanity - after people have left you - after circumstances have drained you of your human energy - there remains a promise in the word of God - and this isn't Peter's prediction - this is God's promise.**
- **Hebrews 15:5: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."**

- the Greek word is **ou mé**. – they might but God says I won't - this is God's promise - never will I leave you - and never will I forsake you – never no never. God says never will I withdraw my love for you - God will never walk away and give up on the plans He has made for our lives - never no never
- When God says never he means never - and there's nothing that the devil can do about it.
- People can change their minds about our potential - but God never will.
- And this is a different level of hope - this is not the plastic hope - that plastic purple Easter egg hope - like these little plastic purple Easter eggs - their brain pretty but there plastic – and there hollow.
- Our hope is built on nothing less - remember that old Methodist him?
- Our hope is not hollow - our hope is not empty - our hope is not plastic – our hope is not circumstantial
- **See Romans 5:3 – “3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.”**
- Hope in the glory of God is very different from the praise from others - This is different than hoping for kindness in life - this is different than hoping for peace in middle of a circumstance.
- **Now watch this: Our hope is hard-boiled egg hope – where our hope has been through the fire – our hope has been through hell – our hope has been disappointed - and we still found a way to bounce back - and even if it has cracks on the surface - it's still good on the inside - we've got a living hope.**
- It is Easter and He has risen.
- **So, he showed us on the cross how to deal with the penalty of our sin - but that's not all that he showed us - he also showed us how to deal with our pain – to let us know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed.**
- There is great potential in your pain - when God says always, He means always.
- **Because it says that while we were still sinners Christ died for us - not on the basis of our performance - but on the basis of his purpose - now he died for me while we were still sinners - it means he still our Savior even if we continue to sin - and nothing can pluck us from his hand - and nothing can erase our name that is etched on His heart.**
- This is not superstition or sentimentality - by the spirit of God I declare over your life today - God has not changed his mind about you – and your pain cannot negate it – and your mistakes cannot negate it.
- **Closing prayer: I want to close today by praying for people that have been called out by God for their great purpose and their great potential. And at the cross we find a demonstration of God's estimation of your worth. It would be my privilege today - wherever you find yourself in life - and whatever particular brand of pain you bring today - whether it's a relational trial - Jesus experienced that - whether it was temptation - Jesus experienced that as well. Whatever the pain you can name today - know that there is a name is greater than your pain. And I know that there is a name that is greater than your shame. And while we were still sinners, he saw what He put in you - He still sees you according to the original blueprint - no matter how much life has tried to layer it with cynicism and doubt - and addictions & fears - and disappointments - and in rejection. Jesus had to go to Jerusalem - Peter didn't like this and the disciples couldn't understand it. It was the purpose that he came for. I believe that God is working a great purpose in your life in this season. It is what you do with the pain that determines when it becomes. Many people died on crosses at the time that Jesus was crucified. There was nothing different about his cross - it is what he did with his cross - he endured it - for the joy beset before him - scorning the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the father. I want to give an invitation for those that have been brought here today by the spirit of God - he drew here because he wanted you to know - that there is potential in you and will only become real if you trust him and surrender to his will - and this is your moment to do it.**