

Know What You Have 1 Peter 1:3-

ETS: Peter reminded believers what God has given them as they endure suffering

ESS: Remembering what God has given you will help you endure suffering

OSS: I want people to remember what they have been given

PQ: Where is your hope?

UW: HOPE

ME

Why do people buy products? Because of the **promise!**

- Geico: “15 minutes or less can save you 15% or more on car insurance.”
- BMW: “The Ultimate Driving Machine”
- Apple: “Think different.”
- Walmart: “Save money. Live better.”

What makes a label a false advertisement?

- Doesn't deliver what is promised!
 - Doesn't contain the amount promised
 - Doesn't fix the problem it claims to fix

EX. Products which failed to deliver

- AIG: "The strength to be there." This campaign was wisely discontinued after the company was bailed out during the 2008 financial crisis.
- Fannie Mae: "Our business is the American dream." Fueled the sub-prime mortgage crisis by backing lots of mortgages that went bad during the housing bust.

We purchase products because of a Promise of a better future!

Why do people elect politicians?

- Promise of a better future!
- Low unemployment?
- Higher wages for all?
- Equality of opportunity?
- Health Insurance for all?
- Eradication of institutional injustice?

There is one word behind why we **purchase products**, elect politicians, and make decisions: **HOPE**

- We hold out “**HOPE**” for a **cure**
- We hold out “**HOPE**” that we **will get hired**
- **WE HOPE** that things will **turn around**

We have HOPE because

- HOPE **inspires** us
- HOPE **moves us** to action

- HOPE **energizes** us
- HOPE keeps us moving forward

When we **lose** HOPE, we **give up**

When we **lose** HOPE, we **stop pushing ahead**

When we **lose** HOPE, we **feel the weariness**

WE

I hope I'm wrong, but I believe we are living in an **increasingly hostile environment** against true **Christians**.

- **VIDEO** St. Joseph's Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio.
 - Turned off Audio due to profanity, but they are saying

In the book, [*Prejudice in the Press?: Investigating Bias in Coverage of Race, Gender, Sexuality and Religion*](#) *Paperback* – November 13, 2018, George Yancey and Alicia Brunson found evidence that

- The **media** are *less sympathetic* to stories where Christians face hate speech or violence than identical stories where other groups are victimized.
- **Social institutions** such as **academia, media, entertainment**, and the arts are likely to be places

where **anti-Christian prejudice** and **discrimination** take place.

The authors noted that “Those institutions greatly shape our cultural values, and thus those with anti-Christian attitudes are in a position to create and sustain anti-Christian perspectives.”

If we are in an **increasingly hostile environment** toward Christ-followers,

- How do we keep moving forward with the Gospel?
- How do we keep from living in fear?

GOD

Turn to 1 Peter

PETER and the **original readers** are in an **increasingly hostile environment**

Peter’s audience was being **labeled** by those **outside** the church.

- Atheists
- Cannibals
- Anti-social
- Incestuous
- Anti-Patriotic

How can these people keep moving forward with the Gospel?

How can these people keep from living in fear?

How can these people keep from quitting?

1 Peter 1:3-5 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Here is WHY Peter starts off with this **praise** of God the Father....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.”

When you face **hostility** for your faith, remember...

GOD HAS GIVEN BELIEVERS A LIVING HOPE

WHO has God given this “living Hope” to?

- **Verse 1:** Those who are **Chosen**

HOW does one get “**Chosen**” by God?

- You place your faith and trust in Christ to save you from the penalty of your sins

As I said last week,

- Christ is the captain of the team
 - You must realize your need to be on His team (Humility)
 - You must repent of your sin (Repentance)
 - You must ask Christ to save your soul (Faith)
- When a person does those things, Christ “**Chooses**” them to be a member of His family
 - God **foreknew** that He would “**Choose**” those who placed their faith and trust in Him
 - God knew that he would “**sanctify**” (purify) those whom He had **Choose**
 - The **Holy Spirit** would **purify** those whom God Choose by the application of the **blood of Christ** on their sins

Peter is writing this letter to **believers**—those who are “**Chosen**.”

Peter praises God for WHAT God has “**GIVEN**” to us!

