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## **A Living Hope and A Sure Salvation**

### **1 PETER 1:3-5**

#### **Introduction**

1. How do you view your life as a Christian?
2. Has living as a Christian been easy for you, or are there times when you struggle to make it through the day?
3. Do you ever find yourself questioning your faith or asking yourself, "Am I missing something which others seem to have?"
4. On the other hand, if you consider yourself to be strong in your faith, do you sometimes encounter others who need encouragement in their faith?
5. In his first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul tells us to "encourage the fainthearted" and "help the weak" (1 Thessalonians 5:15).
6. How do we encourage ourselves and others in the life to which God has called us (1 Peter 2:9).
7. In the beginning of our text this morning, Peter begins by praising God, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 3).
8. However, many of those who to whom Peter is writing may find themselves struggling with that sentiment because of what is happening in their lives.
9. Notice how Peter refers to the recipients of his letter — "those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia" (v. 1).
10. After the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, Luke tells us that "a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1, NASB95).
11. These new Christians, many who had been in Jerusalem on Pentecost when Peter preached the gospel for the first time, eventually made their way back to Asia Minor where they shared the good news with their relatives and friends.

12. Though the church increased in these areas, so did the difficulties many of the new Christians experienced:

- a. Many of them were now being slandered and intimidated by those who formerly had been their friends (1 Peter 2:12; 3:14, 16).
- b. They found themselves suffering unjustly for doing what is right (1 Peter 2:19; 3:17).
- c. Christian wives were being mistreated by their unbelieving husbands (1 Peter 3:1,6).
- d. It is likely that some were even losing their lives for the sake of Christ (1 Peter 4:12-13).

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## I. You And I Have Been “Born Again To A Living Hope”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1 Peter 1:3, NASB95).

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## A. WHAT DOES PETER MEAN BY . . .

1. “Living hope” ?
  - a. In Romans 5:2, the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome and said, “we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (ESV, NKJV, NIV84, HCSB).
  - b. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead and gave Him glory, so our “faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21), who will do the same for us.
  - c. In 1 John 3:2, the apostle John tells us that when God “appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”
  - d. Our hope is a “living hope” for two reasons:
    - 1) It is fixed on “the living God” (1 Timothy 4:10).
    - 2) As a “living hope” it continues to grow and flourish.

- e. It is the hope of “eternal life” (Titus 1:2; 3:7).
- f. There are those, however, who Paul said, grieve over the death of a loved one as those who “have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
- g. They “have no hope” because, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:12, they are “without God in the world.”
- h. They are without God because they have not been “born again.”

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- 2. “Born again” ?
  - a. Many of us have perhaps heard the term *“born again Christian.”*
    - 1) This is a redundant phrase.
    - 2) A person who has been “born again” is a Christian and a Christian is one who has been “born again”.
    - 3) You can’t be one without the other.
  - b. In John 3, we read of a nighttime meeting between Jesus and one of the Jewish rulers named Nicodemus.
    - 1) The first recorded statement which Jesus makes to Nicodemus is this, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, NASB95).
    - 2) Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about a physical rebirth and asked Jesus, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” (John 3:4, NASB95).
    - 3) Jesus clarified, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
  - c. The apostle Paul, in Titus 3:5-6, reminded Titus how God saves us, “He saved us . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our

Savior” (Titus 3:5c,6, NASB95).

- d. This is why Paul would tell the Christians in Corinth, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

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### B. WHAT MAKES THESE THINGS POSSIBLE?

1. God’s “great mercy”
  - a. The main character of the Bible is God.
  - b. It is all about what He has done to save us and bring us back to Himself.
  - c. In Ephesians 2, Paul writes, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-7, NASB95).
  - d. In a passage we looked at just a moment ago, Titus 3:5, Paul says, “He [God] saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy . . .”

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[This “great mercy” of God was working through something. It was . . .]

2. “The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”
  - a. Just as God is the main character of the Bible, so Jesus’ resurrection is the central truth of the Gospel.
  - b. In Romans 1:4, Paul said that Jesus “was declared the Son of God with power by [His] resurrection from the dead.”
  - c. Here, in 1 Peter 3:21, after telling us in verse 20 that Noah and his

family were brought safely through water in the ark, Peter adds, “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21, NASB95).

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## II. We Have A Future Inheritance Reserved In Heaven For Us

“to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” (1 Peter 1:4, NASB95).

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#### A. IT IS “IMPERISHABLE”

1. Not subject to decay.
2. Unable to be worn out with the passage of time.
3. It is as indestructible as the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23, NASB95).

### 8a

#### B. IT IS “UNDEFILED”

1. Unstained by sin.
2. The writer of the letter we call Hebrews describes Jesus as our High Priest, in 7:26, and says that He is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.”
3. To say that our inheritance is undefiled is to say that it contains nothing unworthy of God’s full approval.

### 8b

#### C. IT “WILL NOT FADE AWAY”

1. It will never wither, grow dim, or lose its beauty or glory.
2. Over in 5:4 of Peter’s letter, he says that “when the Chief Shepherd appears,

[our shepherds, elders] will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

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### **III. We Now Await Our Final Salvation**

“. . . who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5, NASB95).

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#### **A. GOD IS DOING HIS PART**

1. Peter says that those of us who are Christians are “protected by the power of God.”
2. He protects us from Satan’s attacks.
3. In John 10, Jesus spoke of Himself as the “good shepherd” and said “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”
4. In verse 28, He added, “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28).
5. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul told the believers in Corinth, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NASB95).

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#### **B. WE MUST DO OUR PART**

1. There is something here which Peter tells us that we must not miss: We who are Christians “are protected by the power of God through faith.”
2. God’s power does not work apart from our personal faith, but through it.
3. This is why we must come to God believing that He is and that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

4. And this is why the writer of Hebrews encourages us to “run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1b-2).
5. And this is also why our glorified Lord told those in the church in Smyrna, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10, NASB95).

## **Conclusion**

1. Are you a person who has been “born again?” If so, you are the possessor of “a living hope” and a sure salvation.
2. The inheritance reserved in heaven for you is imperishable, undefiled and it will not fade away.
3. Let me encourage you to hold on to it with all your might. Don’t let Satan steal it away from you.
4. If you are someone who has yet to become a Christian, then let me encourage you to do so today.
  - a. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God, your Savior.
  - b. Be willing to turn away from your former manner of life and confess that belief.
  - c. Then, be baptized for the forgiveness of the sins in your life so that God can give you the gift of the Holy Spirit.
5. Are you willing to change your life today? If so, please come.