

Living With Hope  
September 2, 2012  
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1 Peter 1:1-12

Opening Question: Let's start with a poll. How many folks have lived in the same town all their lives? Okay. How many have moved around a lot in your lives? What was difficult about moving around a lot?

It's tough to move to a new place. Tougher still to feel like a STRANGER when you get there. The book of 1 Peter was written to BELIEVERS in Christ who were both STRANGERS and PILGRIMS. They were not only far from home; they were persecuted because of their faith. This letter was written to ENCOURAGE them that Christ is our HOPE in the midst of SUFFERING and TRIALS.

1 Peter 1:1–12 (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, 4 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. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

- We know from the name of the book, and the first words of verse one, it was written by Peter an "apostle" (one sent with authority).

- Peter was a "special" apostle -- When the 12 apostles are named in scripture Peter is always mentioned first.
- Peter had some help writing this book from Silas (According to 1 Peter 5:12).
- This is the same Silas who traveled with, and was jailed with the Apostle Paul.
- Silas was “one of the “chief men” in the early church (Acts 15:22) and a prophet (Acts 15:32). This means that he communicated God’s messages to the congregations as he was directed by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 14).
- Let’s see to WHOM was this letter was written.
- Verses 1 & 2 - What are the terms Peter uses to describe TO WHOM this letter was written? (Various translations...but the same meaning.)
- "elect exiles" "dispersion" "foreknowledge of God" "sanctification of the Spirit" "for obedience"
- The KJV puts it simply: "strangers scattered" who are "elect" - BELIEVERS in Christ.
- The doctrine of ELECTION is important, but that’s another lesson.
- In what ways do you think these believers were STRANGERS or EXILES? How are WE as CHRISTIANS like these people?
- Not only were they EXILES from their homeland, they...like we “...are called “strangers and pilgrims” in 1 Peter 2:11. These people were citizens of heaven through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:20), and therefore were not permanent residents on earth.” [Wiersbe]
- As the old song says: “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through...”

The INTRODUCTION to 1 Peter from the ESV Bible says of these PILGRIMS:  
*The readers of the apostle Peter’s letter were confused and discouraged by the persecution they were encountering because of their faith. Peter exhorted them to stand strong, repeatedly reminding them of Christ’s example, the riches of their inheritance in him, and the hope of his returning again to take them to heaven. Peter explained how Christians should respond when they suffer because of their beliefs. Called the “apostle of hope,” Peter’s primary message is to trust the Lord, live obediently no matter what your circumstances, and keep your hope fixed on God’s ultimate promise of deliverance. Suffering is to be expected, but it is temporary and yields great blessings for those who remain steadfast.*

- So we know WHO wrote this letter; and TO WHOM it was written; let’s get to WHAT Peter was writing about.
- Verse 3 Peter begins with PRAISE to God! Specifically, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- Verse 3: What are the specific REASONS he gives in verse 3 that they had (and we have) to PRAISE God?
  1. We PRAISE God because of His GREAT MERCY. "According to his great mercy"
  2. We PRAISE God because of His PLAN of SALVATION "he has caused us to be born again"
  3. Because of God’s MERCY and SALVATION, we can PRAISE Him for the LIVING HOPE we have.
- Why did Peter call it a LIVING hope in verse 3? The verse say it’s “living hope”...“through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"

- What credibility did Peter have to call it a LIVING HOPE? He had SEEN Jesus after His resurrection!

Warren Wiersbe writes:

*"...it is a living hope because it is grounded on the living Word of God (1 Peter 1:23) and was made possible by the living Son of God who arose from the dead."*

Chuck Swindoll writes:

"Just as the light of day displaced the darkness in that empty tomb nearly two thousand years ago, so the light of hope can fill all our hearts with joy, driving out the shadows of despair."

Wiersbe continues...

*A "living hope" is one that has life in it and therefore can give life to us. Because it has life, it grows and becomes greater and more beautiful as time goes on. Time destroys most hopes; they fade and then die. But the passing of time only makes a Christian's hope that much more glorious. (Emphasis mine)*

Did you get that last part? If we are BELIEVERS in CHRIST the longer we live, and the closer we get to Heaven...the more "glorious" our LIVING HOPE is!

When I witness the PEACE of an elderly SAINT of God, it's obvious to me the longer they've lived for Christ, the more they treasure the HOPE WE ALL HAVE as believers.

- That word "hope" translates: "to anticipate, with pleasure; expectation; or confidence."
- What about YOU and ME? Do we slow down to ANTICIPATE our HOPE OF HEAVEN? Do we anticipate it with pleasure; expectation; and confidence?
- (Illustration: Thomas Watson founder of IBM -- "THINK!") We should post: "HOPE!"
- Verse 4: What are we promised in verse 4? "an inheritance" - (We're 'trust fund' kids!)
- How does Peter DESCRIBE our inheritance? "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven"
- What do those words mean?
- Everything in our human existence is "perishable, defiled, and fading"
- Our bodies; our relationships; our stuff...
- It all perishes...it's all defiled (unpure) in some way...it all fades. BUT, not our INHERITANCE, it is SAFELY KEPT for us IN HEAVEN!
- Verse 5: What PROMISE do we have in verse 5?
- YOU are "by God's power...being guarded through faith for salvation..." What do we call "being guarded through faith for salvation"? ETERNAL SECURITY
- Because of GRACE through FAITH, I don't have to try to SECURE ETERNITY in MY power...it's GUARDED "by God's power."
- In case we missed it, in verse 6, Peter reiterates that we have REASON TO REJOICE because of our INHERITANCE and LIVING HOPE.
- Then he SHIFTS with the word "though" - "though now for a little while..."
- Peter is saying, I've REMINDED you about REJOICING in your INHERITANCE and HOPE because of what's going on in your lives.