- **1 Peter 1:3** “Because of his great mercy he has given us **new birth** into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

WHEN a person

- Responds to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and
 - humbles himself/herself before God and
 - ask God to save him/her
- God literally “**Causes**” them to be **reborn!**
 - “**New birth**” = New life
 - The **old** way of life is gone, the **new** life has come!

A believer has new labels—a new identity!

- Chosen
- Sanctified
- Exile

A believer is NO LONGER a citizen of this world!

WHY does God cause us to be reborn?

- The reason: God’s “**great mercy**”
 - **Mercy = NOT getting what we deserve**
- No one **deserves** “Rebirth”
- No one can **earn** “Rebirth”

We are “**Given new birth**” simply due to God’s **mercy!**

- We did not **EARN** our salvation; therefore we don’t have to work to **KEEP** our salvation!
 - Our salvation is a **GIFT** from God that was given freely to all who will believe!

WHAT are we “Born” into?

- Peter says we are “given new birth into a **LIVING HOPE**”

Remember, this “**LIVING HOPE**” is *NOT* for everyone!

- It is **only** for those who are **chosen**—those who believe!

I see a lot of angry people today!

- Rioters are still burning down Portland, Oregon
 - According to the **New York Times**, this is due to years of inaction over climate change, economic disparity and systemic racism.

I see a lot of people who are scared of what the future may bring

Believers are NOT to live in FEAR because we have been “given new birth into a living hope!”

WHAT is “HOPE”?

John Piper noted that there are three **ways** we use the word “**Hope**”

- **Way #1:** Hope is the desire for something good in the future.
 - “I hope we will be safe”
- **Way #2:** Hope is the **good thing** in the future that we are desiring

- “I hope our country will be at peace”
- Way #3: Hope is the **reason** why our hope might indeed come to pass.
 - “A good tailwind is our only hope of arriving on time.” In other words, the **tailwind** is the **reason** we may, in fact, achieve the future good that we desire. It’s our only hope.

What is the reason that Peter calls this a “**living hope**”?

- **1 Peter 1:3** “**Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**”
 - Peter was an **eyewitness** of the resurrected Christ
 - When Peter wrote this, there were **hundreds of living eyewitnesses** of the resurrected Christ!
 - They could visit the **tomb**
 - They could ask **Joseph of Arimathea** who owned the tomb
 - They could ask the **enemies** of Jesus to prove that He was still dead!
 - If the **reason** for this hope (the resurrection of Christ) cited by Peter were not true, it could have been **easily refuted**!

Peter adds a **present active participle** to this “**Hope**”!

- This is something believers are experiencing NOW!

What are we experiencing now? -a “LIVING Hope”!

- Lit. A “lively” hope!
 - Our “Hope” is *not* a **dead, empty hope**, but one that is “**lively, active and life-giving**” for the believer.
 - Our “hope” energizes us!

How is this “hope” energizing?

- Built on the **evidence** of the **resurrection!**
 - The **resurrection** is the **demonstration** of God’s **power over sin and death!**
 - The resurrection proves that we serve a Living Savior
 - Our Living Savior is at **work** in our hearts
 - Our Living Savior is our **advocate**
 - Our Living Savior is **returning!**

Living Hope is an **eager, confident expectation** energized by the **evidence** of Christ’s resurrection that what is **promised will come true!**

- This is why the apostle Paul wrote “**if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith.** (1 Cor. 15:14)

Again, our faith is not built on a philosophy such as “Be a good person” or “Make sure your good outweighs your bad” or “Give to the poor and you’ll achieve eternal life” Instead...

- Our faith is built upon an PERSON, Jesus Christ
- Our faith is built upon the EVENT: the resurrection of Christ from the dead!

If Christ is NOT raised from the dead, then you do not have “living hope.”

- The evidence is all there—Christ is risen from the dead!

When you face **hostility** for your faith, remember...

GOD HAS GIVEN BELIEVERS A LIVING HOPE FOR AN INHERITANCE

1 Peter 1:3-4 “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.

- Notice the two things God has “given us.”
 - God has “given us a living hope” (v. 3)

- God has “**given us an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.**” (v. 4)

HOW do you receive an inheritance?

