**A LIVING HOPE**

1 Peter 1:1-2:3

Key Verse 1:3

**“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 …”**

**Introduction**

 After several meetings among our coworkers, we decided to study the book of 1 Peter for our coming UBF Summer Bible Conference. The author, Peter, encouraged scattered believers who had been suffering all kinds of trials to have a living hope in the kingdom of God, to live a holy life, to know their identity as a chosen people, to suffer for doing good, following the example of Christ, to rejoice as they participate in the sufferings of Christ, and to be shepherds of God’s flock. Though Peter said many things, his main point was for them to rejoice as they participated in Christ’s sufferings and in the midst of their trials. In the past, Peter might have been the last person to have delivered this message. Whenever Jesus mentioned His sufferings as the Son of Man, Peter had showed a very negative response. Once Jesus even rebuked Peter saying, “Get behind me Satan.” But thanks to Jesus’ persistent shepherding before and after His resurrection, Peter accepted suffering personally and was able to encourage believers to suffer for Jesus with full confidence. Pastor John points out that during the time Peter was alive, people had to face fierce persecutions daily. As for us, living in this free and comfortable world, we too can suffer positively by participating Jesus’ suffering to glorify God. May the Lord help us to grow like Peter so that we would welcome Jesus’ sufferings in this coming semester.

1. Read verses 1:1-4. How does Peter address himself and the recipients of his letter? (1) How were they chosen and for what purpose? (2) What has God given us through a new birth? (3, 4) What are the characteristics of this living hope and our inheritance in heaven?

 1-1, Read verses 1:1-4.

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,

1-2, How does Peter address himself and the recipients of his letter? (1)

 ***Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,***



* Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was Jesus’ top disciple among the Twelve.
* Then he addressed his recipients with two titles “God’s elect” and “exiles.”
* To God they were precious, but the world regarded them as nobodies.
* When they believed in Jesus they were rejected and scattered by persecution throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.
* They had been outcast from their societies and were living as foreigners.
* At the time of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, people from Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, and Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism) were present .

Acts 2:5-12 reads,

 “Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. **6** When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. **7** Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? **9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” **12** Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

* They heard the gospel message from Peter and carried it back to their homeland.

1-3, How were they chosen and for what purpose? (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.***

* Peter explained how they were chosen through God the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ.
* The word, “foreknowledge” means awareness of something before it happens or exists.
* Before the creation of the world, God chose us according to his sovereignty based on his grace alone.
* God gave his one and only Son Jesus, who shed his blood for our sins.
* After Jesus’ death and resurrection, God’s works continued.
* According to His promise, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us and leads us to obedience to Jesus.
* Peter greeted them: “Grace and peace be yours in abundance” (2b).

1-4, What has God given us through a new birth? (3, 4)

 ***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,***

* Peter praised God for giving believers a **new birth**.
* In his great mercy God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an eternal inheritance.

* But when we accept Jesus as our Savior personally, he gives us new birth into eternal life.

2 Cor 5:17 reads

 “…if anyone is in Christ, the **new** creation has come: The old has gone, the **new** is here!”

1-5, What are the characteristics of this ***living hope and our inheritance*** in heaven?

First, living hope

* Because of our sins we were cut off from God and lost the source of life. We were doomed to die and suffer eternal punishment.
* We had no hope. Peter emphasizes the result of having a living hope. Peter liked the word “living.”
* He repeats it in this letter: “living hope,” “living and enduring word of God,” “living Stone” and “living stones” (1:3, 23; 2:4,5).
* A living hope is in contrast to a dead hope or a false hope. A living hope is vibrant, dynamic and lifegiving. It fills us with joy and strength that enables us to overcome all kinds of hardships.
* Living hope is not a theory or illusion that does not affect our practical lives. Rather, it is real and effective; we begin to experience in our hearts what is to come, even while living in this world.
* Living hope shapes our character, value system and lifestyle. It does not disappoint us because it is based on God’s promise and power.
* It is an unshakable hope which resides in our deep inner being. No one can snatch it away.

Second, our inheritance in heaven

* Peter contrasts earthly inheritance with heavenly inheritance.
* **Earthly inheritances** perish, spoil and fade. Trying to hold on to them causes stress, anxiety and fear.
* They become catalysts of greed and envy that break relationships. Many people have been deceived by false hope in earthly things and it has led to their ruin.
* For decades many held onto the American Dream. They worked hard for a better life economically and socially.
* But family relationships have become very dysfunctional, and most people struggle just to survive. Many end up living in vain.
* On the other hand, those who put their hope in **their inheritance in heaven** find the deeper meaning of life and can freely use their resources for a better purpose.
* They are generous and willing to share. They are rich in good deeds. In this way they lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age.

