

Our Living Hope

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[0 : 00] Well good morning everyone, it's great to see you at church this morning and it's lovely to be welcoming visitors, newcomers as well, let me add my welcome to you. Please open your Bibles up to 1 Peter chapter 1 and you'll notice in your bulletins this morning there is a bookmark, the idea of that is to put it in your Bibles and there's some key verses there as we go through 1 Peter that will just keep us on track with some key thoughts and key truths from God's Word. So that's for you to have and keep in your Bibles and we'll come to those verses and the key one this morning is that one verse 3, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy, his cause will be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Okay so 1 Peter chapter 1, let's pray. Our Father in heaven thank you that we can hear your Word and as we hear your Word this morning please help us to sit humbly under it but also to be encouraged and spurred on to live to your praise and glory.

For we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. Okay 1 Peter chapter 1, pick it up at verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of dispersion in Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood, may grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you've been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it's tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you've not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, you believe in him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that's inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Well brothers and sisters, everyone needs hope, something to look forward to, for things to get better, that our situation will change for the better one day and without it life becomes hopeless and we can slide into despair.

[3 : 39] The marriage without hope for health will struggle to thrive. The job without some kind of purpose will actually slide and lead to burnout. Life lived in a long groundhog sort of existence, the same thing repeated without any hope of change for the better becomes tedious.

And continuing to push uphill without any hope of getting to the top is soul destroying. It's like riding up Mount Coother.

If you know there's a top just up ahead, it gives you the hope to keep going. And the good news is that Christianity offers real hope, an eternal hope, that will be there and that there is glory to come. That this life is not all there is. That there is hope for something that, and that's everything in the world, everyone in the world needs some kind of hope. And that's something that all of us who trust in Jesus, all of us who have trusted in Jesus, we know and we need to know that we have.

Which is something that Peter wants those he wrote to to remember. He really wants them to remember this. And so we see Peter and his people here. Peter's, 1 Peter, the book of 1 Peter is

written to, by the Apostle Peter, and the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

[5 : 07] Now we know that an Apostle is someone who is, someone who has been a witness to the whole life of Jesus' ministry, from his baptism to his ascension.

That was the nature of an Apostle. In Acts chapter 1 verse 21, when they're replacing Judas, that was a qualification for an Apostle. And we hear in chapter 5 verse 1, how he witnessed the sufferings of Christ.

And in chapter 5 verse 13, he's most likely in Rome, where he actually perished. And we know that he perished there for his loyalty to Jesus. Eusebius, the historian, writes that he was actually crucified upside down.

So he's none other than the Peter, we meet in the Gospels, with all his strengths and weaknesses. This is who this Peter is. Now, just an aside, I have to say it because we need to hear it, there are no Apostles like Peter today.

People who would speak the authoritative Word of God, a new revelation from God. Anyone who says that they are an Apostle of Jesus Christ, like the Apostle Peter was then, are at best deluded or at worst of the devil.

[6 : 26] No one today has been with Jesus from the time of John's baptism to see his ascension. So there are no Apostles today.

Now, Peter was a leader in the church in Jerusalem. He was an Apostle to the Jews, as Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles. We read about that in Galatians chapter 2. Now, an Apostle is someone who's sent with a particular reason, a particular purpose, and Peter, in Peter's case, he is the one who is bringing about the Lord Jesus Christ to people.

He is commissioned by Jesus, the crucified and risen Son of God. He's commissioned by Him. And Peter's writing with a purpose to remind these people what the prophets said and what Jesus commanded.

That's what Peter's doing. Now, the people he's writing to are elect exiles. Now, that's a very apt description of people which sets them apart.

The very word elect means that they are selected, that they are chosen, drawn to God by Himself and chosen from the midst of others, out of the ranks of ordinary people.

[7 : 41] And I think that firmly in Peter's mind is that he's writing to Jews who have become followers of Jesus. I think that's first and foremost in Peter's mind.

To be chosen makes you special. To be chosen by God makes you even more special. Now, if you've been chosen to be a representative of a sporting team for Australia, to represent your country, that's an amazing privilege and an amazing responsibility to have.

If we've been chosen by God Himself to be one of God's people from out of countless other people in the world, now that is something special. That's incredible.

But that's who we are. That's who we are. Now, they're exiles. That is that they are not in their homeland. That's the idea of exiles. It's not that they're enduring punishment from God for something that they have done.