The most common way is to be **born into** or **adopted** into a family.

- When the parents die, it is the children who are first in line to receive an inheritance.

Can you imagine being the **oldest son** in a family of great wealth in Peter’s day?

- As you become an adult you begin taking over the **family business**.
 - You are **making money**, you are **going to inherit** a lot of money and many beautiful things.
 - However, **one day you hear the Gospel** and God begins to draw you to Himself.
 - You **respond** to His plea and ask Jesus Christ into your heart and God **“Chooses”** you.

Soon, you realize that you can **no longer attend** the **pagan ceremonies** at the local temple of **Zeus**.

- You begin to have some **misgivings** about the areas of your business that **do not honor** God and you become **convicted** that things must change.

You tell your family that you will **no longer be attending the temple**, but instead, will be meeting with a group of people in a **house** down the street on Sundays.

- You announce your intent to **reform** areas of the business that are in **conflict** with your new found faith.
 - *The family appears shocked and stunned.*

A few weeks later your father approaches you along with your younger brothers.

- He informs you that you are **no longer in charge** of the business and that your religion is hurting the family.
- He **fires you** and then to add insult to injury tells you that you **no longer have a part** in the family and that you will not be a part of the inheritance.

Suddenly, life as you thought it would be goes up in smoke in an instant because of your faith in Jesus Christ. While you can't help it, in the back of your mind *you wonder if God would not do the same thing to you if you ever give Him a reason to be angry with you.*

Due to the growing **hostility**, many believers may be wondering if God had cast them aside!

- *When times get tough, it is easy to wonder if we have made God mad or if God has abandoned us!*

Dealing with hostility due to your face is NOT because God has abandoned you!

- Remember, we are in a spiritual war
 - You are a **member of the opposition**; you are **counter-cultural**.

We must remember that although life may be tough and even if we lose all that have in this world, there is a **much better reward** awaiting them in heaven.

WE have a better future waiting for us! While it may not be apparent in our English Bibles, to help the original readers remember this truth, Peter **used three words that all begin with the same letter to and ending with the same syllable** to illustrate what is waiting on us in heaven.

We have an **inheritance** waiting on us and this inheritance

AN INHERITANCE THAT IS *IMPERISHABLE!*

Peter likes this word translated “**imperishable.**”

- In fact, he uses it **two other times** in this letter. **1 Peter 1:23 & 3:4**

Why does Peter use the word “**imperishable**” three times in this relatively short letter?

- Peter is reminding his readers (and us) that what we have waiting on us cannot be destroyed—it is an immortal inheritance!

In a world of **death and destruction**, we dream of things going on forever!

- We want that **vacation** on the beach to last forever!
- We want that **new home** to stay new forever!

REALITY: Due to Sin, death and destruction are a part of our world!

- No amount of technology is going to change that reality
 - We cannot reverse the third LAW of Thermodynamics!

Our “**new birth**” gives us a “**living hope**” and results in an inheritance that is **immortal, indestructible** waiting on us!

We have an **inheritance** waiting on us and this inheritance

AN INHERITANCE THAT IS *UNDEFILED!*

Our future inheritance is **pure** and **untainted** by **sin**.

- Everything we have here on earth is tainted by sin.

One of the greatest joys of heaven is freedom from the struggle against sin!

- In **heaven** we no longer possess a sinful nature
 - We will no longer feel the **pull** of sin
 - We will no longer be faced with **temptation** to sin
- It is difficult for us to conceive of this future reality!

Some people wonder how **Christ** could have **been without sin**

- We know Christ was without sin not just because the **apostles** state that **“He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth;”** (1 Peter 2:22)
- We know Christ was without sin not just because His enemies could not convict Him of sin (John 8:46)
- We know Christ was without sin not because He **did not possess a sinful nature!**
 - The **virgin birth** of Christ attests to this reality!
 - Jesus was not born of the **“seed of man”** but was conceived of by the Holy Spirit.

Part of the inheritance of our “new birth” is that we have an inheritance waiting on us that is “**undefiled**”

We have an **inheritance** waiting on us and this inheritance

AN INHERITANCE THAT IS *UNFADING!*

As a result of being **tainted by sin** everything **decays**.

