

### 3 | The Testimony of Our Hope



**GOOD  
NEWS  
IS COMING**

#### THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

“If God loved me, He would not have treated me this way.” Charlotte Elliott often said this because poor health had rendered her disabled.

When Dr. César Malan, a Swiss minister, visited her family home in 1922, he spoke with Charlotte about her condition. The minister’s genuine concern for her, coupled with his own confident faith, led to a breakthrough. He reportedly said, “Give yourself to God just as you are now, with your fightings and fears, hates and loves, pride and shame.”

Charlotte turned to God and experienced new life in Christ that very day. As she grew in her walk with the Lord, she studied His Word and began to write hymns, the most famous of which detailed that most pivotal day in her life: “Just as I am without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Malan’s hope pointed Charlotte to the Living Hope, and our hope can point others to Christ, too. A life lived in Christ is a great recommendation to others to come to Him.

## GROUP TIME

**THE POINT:** Our \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ points \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

Disappointment. Humiliation. Shame. At some point, we've all felt these emotions because something or someone we depended on failed us. The good news is that God, in whom we put our faith through Jesus Christ, will never fail us. Penned by the apostle Peter, 1 Peter was written to Christians in Asia Minor who were facing persecution. Peter began this section of his letter by calling on his readers to continue to grow spiritually.

**1 Peter 2:4-6** <sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—<sup>5</sup> you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.

**When we hope in Christ, we are \_\_\_\_\_ put to shame.**

The Jewish people called out to God as their rock and salvation (Psalm 18:2; 62:2), and now Jesus was identified as the chief cornerstone. Jesus is the foundation of the church, who provides its stability, security, and strength. The cornerstone was crucial to a building's overall structure. It was the main foundation stone in ancient buildings and tied everything together as the place where walls would meet, or it served as the keystone in the center of an arch. There is stability because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Because the church's foundation is rock solid, believers will never be disappointed or put to shame. We have no regret or remorse after making the decision to follow Christ. D. J. Kenyon wrote, "One who centers his life in Christ will never have reason to regret his choice."<sup>3</sup>

**1 Peter 2:7-10** <sup>7</sup> So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving, The stone that the builders rejected—this one has become the cornerstone, <sup>8</sup> and A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

## Others may reject Christ, but we \_\_\_\_\_ confidently because of who we are in Christ.

Peter gave some pretty incredible descriptions of the people of God:

- ▶ **A Chosen Race.** God chose Israel not on the basis of their size or merit, but out of His great love (Deuteronomy 7:7-9). He also has chosen us (John 15:16; Ephesians 2:8-10).
- ▶ **A Royal Priesthood.** Those who are in Christ have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, who is both our faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:17) and King of kings (Revelation 19:16).
- ▶ **A Holy Nation.** We are called to holiness because God is holy (1 Peter 1:16).
- ▶ **A People for His Possession.** We have a personal relationship with Christ. We are His, and no one can take us from Him (John 10:27-30; Romans 8:31-39).

**1 Peter 2:11-15** <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits. <sup>13</sup> Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. <sup>15</sup> For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.

## Our lives can lead others to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

God has linked His reputation in this world to our behavior. As Christians, we give a face to faith, a credible witness to a cynical world. Our lives of honor and integrity shouldn't be a point of controversy or contention, and our reputations never should stand in the way of the gospel. We are different—Christians living in a non-Christian world—and we are responsible to live in such a way as to silence any accusations and cause others to stop and consider the goodness and glory of our God.

### MY LIVING HOPE

In which of the following areas have you sensed an opportunity to point someone to Christ? Circle your response. Then, list one way you'll allow God to use you this week.

*Family*                      *My neighborhood*                      *At work/In my job*  
*Friendships*                      *In my church*                      *Other:* \_\_\_\_\_



## DAY 1: Jesus is the source of our hope.

### Read 1 Peter 2:4.

Peter described Jesus in two ways. First, he called Jesus “a living stone” (v. 4). Earlier Peter had described “a living hope” that had come to believers through Christ’s resurrection (1:3). The source of their hope was Christ, who is no longer dead but alive; their hope was for “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (1:4). Everything about Jesus is living and enduring. As a stone signifies strength and endurance, so does the resurrected Lord.

The second way Peter described Jesus was as the one “rejected by people but chosen and honored by God” (2:4). During His earthly ministry Jesus was constantly criticized and attacked by the Jewish religious leaders because He rejected their views of God and Scripture. The apostle John also described how Jesus was rejected by His own people (John 1:10-11). God the Father honored Jesus. This honor isn’t something that God *did* for Jesus but the way God *views* Jesus. To God the Father, Jesus is His precious and beloved Son.

