

SESSION 2

The Expression of Our Hope



QUESTION 1:

When have you been fooled by something that didn't live up to its claims?

THE POINT

Our hope in Christ changes how we view the world and live in it.

THE PASSAGE

1 Peter 1:13-25

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Fraud. Cheating. Scandal. Millions upon millions of dollars paid to college administrators. The 2019 college admissions bribery scandal uncovered all of this. High-profile celebrities, student athletes, coaches, admissions counselors, and other professionals all were exposed in the largest case of its kind ever prosecuted by the United States Justice Department. The scandal left many scratching their heads wondering why any parent would go to such extreme lengths to get a child into a university.

At the bottom of it all was misplaced hope—misplaced hope in a university, degree, team, or status. All those things can come crumbling down. But it doesn't take a high-profile case to see misplaced hope; we see it when people pursue a bigger house, a better job, or a certain status as if these things truly matter. We even see it when people buy something based just on the marketing hype. Hope in such things is never sure; these things can disappear overnight. Is there a firm footing for hope that will never disappoint? Faith and hope in Christ transforms our perspective so that life is no longer about what we can gain, but about how we love and serve God and others.

1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance.

15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct;

16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

KEY WORDS: **The revelation of Jesus Christ** (v. 13)—This is a reference to Jesus' second coming. Jesus used similar wording in Luke 17:30 as He instructed His disciples about the future.

The first recipients of Peter's letter were facing persecution, but Peter didn't call on them to take up physical weapons against the Roman Empire. Rather, he understood that we fight the true battle in the mind; our battle is over our affections, time, disciplines, anxieties, and priorities.

We live as God's people because we have been redeemed from the world. Living as strangers in this world does not mean that as Christians we are to be detached and isolated from other people. However, it does mean we are no longer driven by the culture's values and demands. We fight the battle of the mind, ready for action, living according to God's standards of holiness and purity through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The created world is not evil in and of itself. We may build houses, buy cars, enjoy meals at nice restaurants, go on vacations, exchange gifts, and work to earn money. Nonetheless, Satan controls this world's system, and any of these good gifts can quickly become idols in our lives. When our minds become consumed with the gifts and forget the Giver, we're out of balance;

then we need to realign our minds with the hope we have in Christ. Peter gave five admonitions to help us stay aligned with that hope:

1. **Be ready.** (“With your minds ready for action.”) The word for *ready* in this passage conjures up the image of the Israelites eating the Passover meal in haste, and preparing for the journey ahead of them as they made ready to leave Egypt (Ex. 12:1-11). We should be mentally alert as we prepare for Christ’s return.
2. **Be alert.** (“Be sober minded.”) The Greek word literally means to not be intoxicated. Intoxication clouds the mind. In this context, Peter was not referring to literal intoxication, as with alcohol, but to the danger of letting our minds be clouded by deceit or our own passions and whims.
3. **Be hopeful.** (“Set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”) The Greek word *elpizo* bubbles over with trust and confident expectation. This isn’t wishful thinking or idly passing time; this is rock-solid, assertive trust. And this hope-setting has an object; it is focused on the grace of Christ!
4. **Be distinct.** (“Do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance.”) The life of the believer should be counter-cultural. We shouldn’t “fit in” because we’ve been radically transformed by the gospel. The word for *conformed* in this verse is the same word found in Paul’s writing to the Romans: “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).
5. **Be holy.** (“As the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.”) God is holy—He is fully set apart from all else—and He has called us to be holy. God didn’t call us to be “pretty good” or “better than most.” To be holy is to be like Christ.

As God reveals Himself through Scripture, we see that He is holy and set apart. Holiness describes the relationship between God and His chosen people. God’s holiness confronts our own idolatry and

sinfulness and calls us to purity. We would do well to pray Robert Murray M'Cheyne's daily prayer, that revealed the secret to his life: "Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be."¹

QUESTION 2:

What does holiness look like for a person devoted to Jesus?

1 Peter 1:17-21

17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers.

18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you.

21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

ENGAGE

List some of the difficulties and complexities of living as strangers in a foreign land.

QUESTION 3:

What situations or circumstances make you feel like a “stranger” in this world?

We see two wonderful truths about God in this passage:

1. **God is an impartial God.** He judges impartially. He’s not impressed with wealth, education, social standing, physical appearance, or intellect. God doesn’t appraise our value based on externals; God looks at the heart.
2. **God redeems us through Christ.** Our salvation was not secured by anything perishable, “like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” The outward appearances and the accumulation of worldly goods will fade away, but our redemption is forever secure in Christ.

Redemption is a rich word with huge implications for our walk with Christ. The Greek word *lutroo* means to gain release by paying a ransom price. Here are ten biblical truths about redemption:

1. We cannot redeem ourselves (Ps. 49:7-8).
2. God’s great love planned our redemption (Isa. 52:3; 63:9).
3. God sent His Son to redeem us (1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 4:4-5).
4. Christ became a man, like us, so that He could redeem us (Heb. 2:14-18).
5. Christ paid the ransom that frees us from the bondage of sin (Rom. 3:24; Titus 2:14).
6. Redemption is through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9).
7. We’ve been redeemed from our old life (1 Pet. 1:18).
8. We’ve been redeemed from the bondage of the law (Gal. 3:13; 4:4-5).
9. Redemption implies a change of masters (Acts 20:28; Isa. 43:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
10. Redemption is permanent and eternal (Heb. 9:12).