It's more the idea of being a refugee. That's the idea here. Now, right now in the world, there are over 100 million refugees, apparently.

[8 : 53] 120 million refugees, they say in the world right now. That's the highest level of displacement ever on record.

That's twice as many people are refugees now than they were after the Second World War. And refugees know that where they live is not their home.

They've wandered into a foreign land or living in a refugee camp, longing for a better land to live in, longing to return to where they've come from. Now, Peter is telling us that we're not actually living where we should call home.

That's the idea of being a refugee. Where we live right now is only temporary. We're like people that he's writing to who are exiles of the dispersion.

We too are wandering in a foreign land. Australia might be home. You might be an Australian citizen, but it's not our eternal home. which brings up all kinds of Old Testament imagery.

[9 : 59] After the Jews had been forcibly removed from Israel in about the 6th century BC, there were Jews living all over the world, all over the known world at the time. And they never returned home to Israel.

In Acts chapter 2, we read about the coming of the Spirit, that there were Jews from, gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world. Let me just read to you from Acts chapter 2 on the screen behind me here. Now there were Jews, there were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound, the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speaking his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

And how is it that we hear, each of us in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Panphylia, Egypt and parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians.

We hear them telling us in their own tongues the mighty works of God. That group of people who had come from all over the world to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost, heard the first sermon from Peter and became followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[11:16] And as this group of people who became followers of the Lord Jesus Christ went back out to where they came from, taking the good news, gossiping the gospel of Jesus, the risen Lord Jesus who now reigns for all eternity, back where they went.

And so they're told that the kingdom of God has come, which means it's time for people to repent and believe that Jesus is the Lord and Saviour. And so believing Jews went home after Acts chapter 2 and told fellow Jews all over the place.

Acts chapter 11 verse 19 tells us about another group of people who took the message of Jesus back home where they came from into the dispersion. Acts chapter 11 verse 19.

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus, Antioch, and speaking the word to no one except Jews.

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching to the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

[12:21] So we're told after the death of Stephen, who was martyred in Acts chapter 6, that Jews had become followers of Jesus and were dispersed, diasporied, all around, scattered because of the persecution that came after Stephen was killed.

And this scattered, dispersed group, same word, diaspora, only spoke to Jews about the risen Lord Jesus who was King of the Kingdom. So this letter is first and foremost written to Jewish believers. But what's written to them becomes true for all people who are followers of Jesus. And it's this letter from Peter, that's a general letter to no particular church in general, but to people who are followers of Jesus in all kinds of places in the world.

So here's the map where they come from. Have a look at this. There's the map, scattered all over modern day Turkey. That's where they come from. Alright, now what's happened is no surprise to God.

In fact, it was all according to the foreknowledge of God there, you see in verse 2. It all happened according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. God's totally in control of what's happened.

[13:35] These people have been sanctified in the Spirit, you see there, verse 2. They've been made holy. They've been holified. That's what's happened to them. Not that they're becoming more holy, no, but they have been made holy, suitable to be in the presence of God, in the sanctuary of God, and not die.

And the Spirit of God has brought them to repentance and faith in Jesus. The Spirit of God has brought them to submit to Jesus as Lord and has enabled them to hear His Word and believe it. And the purpose of them coming to faith is twofold, you see there. One, for obedience to Jesus Christ, and two, for sprinkling with His blood. Now first of all, as we hear God speak, He's saying that we have a purpose in life.

That is, first and foremost, to live obediently to Jesus Christ as Lord. not to be saved, but because we have been saved, because we have been chosen.

We have been chosen. He's chosen us then to be sprinkled by His blood. Now that's a massive phrase, to be sprinkled with His blood.

[14:54] There are three things that the sprinkling of blood refers to in the Old Testament. Firstly, it's the time of Mount Sinai when the people of Israel were constituted as a nation.

Secondly, it was the ordination rite for the priests when they were sprinkled with blood. And third, it was a time for purification from a skin disease.

Now I think it probably refers to all three because all three are spoken of later in chapter 2 verse 9 where Peter specifically calls the people being addressed as his chosen race. Picks up Exodus 24 where the race was constituted.

A royal priesthood picks up Exodus 29 when the priests are actually scattered and appointed and consecrated. And a holy nation picks up the idea of Leviticus chapter 14 where purification comes about for his own possession.

And then to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. More of that in a few weeks time. But that's our present reality.

[15:59] We are God's holy people called, chosen to be his and we are to be obedient to him. That's our present reality.

