

Living Hope:
Living Hope Forever
1 Peter 4:1-10

Dr. Steve Horn

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Text Introduction: We are returning to 1 Peter. “Living Hope” is a phrase that we find in 1 Peter 1:3. Jesus is our Living Hope. This is the Gospel. Our salvation rests in the resurrection of Jesus. Our hope in this life rests in the resurrection of Jesus. I’m looking forward to the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection next Sunday. We have examined in this book that Jesus is not only our Living Hope, He is our only hope. Because of that, we are to live holy, we are to live with hope in a hopeless world, we are to live this hope together as the church, and we are to share this hope with others. We have further learned that this Living Hope calls us to embrace even our suffering. Today, I want to talk to you about how this hope is to be lived forever.

Peter referred to the rest of our lives in the passage before us this morning. Like the book of Hebrews, Peter wrote a letter of encouragement to believers going through persecution. I borrow the lines from *The Daily Walk Bible* as a summary of 1 Peter. “They have been born again to a living hope, and therefore both their character and conduct should be above reproach as they imitate the Holy One who called them. Since they are God’s special people, their lives should be marked by submission to others, producing law-abiding citizens, obedient employees, submissive wives and understanding husbands” (1454). The book ends on a crescendo of exhortation of how we should withstand all forms of opposition.

Text: Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding— because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin— ²in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God’s will. ³For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. ⁴They are surprised that you don’t join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. ⁵They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God’s standards.

The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. ⁸Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins**. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

Introduction: Peter said, “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding. . .” Another translation of the word understanding is “resolve.” Peter is not so much calling us to a life of suffering, as he is pointing us to the suffering of Christ as motivation to live a life pleasing to Him. The key word for me in verse 1 is resolve. I love that word. Resolve is how we move on in most things of life. The truth is that a lot of people want to do what is good and right, but lack the resolve to do that. I want us to give some thought this morning to the rest of our lives. That is one idea that draws us all together. Regardless of our varied backgrounds, personalities, and circumstances, one

thing is absolutely true of every single one of us. **Today, for all of us, is the beginning of what will be the rest of our lives.** Some of us only have a short time to live, who knows, but all of us have the rest of our lives. What are we going to do with the rest of our lives?

P.T. Barnum, the famed circus promoter, is claimed to have said on his deathbed, “How were the receipts today at Madison Square Garden?” He probably had missed the point of this life.

If we are going to live well the rest of our lives, we ought to live with two primary days in view: today and “that day!” We are going to give account on “that day” of what we do with “today.” (Ken Boa)

Let us consider three realities as we ponder the **rest of our lives.**

The Challenge of the Rest of Your Life

What? There are three references to time in this passage. The first is in verse 2—“remaining time.” The second is in verse 3 implied as former life with the phrase “already been enough time.” The third phrase is a reference to eternity in verse 6. The primary emphasis of this text and therefore this message is the “remaining time.” You cannot do anything about the past. God is not concerned with your past, but He is concerned with your future.

How? How do we meet this challenge of the rest of our life?

- Jesus is our example. The idea is that his suffering in the flesh gives us an example. Jesus’ suffering was about much more than example, but it did involve example.
- Jesus is our enabler. Just as His death serves as example, His death also enables our future. Look up at 3:18—“that He might bring you to God.”
- Jesus is our encouragement. Looking at His sacrifice encourages our journey.
- Jesus is our enjoyment. In verse 2 we see the idea of fulfilling God’s will. There is joy in fulfilling God’s will.

The Concept of the Rear-View Mirror of Life

There ought to be some things that the only way you remember them is by looking through the rear-view mirror of life.

Verse 3 is self-explanatory, is it not? For the rest of your life, some things that were much a part of your life can no longer be a part of your life.

Some rear-view mirrors have the warning: “Some objects are closer than they appear.” That kind of warning serves us in our spiritual life as well.

A Clear Word about the Resentment of our Former Friends

- They will be surprised.

The literal phrase is “think it strange.”

- They will slander.

What do we learn from 2 Corinthians 2:14? ¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always puts us on display in Christ, and spreads through us in every place the scent of knowing Him. ¹⁵ For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

What kind of fragrance are you giving off to those who slander you?

- They will stand before God.

The Celebration of Eternal Life

Ultimately, this passage tells us of the celebration that awaits us in eternal life.

So What?

- Pray Big!
- Love Big!
- Serve Big!

“Age conspires with God to take away this temporary hope.”—Ken Boa, Louisiana Governor’s Prayer Breakfast, April 10, 2019