1 Tim 6:17-19 reads,

 “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth,which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **18** Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19** In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

* Those who hope in heaven give generously not only of their money, but of their youth, time, energy and talents.
* Many among us put their hope in God in their college days and lived sacrificially for his world mission purpose.
* Los Angeles UBF pioneer, missionary Isaac Kim left his promising career in South Korea in 1982 to live poorly and preach the gospel as a layman missionary.
* After coming to America as a missionary, he had to start at the bottom of society, working at Taco Bell.
* After he retired, he prayed to pioneer Northern California ministry by moving to a remote city, Redding. It is because he has a living hope in the kingdom of God.
* Similarly this living hope enables us to overcome all kinds of hardships and to sacrifice comforts for Christ and his kingdom.
* Let’s pray to rekindle living hope in the kingdom of God in our hearts.

2. Read verses 1:5-9. How is this inheritance to be realized at the last time? (5) What is God’s purpose for suffering in Jesus Christ? (6-8) What is the end result of our faith? (9)

2-1, Read verses 1:5-9.

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.

2-2, How is this inheritance to be realized at the last time? (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.***

* The promise of our inheritance is certain because we are kept by the power of God. This enables us to endure through faith until the coming of Jesus.
* We are kept by the power of God, but it is through faith, meaning our faith counts.
* The person who is kept is a person abiding in a continuing relationship of faith with God.
* We could say that faith activates the preserving power of God in the life of the Christian.

2-3, What is God’s purpose for suffering in Jesus Christ? (6-8)

 ***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,***

* God uses all kinds of trials for our good. Before knowing Jesus, trials were nothing to us but meaningless suffering so we tried to avoid them at any cost.
* But now, when we face trials in Jesus, we can find great meaning in them.



* Peter uses the analogy of refining gold. Gold is taken from the ground in the form of **ore** which also contains many other elements.
* This ore must go through a fiery refining process which destroys everything but the gold.
* The refining fire must be extremely hot, over 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit. On average, out of one million grams of ore, refiners can expect about 1-2 grams of gold.
* Fire does not destroy the gold; it only removes the impurities. Likewise, persecution does not destroy the life of God in Christians.
* But it does purge away all that is dirty and impure, such as false hopes and our sinful nature.
* So these trials should not surprise us or cause us to doubt God’s love. Rather, they purify our faith and strengthen us and shape godly character (Ro 5:3-5).
* It is noteworthy that gold will eventually perish; but our faith never will. Rather, it will result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Revelation 3:18 reads,

 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

2-4, What is the end result of our faith? (9)

 *for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

* The end of your faith is the return of Jesus and the ultimate salvation of your souls.
* Peter knew that though he had seen Jesus (both before and after the resurrection) most every Christian in the early church had not seen Jesus.
* Nevertheless, they loved Him. It is important to love Jesus to the end.
* May the Lord help us to be faithful enough to love Jesus to the end.

3. Read verses 1:10-2:3. How did God make His salvation known ? (10-12) How did Peter encourage believers to live and why? (13-19) What has God done for us through Jesus Christ? (20-21) How does Peter further exhort us? (22) How does Peter emphasize the word of God? (23-25) How can we grow up in our salvation like newborn babies? (1-3)

3-1, Read verses 1:10-2:3.

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.

**13** Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. **14** As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. **15** But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;**16** for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%201#fen-NIV-30391a)]

**17** Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. **18** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. **20** He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. **21** Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

**22** Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%201#fen-NIV-30397b)] **23** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. **24** For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, **25** but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.**2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, **3** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

3-2, How did God make His salvation known ? (10-12)

 ***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.***

* Salvation did not come about at random. God told the prophets thousands of years in advance.
* The prophets predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.
* They could not fully understand the message, but they believed it and tried to find the time and circumstances.
* It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but future generations who would hear the gospel and believe through Spirit inspired preaching.
* This salvation is so precious that even angels long to look into these things.

3-3, How did Peter encourage believers to live and why? (13-19)

 ***Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” 17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

* “Therefore” reminds us that we have received God’s salvation. In light of this, how should we live?
* We should set our hope on the grace Jesus will give us when he comes again. This hope should always be burning in our hearts.
* For this reason, our minds should be alert and fully sober.
* “Sober” literally means not under the influence of alcohol or some substance. More broadly, it can include lusts for power, sex or money.
* If we are under the influence, everything is blurry and we easily make bad decisions. We lose discernment and become careless, self-indulgent and complacent.
* Our life of mission becomes a burden. So it is so important to set our hope on the grace to be given when Jesus comes again.
* Peter calls us “obedient children.” Before receiving new birth we were rebellious and disobedient.
* But through new birth we became obedient children of God.

 ***But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”***

* When we received new birth, the seed of God’s holiness was planted in our hearts. The meaning of “holy” is “set apart.”
* It means to come out of the corruption of the world and to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to desire to be like him.
* God wants us to come out of the corruption of the world caused by evil desires and to participate in his divine nature.

***Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.***

* Then Peter says, “…live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.” We should live before God’s eyes moment by moment.
* When we fear God, we can overcome temptation and stay focused on what we should be doing. We can use our time and energy and money wisely and effectively.

 ***For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

* The empty way of life was handed down from one generation to the next and became like chains binding people in emptiness and meaninglessness.
* Many people have said, “I hated the lifestyle of my father and vowed never to live like that. But I became just like that.”
* Silver and gold are powerless to redeem us. But the blood of Jesus breaks the vicious cycle and sets us free.
* The blood of Jesus washes our sin-stained souls. The blood of Jesus purifies us and enables us to come to God.

3-4, What has God done for us through Jesus Christ? (20-21)

 ***He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.***

* According to this plan before the creation of the world, God sent Christ as the Lamb of God, without blemish or defect.
* God paid the redemption price of our sins by shedding the precious blood of Christ.
* In this way God demonstrated his redemptive love for us. Then he raised Christ from the dead and glorified him.
* Now through Christ our faith and hope are in God. When we realize the depth of God’s redemptive love for his children, it motivates us to live a godly life.

3-5, How does Peter further exhort us? (22)

 ***Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.***

* When our hearts are purified by obeying the truth, we can experience God’s sincere love. Then we begin to love others deeply from our hearts.

1 John 3:16 reads,

 “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters”

* Now that we are different from the people of the world. Now we have sincere love and thanks towards Jesus who showed His example.
* We can no longer follow the world. We must obey Jesus. Jesus commanded us not only to make disciples of all nations, but also to love one another.
* When we try to love each other, Satan uses every means to stop us. In our hearts are hidden anger, jealousy, and hatred. Sometimes we can’t love certain people through our human strength.
* And if someone doesn't repent, we can't forgive him. But Jesus commanded us to love one another and to forgive one another.
* He didn’t give any excuses or conditions for not doing so.
* We must love God and not the world, so we struggle to defeat these sinful desires in our hearts.
* Sometimes we fail. It’s easy to become discouraged and want to give up. If we are determined to struggle in our own strength, we will surely fail.
* This failure is the fruit of pride--"I want to do it myself." But we cannot struggle with our own strength and win.
* We must struggle by faith. We must have Jesus' help. So we must pray. We must read the Bible, study the Bible, and think about the practical meaning of this passage.
* In this way we should fight our spiritual battle with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Jesus took our burden of sin. He died to make us holy.
* By his mercy, he clothes us in his holiness and forgives our sins. He removes the roots of anger and hatred from our hearts. He makes it possible for us to forgive.
* We should forgive others even if they don't repent. We should love others even if they hate us. This is what Jesus did.
* By God's grace alone we can love God and love one another. We can know God's heart for the world.
* We do not live for our own happiness. We live for the glory of God. Then, real happiness follows.

3-6, How does Peter emphasize the word of God? (23-25)

 ***For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.***

* Peter emphasizes the imperishable nature of our new birth through God’s word. He then quoted Isaiah 40:6-8.
* But life in this world ends and the glory of people, nations, and generations disappear just as the grass withers and the flowers fall.
* But the word of the Lord endures forever, for the word of God is living and enduring. We have been born again of an imperishable seed through the word of God.
* That is why it is so important to learn to love one another for love lasts for eternity.

3-7, How can we grow up in our salvation like newborn babies? (1-3)

 ***Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.***

* “Therefore” indicates that Peter has just demonstrated the eternal character of God’s word. Therefore we should receive the word above all.
* Malice is an evil intention toward someone else. It may not be realized in action, but it eats away at the person who harbors it like a poison.
* In the same way, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander eat away at the hearts of God’s children, making them sick and weak.
* Slander includes speaking ill of others behind their backs. We must get rid of all these things.

***Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,***

* Newborn babies have a desperate desire for basic nourishment and absolutely need their mother’s milk to thrive.
* The word “crave” is strong, which means, “feel a POWERFUL desire for something”.
* In the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) it is used for man’s deepest longing for God.



Psalm 42:1-2 reads,

 “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. **2** My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”

* As a healthy new baby has an instinctive yearning for its mother’s milk, failure to crave spiritual milk leads to many problems in our lives.

***now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

* When we taste the Lord’s goodness, it delights our souls and creates in us a craving for more of Him.
* In such a way, we grow stronger and stronger within our souls until we grow up in his holiness and love.
* Then we can love one another deeply from our hearts.

**Conclusion**

 Our salvation was very costly, for it came through the suffering, death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus. Suffering came first, and then glory came. No suffering, no glory. In order to receive praise, glory and honor when Jesus comes, we must go through sufferings. Living in this world we go through many trials, both small and large. We can be easily discouraged, become angry, and blame others. Even though we live by faith, we lose joy and peace. We need to look at God and think of what God has done for us. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope. He uses trials to refine our faith so that we may grow in his likeness like newborn babies. Let’s have living hope in our hearts and live victoriously.

**One word: A Living Hope!**