- In verse 6, what does Peter acknowledge was going on in the lives of these "SCATTERED BELIEVERS"?
- VARIOUS TRIALS or all kinds of trials - In this case Peter was referring to being PERSECUTED for their faith. But, this text applies to TRIALS of all kinds.
- Let me circle back to that phrase "for a little while" -- trials are for a "season."
- Verse 7: According to Peter, what's the OUTCOME of our various TRIALS?
- The GENUINNESS of our FAITH is tested.
- Think about any kind of STRUCTURE. Let's say a BRIDGE, for example.
- If they build a bridge and we want to see how strong it is, how would we test it?

Graduate students at Oregon State University experimented with a new technique to see "exactly how much force it takes to break a pair of massive steel connecting plates used in bridge construction."

Using immensely powerful hydraulics [on] a 6-foot-thick concrete slab in the Hinsdale Wave Research Lab, the team gradually cranked up the pressure on an elaborate mockup of a section of freeway bridge until the heavy steel plates groaned once, twice, then crumpled like an empty beer can.

Preliminary measurements from the test showed the connecting plates failed under about 300,000 pounds of force — and failed just the way a computer model predicted it would.

The information is important, [they said], because it can be used to prevent another tragedy like the one that happened in Minneapolis in 2007, when an overloaded connector on a busy freeway bridge failed. [http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/article\\_a257f55e-f21f-11df-93d5-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/article_a257f55e-f21f-11df-93d5-001cc4c002e0.html)

- If you want to know how strong something is you LOAD IT UP WITH PRESSURE.
- Peter said, if you want to test the GENUINNESS OF YOUR FAITH...see how it holds up under VARIOUS TRIALS.
- Peter tells us a few things about trials: [Wiersbe OT Commentary p.896]
  - Verse 6: Peter said "if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,"
  - Sometimes trials discipline us when we have disobeyed God's will (Ps. 119:67). At other times, trials prepare us for spiritual growth, or even help to prevent us from sinning (2 Cor. 12:1–9). We do not always know the need being met, but we can trust God to know and to do what is best.
  - Peter also tells us: trials are not easy. He said we are "grieved" by trials. "The word means "to experience grief or pain." It is used to describe our Lord in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37) and the sorrow of saints at the death of loved ones (1 Thess. 4:13).
  - Peter also tells us trials are CONTROLLED BY GOD. Unlike the bridge "testers", God will not allow trials to CRUSH US.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

*"[Trials] do not last forever; they are "for a season." When God permits His children to go through the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. If we rebel, He may have to reset the clock, but if we submit, He will not permit us to suffer one minute too long."*

- Question: How should a BELIEVER IN CHRIST change our FOCUS to get through trials?
- Verses 8 & 9 tell us it's all about FOCUSING on JESUS and not our TRIALS:

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- An UNBELIEVER might ask: "How can you trust a God (and His son Jesus) who you can't see? Fair question. Thoughts on how to answer that?"
- It's like the lyric to the old song: "You ask me how I know He LIVES...He LIVES within my heart." (Old Gospel song "My God Is Real...for I can feel Him in my heart!")
- We can walk by "FAITH and not by SIGHT" because of the CHANGE He's made in the BELIEVER's heart. Verse 8 talks about JOY: How would you define or describe the biblical concept of joy?

*"Biblical joy does not depend on circumstances. Joy is inseparably connected to love and trust. Even during pain, the fullness of joy comes from a deep sense of the presence of God in our lives. We can experience joy in suffering when we believe our suffering has a redemptive or refining purpose."* — Holman New Testament Commentary – I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude.

Romans 5:3–5 (ESV) Paul writes:

3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

So, What's the Takeaway?

Chuck Swindoll summarizes nicely the SIX REASONS WE CAN REJOICE THROUGH SUFFERING shown in verses 3-9

We can REJOICE because...

1. A living hope (V.3) - *"Because He rose from the grave, we, too, will be raised like Him in glorified bodies to dwell in a new heaven and new earth for all eternity."*
2. A permanent inheritance (V.4) - Swindoll says we don't have to worry if they'll have our RESERVATION in Heaven *"...after your long, painful journey in this life, the living God will welcome you home without an inch of red tape."*
3. A divine protection (V.5) - *"We can rejoice in suffering because we are 'protected by the power of God.'"*
4. A developing faith (V.6-7) - *"We can rejoice in the midst of various trials because they bring about a growing, strengthening faith."*
5. An unseen Savior (V.8) - In our trials we can have *"confidence in the unseen power of Christ."*
6. A guaranteed deliverance (V.9) - For BELIEVERS in Christ, *"The salvation of our souls is GUARANTEED."* (Insights on 1 Peter - Charles R. Swindoll)

- One last point. People might say, “I’ve tried to ‘have joy.’ I’ve tried to pray, read the Bible, all that. I still don’t have joy.” The secret is back in verses 8 & 9:
- “you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the **end result** of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- We don’t “HAVE” joy...we RECEIVE joy through a relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and LORD. Do you know him?