

Living Hope:
Jesus Christ—Our Living Hope
1 Peter 1:1-12

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Text Introduction: Today, we are beginning in what will be essentially a verse by verse study of 1 Peter. We will call our study “Living Hope.” This is a powerful phrase that occurs in 1 Peter 1:4.

The author of 1 and 2 Peter is the apostle Peter that we are familiar with in the Gospels and Acts. During the ministry of Jesus, no other person is more important to the story than Peter. You will remember that Peter was the one who first identified Jesus as being the “Christ, (Messiah), Son of the Living God.” (Matthew 16) Peter is the primary preacher of the early church proclaiming the significance of the resurrection of the Lord. (Acts 2) Peter’s influential background is the backdrop of the importance of these two letters. These letters are written to “those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” That is, these are letters written to Christians who have been scattered perhaps as a result of their beliefs, but not necessarily so. They may have been scattered simply at the whim of the Roman government. Nevertheless, the idea of being a stranger is not only literally true, the idea is also figuratively true for these believers. Peter desires to make the point that as believers they are strangers in this world. Their beliefs are foreign. Here is where the book begins to take on contemporary application for the modern day believer in Christ. We also are strangers in this world. Our beliefs are foreign to the world around us. Our beliefs, desires, and habits of holiness are often thought of as foreign and silly in an unbelieving world.

The purpose of 1 Peter is to encourage the recipients to endure in their commitment to Christ. The description of being aliens in the land in which they live coupled with the general call to endurance throughout the letter suggests the idea that they were suffering from some level of persecution.

Well, let’s dig in to the first chapter and consider today the Person, therefore the Reason, of our Living Hope, Jesus Christ.

Text: Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:

To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials ⁷ so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. ¹¹ They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

Introduction: In 1928 one of our American submarines, S4, sank off the eastern coast on a dive after routine maintenance work. Divers made contact through Morse code. After initial exchange of how many on board, what is your condition etc., the divers received the message from those on board, “Is there any hope?” In the midst of the circumstances, what a penetrating question! Many ask that question about so many circumstances of life. Is there any hope? Is there any hope for my marriage? Is there any hope for my children’s salvation? Is there any hope for my country? Is there any hope for my sin?

I’ve got good news—Jesus is our Living Hope! We have several important principles of hope to note here in the first 12 verses.

Our Living Hope rests in the essence of our salvation.

Our salvation is . . .

- Provided by God’s Grace through Jesus’ Work

Note in verse 3 the phrases, “Because of His great mercy” and “He has given us new birth.”

- Proved by Jesus’ Resurrection

Here is the core truth of this passage. Our hope has been proven by the resurrection—a resurrection believed by Peter with all of his heart.

- Perfected by the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit

Peter, the author of this letter, experienced all of this. In fact, he was an expert. When he was the first to confess that Jesus was the Son of the Living God, Jesus said, “Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, Peter.” When the women came to Peter to report the resurrection of Jesus, Peter took off running to the tomb. And then John reported that it was with Peter that He had a conversation on the beach. Though Peter had denied Jesus before the crucifixion three times, now Jesus was inviting, through a sanctifying work, “Come, follow Me.”

Our Living Hope results in eternal solutions for our temporary struggles.

We notice this truth in verses 4-7. Watch the comparison of our eternal promise and our temporary problems.

- Eternal Inheritance-Guaranteed to be Permanent and Guarded by His Power

So, your promises are safe and you are safe.

- Earthly Trials—Temporary, Refines faith, and Results in Praise

We don't minimize our problems here on earth, but we do need to put them in a proper perspective.

There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three they came across verse three which says, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study. That week the woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that, in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot - then she thought again about the verse, that He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. He explained, "For if the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed."

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's the easy part -- when I see my image reflected in it."¹

Our Living Hope is rooted in a personal relationship to our Savior.

We notice this in verses 9-12.

- Expected by the Prophets
- Envied by the Angels

This is so interesting to me. I bet you didn't wake up this morning thinking that you were the envy of angels. By that, we mean, the angels never experienced this reality of the personal relationship with a Savior through the earthly trials of life, and yet they "long to catch a glimpse of these things."

So What?

Rejoice!

¹ Copied from Internet.

Notice the word “blessed” that begins this passage. Notice “rejoice” in verse 6 and again in verse 8. The joy in Peter’s mind increases as he writes. So, we rejoice because we have a LIVING HOPE!

This is our hope . . .

- Though I might feel lonely, I am never alone.
- Though I might feel overwhelmed, I am never without hope.

Those aboard the Submarine S4 did not survive. Contact was maintained over a couple of days and even up to just a few hours before rescuers finally were able to attach an air line to their compartment. But it was too late. When the submarine was brought to the surface and entered, an amazing discovery was made. On a rack, apparently untouched, was a flask containing a considerable amount of oxygen.

This discovery, apparently unexplainable, gave rise to some very dreadful thoughts. Why did they not use that oxygen? Why did they announce that they were at the end of supplies? Was it because they knew the worst, and did not wish to prolong it? But, as the world knows, only a matter of hours after their last taps were heard an air line was successfully attached to their compartment.

Don’t let it be said of any who are here today that we didn’t reach out to the ONE who is our Living Hope!