

June 7, 2020, “The Basis for Our Hope” Bible Studies for Life

We are beginning a new unit of study entitled “Living with Hope in a Broken World.” Because our hope is in Jesus Christ, we can face the challenges of life with confidence. Our hope in Christ strengthens us to stand strong in a broken world. Place your hope in God alone and testify of His hope to the world around you.

When have you been glad you didn't give up?

- when a class I was taking was very hard
- when only half done with the yard work or a building project
- reading the Bible through in a year
- fighting an illness
- applying for a great job
- praying through a tough situation
- working extra to pay off some bills

Florence Chadwick was a champion long-distance swimmer. In 1950, she swam 21 miles across the English Channel. In 1952, she tried to swim 26 miles from Catalina Island to the California mainland. After 15 hours, heavy fog set in, the temperature started to drop, labored breathing and heavy fog caused her to fear she was swimming in circles. She asked to be pulled from the water and then learned she was ½ mile from the mainland. Florence had lost hope of finishing her goal. We too may become weary and discouraged, but we have hope in Jesus Christ. (A story from the student book).

Today's Point: Only hope in Christ is sure and certain.

Our next 6 lessons will be from I Peter. Peter, one of Jesus' twelve apostles, wrote this letter in the early AD 60s to believers in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) who were beginning to face opposition because of their faith. He wrote to affirm their faithfulness and to encourage them to persevere through the persecution they were suffering. They were to keep their faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:1-3 (NIV) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Peter began by identifying himself. He was one on the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus as apostles. He then identified whom he was writing as exiles (temporary residents) dispersed abroad. They had been exiled from Israel. He also referred to them as “those chosen.” In Deut. 7:6, and in 10:15 God spoke of choosing the Israelites to be His special people. Peter was writing to the churches in five Roman provinces which is Modern Day Turkey.

How had Peter's readers been chosen?

- according to God's foreknowledge – He chose us before the foundation of the earth to be holy and blameless in love before Him
- those whom the Spirit sanctified, set apart – the Holy Spirit guides and empowers us to be like Christ
- those in obedience to Jesus – responding to the call of salvation and/or the ongoing process of sanctification

Note the references to each member of the Trinity

- Father – Creator, supreme authority
- Jesus – Lord over humanity and all creation. He is the head of the body of Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the One God sent to establish a new covenant. God showed us mercy by sending His Son to die in our place and then to raise Him from the dead. As believers we are given a living hope.
- The Holy Spirit – reveals God's thoughts, teaches and guides believers in truth, comforter

According to Peter, what moved God to act on our behalf?

- His grace – His limitless love in redeeming the believer through Jesus Christ
- God's peace – Guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

What became available to the believers through the Lord Jesus Christ?

- new birth (salvation)
- a living hope
- an inheritance

What are some things people in our culture hope for?

- their team wins
- they get what they want
- they get that present for Christmas/birthday they've been wanting
- to find that special someone
- soon end to the Covid-19 pandemic

On what do we base these kinds of hopefulness?

- good luck
- a skillful quarterback
- personal effort
- a good doctor
- government help

How does basing your hope on these kinds of things often disappoint?

- they can have bad luck
- the quarterback got hurt
- the weatherman was *wrong*
- the doctor tried his best, our loved one still didn't get well
- no matter how hard I try, I just cannot do it

Peter talks about a “living hope.” What do you think he meant by this phrase? How is it “living?”

- based on a *living God*
- based on Jesus who lived, died, and was *raised again to life*
- a hope that is *not just a wish*
- the object, the basis of the hope is a powerful, sovereign, and loving God
- He has demonstrated those qualities in the redemptive work of Jesus

How do we demonstrate this living hope on a day to day basis?

- ready with a testimony of what God is doing in your life right now
- share how God is providing, even when times are tough
- focusing on God’s working in your life, not on the problems
- quick to thank God ... in every situation

Next, we will be reminded of the eternal inheritance promised to believers.

1 Peter 1:4-5 (NIV) and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter wrote that part of the believer’s new birth in Christ is an inheritance. Receiving an inheritance could be money, land, property or jewelry. Usually it is something that increases our wealth. For the Christian, it means that we inherit salvation and its blessings. Our inheritance can never perish, spoil, or fade away. It is kept in Heaven and will be revealed for the day of judgment. It is guaranteed by God for all those who believe.

Some translations refer to our inheritance as:

- imperishable –it won’t decay, it is secure
- undefiled – it is pure, cannot become defiled by others, shielded by God’s power
- unfading – never lose its glory, never be destroyed, never grow dull

Peter said that his readers would be protected or shielded by God’s power. If so, why did they end up experiencing persecution?

- God allows all kinds of things to happen to different people
- we all have physical, financial, or family problems
- God knew that the coming persecution would bring spiritual growth
- He also knew that this would demonstrate to the world the power of God at work in their lives
- God gave them the power to remain faithful in the midst of the persecution

What are practical ways believers can manage suffering?

- always building your life upon the Truth in God’s Word
- daily time with God ... tell Him your problems, your anguish, your joys, even just the daily events of life
- regular attendance and participation in a church ... worship, study, fellowship within the body of believers.

Next, we will be reminded of the hope that we have, even when suffering occurs.

1 Peter 1:6-9 (NIV) 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 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 honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 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. 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Peter talks about the Christians having to suffer grief in various trials. Sometimes we have to suffer in order to grow our faith. Through our trials and tribulations, we develop endurance that proves our status as Christians.

There are five characteristics of trials:

1. Trials vary in nature – They come in all shapes and sizes.
2. Trials are temporary - Our trials are limited in the face of eternity.
3. Trials are difficult – They can cause pain, grief, or distress. They can drain us physically, mentally, emotionally and relationally.
4. Trials have a purpose – Trials help to grow our faith.
5. Trials should result in rejoicing – “In a loud voice they were saying: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.” Rev. 5:12

How do we respond to our trials?

- complain, grumble
- respond in anger ... get mad at God
- worry, lose sleep
- rebel
- drown sorrows in substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, food, chocolate, etc.)

Even though Peter’s readers had not seen Jesus, they still trusted Jesus was who He claimed to be. They loved Jesus, they believed in Jesus, and they were filled with joy. Jesus is the example of love. We can express the same love toward God and other people through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Christians believed in Jesus even though they had not seen Him. They demonstrated their faith for through their love for and faith in Him. The result of the believers’ loving and trusting Jesus was a deep and abiding sense of joy. Jesus warned His disciples that trials would come, but that His joy would be with them. The indwelling Holy Spirit produces in the Christian a permanent, unshakable joy that is not contingent on momentary feelings, events or experiences. Because of our salvation and the knowledge of Jesus’ return, believers are able to rejoice.

Application

Recognize.

- Admit to *God* the areas where you're losing hope.
- Confess any sin and ask Him to open your eyes to the reality of living hope in *Christ*.

Remember.

- Read through 1 Peter 1:1-9 again and make a list of how Peter described those who follow and trust in *Christ*.
- Place this list in a prominent place to remind you of who you are in *Christ*.

Restore.

- Is there someone the Lord has brought to your mind who is losing hope?
- Take time to call them this week and share the truths the Lord has shown you in this study.