And we are to tell the world how grand it is and how good it is to be his people. I hope you feel good about being a Christian. All too often the weight of this world drowns out the reality of who we are and who we belong to and what we're on about.

And now we'll see how much and how good it is to be one of God's people. Have a look at verses 3 to 5 with me. Look at who we are.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope. Look at who we are.

We have been born again. Jesus said we had to be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven.

That's what he said to Nicodemus in John chapter 7. And that's exactly what's happened to us.

[17:12] Notice again it's God who has caused it to happen to us. Which means that we are in the kingdom of God. We didn't contribute anything to it.

But God has brought us into the kingdom of heaven. We've been given a fresh start. Born again. We are now citizens of the kingdom of God. And that's where we belong. That's our homeland now. Our new birth is now into eternal life in the eternal kingdom of God. And this hope is a living hope. It's a real hope. A certain hope. Guaranteed because Jesus Christ himself has risen from the dead. You've kind of got to pinch yourself and not just have this roll over you.

Just catch it again. We have a living hope into eternal life into the eternal kingdom of God.

[18:20] Guaranteed because Jesus himself has risen from the dead. We have something to look forward to. A permanent eternal inheritance.

inheritance. Now I don't know about you but inheritance is something that you look forward to receiving one day. Some of you may have already received an inheritance. For some it might be large.

For some it might be quite small. It's something passed on from generation to generation. It's something that might come in the future.

But there's no guaranteed you'll have one. Now whether you receive one or not things that pass down in this world are perishable. But look at what we look forward to.

It's something that's imperishable. It's far far better. It won't perish. Moths and rust will not corrode it. And our inheritance is undefiled.

[19:23] That is it's pure. It's perfect. It's not corrupted in any way. And our inheritance is unfading. It never loses its lust state. It's always going to be shiny. It will never lose its appeal.

It will always satisfy. It won't wear out. I mean the Tesla will go flat. But this will never wear out. And this inheritance is kept for us in heaven, the dwelling place of God. The true home for true believers. We'll receive it when we get there.

Our inheritance is that of receiving the crown of glory. Chapter 5 verse 4 speaks about it. That's what we get. We are co-heirs with Jesus of all that is his.

That is everything in the new creation enjoying complete holiness. in perfected bodies enjoying all the wonders of the new creation for all eternity.

[20:32] Now that is something worth hanging on to and hanging out for. There's no stress.

There's no tiredness. There's no regret. There's no danger. No threat of persecution.

No thieves. No sickness. But eternal bliss. It never loses its attractiveness. The battery in the toy will never run flat.

And all this is kept in heaven waiting for us. And we are being guarded by God. You see there in verse 5. The good news is that we are guaranteed to get there.

Did you get that? We are guaranteed to get there. For God himself is guarding us, constraining us, bringing us home. we are being guarded by God's power.

Just there in verse 5. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[21 : 35] The one who made the universe, the one who created everything and everything in it, the one who raised Jesus from the dead, he is our bodyguard.

He is going to be protecting us from the sniper, from the one who would want to attack us and bring us down.

And if God is guarding us, then nothing and no one in all the universe is more capable than him to protect us from anybody in the universe.

There is no doubt whether we will get there or not, whether this inheritance will be there or not. We are guarded and it's guarded. If you're looking for hope, then God in his word is giving it to us, reminding us again and again of how good it is to be one of his people and what we have to look forward to.

And even while our experience is currently one of, missing out on it, not enjoying life necessarily, finding it tough to get going, there's every reason to keep pressing on for we are waiting and waiting with a certain hope for the salvation, this rescue, is yet to be seen.

[23 : 05] The last time will be one day be our experience. it's not our experience yet, but it's coming. Guaranteed, yet not yet received.

And so, with that foundation, we're able to rejoice because we have this living hope. And knowing this, being reminded this, in the midst of various trials, we have joy in spite of suffering.

and we're living in this certain hope. I want to point out a few things about these trials. Have a look at it with me there. In this you rejoice, verse 6, though now for a little while it's necessary for you have been grieved by various trials.

Notice about these trials, they're only for a little while. Alright? The trials will not last forever. At most, they can last for a lifetime.

That's a long time, I know. But in a scale of eternity, that will be an infinitely short period of time.

And only shorter the longer we're there in the perfect kingdom of God.

[24 : 24] And secondly, these trials are according to the will of God, if necessary. These trials are according to God's wise will.