Life without Christ is barren, futile, empty, and. Sin sucks the meaning out of life and leaves us searching for direction and

purpose. Life apart from Him is incomplete—and we can do nothing to change that fact. All the silver and gold in the world can't redeem us or change our spiritual condition. The bondage of sin can only be broken with the blood of Christ.

The incredible truth is that this redemption through Christ was the eternal plan of God (1 Pet. 1:20). God didn't go back to His cosmic drawing board to figure out "Plan B" when sin entered the world. He knew even before the first day of creation. Salvation was framed in eternity and revealed in God's perfect fullness of time.

Still with hope in mind, Peter linked back to the brilliance of the resurrection as the basis for our hope and faith. Without the triumph of God raising Jesus from death, we truly are without hope and have nothing in which to place a confident faith. Paul Rees wrote:

“The connection between this stress on our Lord’s resurrection and the appeal for holy living should be clear. The Peter of the Four Gospels felt the tug of holiness, as he saw it in Jesus, but lacked the power to rise to it. The Peter of the Acts, on the other hand, was always linking the resurrection of Jesus with the victorious adequacy which had now become the possession of the Spirit-filled Church.”²

That same glorious reality can be ours today, not because of anything of our own doing, but because of the finished work of Christ, which secures for us a living hope and a firm faith.

1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly,

23 because you have been born again — not of perishable seed but of imperishable — through the living and enduring word of God.

**24 For All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.
And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.**

Peter clearly articulated that, when it came down to living out the hope and faith that is ours through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Word of God is our only guide. God’s Word forever stands as the sole authority for how to live in the world, no matter what difficulties confront us. It is interesting to note that our relationship to one another in sincere brotherly love was assumed: “*Since you have purified yourselves ... so that you show sincere brotherly love ... because you have been born again ...*” (emphasis added). In other words, Peter recognized that because we have experienced new life in Christ, our obedience, purity, and sincere love for one another is evident. Peter wasn’t commanding us to love—he reasoned that our faith meant we are already loving—but he called us to do so “constantly.” This is not love in word only; we are to constantly display “sincere brotherly love.” Sincerity means our love is to be genuine and real, without hypocrisy or pretense.

“The believer is to love sincerely without hypocrisy. It means that a person does not just say ‘I love you,’ but he actually loves. He sincerely loves; he honestly and truthfully loves. The love being spoken about is love for all men and not only for believers. The believer must never pretend, be hypocritical, play-act, or have an ulterior motive when dealing with others. He must show love and respect, interest and attention, care and concern; but he must not show it from an impure motive.”³

QUESTION 4:

Why does God’s Word place so much emphasis on loving one another?

Since we believe the Word, we must act on it—and Scripture is abundantly clear on the matter of love. Love for one another is the hallmark of Christianity. We're not to use others for our own advantage, and we don't mask inward grudges with a smile. We see no superficial unity painted over hate-filled hearts.

The Word of God shows us how to love sincerely. In fact, we can't love in this way without knowing the Word. Throughout the pages of His Word, God reveals what love is, how He has shown it to us, and how we are to manifest it to the world around us. Peter gave us two important truths about the Word in this passage:

1. **God's Word is living.** It is alive and active. The Word is always working to accomplish God's purposes. It is not dead, meaningless, or outdated.

“For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

2. **God's Word is enduring.** The original Greek language the apostle Peter used here means to remain, stay, abide, endure, and be permanent. Often in the New Testament we see this word translated *abide* or *remain*. God's Word is here to stay. It is fixed and unchanging because the God who spoke it is fixed and unchanging.

“Lord, your word is forever; it is firmly fixed in heaven. Your faithfulness is for all generations; you established the earth, and it stands firm. (Ps. 119:89-90).

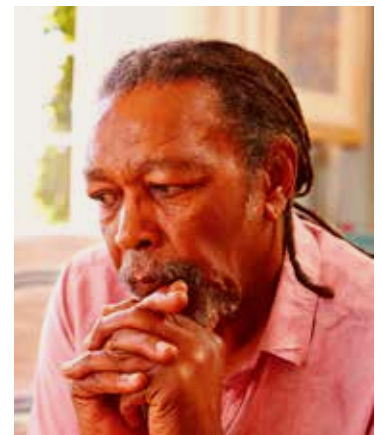
QUESTION 5:

How have you experienced the power of God's Word?

LIVE IT OUT

Hope in Christ changes how we view the world and live in it. How will you live out that truth?

- ▶ **Confess.** Confess to the Lord where you have misplaced your hope. Be honest and open about the people or things that you've looked to for hope apart from Christ.
- ▶ **Read.** Commit to read and apply God's Word to your life every day. It is through continually reading the Bible that we can develop a lifestyle of obedience and holy living. If this is a new discipline for you, consider a devotional guide to help you such as *Open Windows*, *Stand Firm* (for men), or *Journey* (for women).
- ▶ **Commit.** If there is an area of your life where your hope in Christ is not evident through your obedience to God, commit to change that. Surrender that area of life to God and remove all the barriers that stand between you and total obedience.



END NOTES

- 1 Andrew A. Bonar, *Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960).
- 2 Paul Rees, *Triumphant in Trouble: Studies in 1 Peter* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1962), 44.
- 3 "Hypocrisy, Without," *Practical Word Studies in the New Testament*, ed. Alpha-Omega Ministries (Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1998), Wordsearch edition.