

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 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. 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 just based 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.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

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.

In the previous session, we read Peter's words about who we are in Christ, the One in whom our hope is sure and certain. Now Peter calls us to action. The first recipients of Peter's letter were facing persecution, but he didn't call on them to take up physical weapons. Rather, he understood the true battle is fought in the mind.

We live as God's people because we have been redeemed from the world. This 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 through the Holy Spirit.

The created world is not evil in and of itself. We may build houses, buy cars, and earn money. Nonetheless, any of these good gifts can quickly become idols in our lives. 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 readiness as they prepared to leave Egypt (see Exodus 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 not to be intoxicated. 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"). This isn't wishful thinking; 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 countercultural. We shouldn't "fit in." We've been radically transformed by the gospel.

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. To be holy is to be like Christ.

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.

We see two wonderful truths about God in this passage:

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **God redeems us through Christ.** Our salvation was not secured by anything perishable. 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. Humanity is not getting better. Life without Christ is barren, futile, empty, and meaningless. Sin sucks the meaning out of life and leaves us searching for direction and purpose. Jesus said He came to give us abundant life (see John 10:10); therefore, 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. Slaves were able to purchase their freedom with silver and gold, but the bondage of sin can only be broken with the blood of Christ.

QUESTION 3:

How does the reality of redemption change the way we see the world and live in it?

The incredible truth is that this redemption through Christ was the eternal plan of God (see 1 Peter 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.

That same glorious reality can be ours today because of the finished work of Christ, which secures for us a living hope and a firm faith.

A dense forest of evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, fills the background. The trees are dark green and densely packed. In the foreground, there is a body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, with a light-colored, pebbly or sandy shore. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day, with some highlights on the water and the tops of the trees.

“HOPE DELAYED

MAKES THE HEART SICK,

BUT DESIRE FULFILLED

IS A TREE OF LIFE.”

Proverbs 13:12

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 where we are or what difficulties confront us.

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 love to us, and how we are to manifest love to the world around us. Peter gave us two important truths about the Word in this passage:

QUESTION 4:

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

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 this passage, 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."

It is impossible to love God's truth and hate another person. Since we believe the Word, we must act on it—and Scripture is clear on the matter of love. Love for one another is the hallmark of Christianity. We're not to use

▶ **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.

▶ **God's Word is enduring.** The original Greek language the apostle Peter used here means to remain, stay, abide, endure, and be permanent. God's Word is here to stay. It is fixed and unchanging because the God who spoke it is fixed and unchanging.

QUESTION 5:

What are the challenges and benefits of striving to live a holy life?

HOLY LIVING

In the columns below, write down some characteristics of a life built on hope in Christ and a life built on hope in the world.

Life Built on Hope in Christ

Life Built on Hope in the World



*Circle the characteristics above that best describe you, regardless of which column they are listed in.
Pray this week that God will plant in you an increasing desire
to live your life based on the living hope of Christ.*

LIVE IT OUT

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

- ▶ **Be honest.** 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.
- ▶ **Know God's Word.** 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).
- ▶ **Live your hope.** 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.

Misplaced hope can come crumbling down. Is there a firm footing for hope? Faith and hope in Christ does not disappoint. **It's not about what we gain, but about how we love and serve God and others.**