*Underline the phrase “a living stone” (v. 4) in your Bible as a reminder that Jesus is the enduring foundation of our faith.*

*“Without Christ there is no hope.”*

CHARLES SPURGEON

## **DAY 2: God uses His people to accomplish His purposes.**

### **Read 1 Peter 2:5-6.**

Our salvation was secured once and for all in Christ. So Peter’s phrase “as you come to him” (v. 4) isn’t a reference to the initial salvation decision; rather, it’s a picture of God’s children constantly drawing near and coming into His presence. Under the Old Testament sacrificial system, only priests had the privilege of coming into God’s presence to offer sacrifices. But Jesus’ death and resurrection changed all that. All believers can now enter into God’s presence. We have access to God; we can approach Him in prayer at any time in any place. As His people, we “are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God” (v. 5).

In verse 5, Peter also taught that Christians are “living stones” (v. 5) who are being built into a “spiritual house” (v. 5). In the Old Testament, the temple and specifically the holy of holies was the dwelling place of God among His people, but now, we are that dwelling! As Christians, God is using us as part of His church to accomplish His purposes. One of those purposes is to be a witness so that others may know God’s grace and be added to the church.

*Today, pay attention to the different types of homes you see (apartments, houses, high-rises, and so on). Thank God for choosing to dwell among His people.*

## **DAY 3: Some people will reject Jesus and the gospel.**

### **Read 1 Peter 2:7-10.**

Many of the Jews rejected Jesus and His claim to be the Son of God. Many of the people among whom Peter’s readers were living had also rejected Jesus. For these people, Jesus was “a stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over” (v. 8). They rejected the gospel, the word of salvation offered to them. Even today, many people find the gospel to be offensive to them.

Peter had quoted the prophet Isaiah in verse 8. It’s worth noting that in Isaiah’s day the faithless stumbled over God’s promise of protection. Then, in Peter’s day, they tripped over Jesus and His offer of eternal salvation. Peter concluded his description of those who rejected Jesus, noting the reason such people stumble: “They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this” (v. 8). While some view Peter’s words to mean that God has predetermined who will reject Jesus, a better view is that God knew that those who reject Jesus will stumble and trip and thus suffer, as did those who rejected God in Isaiah’s day.

*Go to Bible.com and re-read 1 Peter 2:7-10 in several translations. Pay attention to how both Christians and non-Christians are described in this passage.*

## **DAY 4: We point others to Christ when we avoid sinful situations.**

**Read 1 Peter 2:11.**

Living with heaven in view will make our walk on earth more effective and consistent. We realize we are accountable before God, and we are aware of our witness and our calling. When our hearts and minds are in tune with the things of God, it shows up in our everyday conduct. As Christians, we are to represent Christ in everything we do—from paying our bills to playing sports to raising our kids. Peter noted a few ways we can exemplify Christ.

One way we can point others to Christ is to abstain from sinful desires. We bear personal responsibility for our actions; therefore, we should remove ourselves from certain influences and situations. It's critical for us to be on guard against things that war against us. God-given desires used in the wrong way can damage our witness. There's no magic formula that removes us from the war of the spirit against the flesh. The process of sanctification is ongoing, and though we may struggle, we don't have to live in defeat. Our godly living will serve to point others to the One who has saved us and set us on a new course.

*In prayer, confess a specific sin to God. Ask Him to give you the strength to abstain from this temptation.*



**WATCH YOUR STEP**

## DAY 5: We point others to Christ when we submit to authority and do good.

### Read 1 Peter 2:12-15.

Peter noted two other ways Christians can honor Christ in their behavior. First, we're to submit to authority. Peter didn't back down on his instruction about submitting to human authority, even though many of the believers he wrote to were facing intense persecution at the hands of those in authority. A governmental system may be corrupt, but God has ordained the institution of government itself for the good of its citizens. Therefore, when we submit ourselves to delegated power, we submit to God. When we are honest and upright in a hostile world, it's evidence of our obedience. God allows a watching world to gain insight into His ways because of how His people maintain honesty and integrity, even in high-pressure situations.

Second, we can do good. "For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good" (v. 15). People often question what God's will is for their lives, and yet it's spelled out here in black and white: do good. We don't silence our critics by arguing, debating, or shouting—and certainly not by airing all our grievances on social media platforms. We shut them down by our good works. Peter's message was powerful. We're to be living witnesses to God's grace and authority; we're to point others to Him.

*Evaluate the needs of your community. How might your Bible study group come together to do good? Consider projects once every three months, or more often, depending on group availability.*

*"For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good."*

1 PETER 2:15