They are as necessary, that it's according to God's will. These trials are not a mistake. They're according to God's will. There is a reason for them.

They're according to God's purposes. And that is, you see in the very next verse, to prove our faith. See verse seven. So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, that perishes though it's tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Suffering hurts, causes grief which is emotional, and grief can be lifelong, but it need not overwhelm us. We can simultaneously have grief and joy.

There are various kinds of trials, but the trials have a purpose, to prove our faith is genuine. And as we persevere in the midst of these trials, that is a sure sign that your faith is genuine.

[25 : 50] And this faith, which being given, which we exercise, is more precious than gold. Money can't buy what faith has given us.

Can you see that in verse 7? For faith brings glory and praise, not shame and cursing.

Faith brings what money can never buy. And there's glory to come, verse 8 and 9. Have you noticed how future-orientated these verses are?

And it's all when Jesus Christ is revealed. Do you notice this passage doesn't talk about Jesus coming? It talks about Jesus being revealed, verse 5.

Who by God's power being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed at the last time. And in verse 7, may found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 56] Jesus is going to be revealed, disclosed, seen for who he really is. Jesus now reigns in glory. He's there and he's worthy of our praise.

We just can't see it right now, but he's there. Right now it's like we've moved in from the outside of the concert hall waiting to get in. We're in the seats now and the stage is set and the curtains closed.

We're sitting in the seats, everything's on the stage, ready to happen. People are waiting in eager anticipation for the curtains to open and the show to begin. And then the show that we've been all waiting for will begin. Now, right now Jesus has been raised, he's seated on the throne, he's there, we just can't see it yet with our physical eyes. what we're waiting for is ready to begin, ready to be revealed and one day the curtain will be rolled up like a scroll and we will join Jesus on centre stage and continue reigning with him for all eternity in the new heaven and the new earth and we'll enjoy eternal salvation with him for all time which can never be taken away from us, singing his praises for all eternity. [28 : 20] which is what we could be doing right now for we haven't seen him yet but we love him. We don't see him now but we rejoice in joy because we are confident that our very being is being saved, saved in this world of woe in which we are foreigners, aliens if you like, living in exile and notice the great privilege we have there in verses 10 to 12.

You can see in this salvation we are in a very privileged situation. Did you know that you and I are better off than the prophets of old and we're better off even than the angels? Christians? That's how better off we are, how privileged we are, it's true. Look at verses 10 to 12 with me. There's so much to dig into here about other things but notice the prophets inquired carefully about the things that they wrote about but they didn't know the personal times they were writing about.

the Holy Spirit was in them so they wrote and spoke about the Christ's suffering and the glories it would follow but they didn't understand or get what they were writing about.

What they wrote is actually serving us more than serving them. We who live this side of the resurrection are in a far, far better situation than the prophets of old or even the angels.

[30 : 04] the Holy Spirit was at work in the prophets as it worked through those who preached the good news, the message of Jesus Christ who was risen from the dead and what's been revealed to us, what's been described to us, even the angels of heaven are trying to fathom and understand, to know, to see clearly what's been made known to us.

We're in a far, far better situation than the people before Christ. We're in a far, far better situation than the prophets and we are in a far better position than even the angels when it comes to knowing God's plans and purposes for the world in Christ Jesus.

So we live in a certain hope. I think 1 Peter is kind of one of my favourite books of the Bible because of how it addresses our present reality in the light of the glories to come.

So we can live with hope because the one we're relying on for that hope is himself alive. We don't rely on a dead person to save us or a mythical figure to save us.

We rely on a real person, Jesus, who suffered, which is all about his sacrificial death for us. We heard of that last week over the Mission Minor weekend and he has been glorified by being raised from the dead to reign for all eternity.

[31 : 33] We live in hope, knowing that there is life to come that's far, far better than this world can ever offer. Knowing that whatever trials that come that we endure and what God thinks is necessary will be short and ultimately prove our faith.

And that the inheritance will be worth waiting for no matter what might come our way before it comes. So we, like Peter, can break out into spontaneous praise and regular praise.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again into a living hope to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and into an eternal evidence that can never perish, spoil or fade.

Kept in heaven for us. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, thank you for the great treasure stored up for us in heaven, the great hope that that gives us.

Thank you for your word that you've revealed these things to us, that we can understand the things that people of the past only dreamed of knowing about. And please help us to declare your praise every day on our lips to all who might hear.

[32 : 47] We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.