- That **house** you inherit is tainted by sin and is fading
 - How do I know? Because you have to constantly work on it to keep it up! You have to fix the plumbing and repaint, etc.
- The **car** you may inherit is tainted by sin and is fading
 - Everything on this earth that we **inherit** or **struggle to attain** ultimately **fades** away. That is just a fact of life!

But that is NOT the case with our FUTURE inheritance that we are promised.

We have an **inheritance** waiting on us and this inheritance is... **kept in heaven for you”**

Our inheritance in “**kept in heaven.**”

- Is sin in heaven? No!
- Is there persecution in heaven? No!

- Do things fade away in heaven? No!
- Are there things in heaven like moths and rust which corrupt things? No!

Our inheritance in “kept in heaven.”

- It is **safe** from those who are **hostile** toward you
- It is **safe** from any **government**

This all sounds wonderful, but what guarantee is there that we will receive our inheritance?

- When we face hostility—which may result in losing everything—we can easily fall into depression!
 - We can begin to despair about the future!
 - We can start to feel like there is no hope!

Peter understands that feeling so he reminds us of a fact about our future inheritance: **1 Peter 1:4b-5** “You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Notice the shift from the inheritance back to the **believer**: “YOU are being guarded by God’s power....”

That word “**guarded**” is used to describe something being **protected** by a **military guard** that was **posted inside** a city to **prevent the city** from a hostile invasion.

- (Like the 26,000 military personnel posted inside Washington, CD. Praise God, nothing happened!)

Peter is telling us that **God's Power protects us from *within*.**

- God has taken up **residence in you** and He **protects** you and **preserves** you for your inheritance of salvation.
 - **Nothing, nothing, nothing can steal your salvation.**
 - You are protected from within by God's power.

What does Peter mean when he says that we are guarded “**for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time**”?

- Peter is telling his audience (and us), that while we are saved now, we will one day reap the ultimate reward of our salvation.
 - The “Last time” is when all judgment is completed and we receive our inheritance.

WE

What Peter is telling us should empower us to keep living for Christ-even in the face of hostility!

The people in Peter's day were facing increasing hostility.

- Nero started persecution Christians.
- Later, emperors such as Diocletian unleashed even greater persecution upon the believers

Here is a real account of a Christian facing persecution who understood and applied what Peter taught!

Pliny, Roman Governor in Asia Minor in the early Second Century, was **puzzled** about the Christians brought before him for trial. Pliny was so puzzled that he wrote his famous letter to the **Emperor Trajan** asking for his **advice**. In his letter, Pliny gave a **description** of what he **was encountering**:

In his letter, he talks about a certain **unknown Christian** was brought before him, and Pliny, *finding little fault in him*, proceeded to threaten him.

- “I will banish you,” he said.
 - “You canst not,” was the reply, “for all the world is my Father’s house.”
- “Then I will slay you,” said the Governor.
 - “You cannot,” answered the Christian, “for my life is hid with Christ in God.”

- “I will take away your possessions,” continued Pliny.
 - “You cannot, for my treasure is in heaven.”
- “I will drive you away from man and you shalt have no friends left,” was the final threat.
 - And the calm reply once more was, “Thou cannot, for I have an unseen Friend from Whom thou art not able to separate me.”

Pliny, asked “What was a poor, harassed Roman Governor, with all the powers of life and death, torture and the stake at his disposal, to do with people like that?”

YOU

PQ: Where is your hope?

If your hope is in this world

- You will be **disappointed!**
- You will give into the hostility and live in **fear** and **depression**
- You may even be tempted to **recant** your faith (You may even recant your faith!)

If your hope is in this world, you will miss the

- Joy of serving Christ in midst of suffering
- Ability to grow and mature in your faith

- Opportunity to make an impact for the cause of Christ
- Opportunity to be “salt and light” in this world!

PQ: Where is your hope?

The way you are **responding** to the **events unfolding** before us right now is a good indicator of where you have your hope!

- If you are “**wringing your hands**” then your HOPE is in the wrong place!
 - This earth is NOT your home!

PQ: Where is your hope?