

MESSAGE TITLE: If You Need Hope, Then Look to Jesus

SCRIPTURE: I Peter 1:3-5

KEY TRUTH

Because of the incorruptible power of Jesus, we have an enduring and living hope.

GETTING STARTED

Peter wrote to encourage suffering believers who struggled in the midst of persecution. He wanted to remind them that their new birth in Christ gave them living hope and the power to live holy lives. Verses 3-5 are part of a doxology of praise to God for giving believers new life in Christ. Through the second birth, believers have a living hope in an imperishable future inheritance. Believers will certainly receive their inheritance of eternal life because they are shielded by God's power until it is ready to be revealed. Consequently, believers can rejoice even when they encounter trying times, since the trials of life will prove or demonstrate their genuine faith and therefore bring glory to God. And we can have faith in God's promise of an eternal inheritance.

OBSERVATION

Why does Peter encourage believers to bless God?

To whom is Peter writing his letter and why? Read the Getting Started section. How does Peter attempt to elevate his readers' attention to the things of eternity?

What does Paul mean by the phrase, 'born again' in this passage? What image does this phrase recall for you?

What does this new birth accomplish in the lives of believers according to this passage?

What have believers inherited by faith? How does Peter describe this inheritance?

APPLICATION

How has God blessed believers through Jesus? Oftentimes we think of God's blessings as material, not eternal. God's greatest blessings are found in Jesus. So how can we live daily in the reality of God's blessings in Christ? Read Ephesians 1:1-14. What blessings in that passage are echoed in I Peter 1:3-5? Which blessings does Paul cite in Ephesians that are not repeated in Peter's letter?

What hope does the reality of God's blessings stir up in you? Remember that biblical hope refers to a certain expectation – promises we can count on.

Take a couple of minutes to write down as many of God's promises as you can remember. Share them in your group. Which of these biblical promises gives you the most hope? Why? Take time to thank God for his promises which are ours in Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for blessing us ‘in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places’ (Ephesians 1:3). Your blessings give us hope – hope that causes people far from You to wonder at our faith. Please continue to stir up hope in our hearts, and lead us to stir up hope in others. You have not left us without hope in a broken world! May the God of hope fill us today with all joy and peace as we trust in your promises this Christmas.

SHARE POINT

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God’s Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

1:3 Salvation is due to God’s mercy, grace and sovereignty, for he miraculously gave sinners new life. Peter may be connecting ‘born again’ to ‘through the resurrection of Jesus Christ’, meaning that the new birth was made possible because God thought of those who believe in Christ as being united to him in his resurrection. Or he may be linking the resurrection to the ‘living hope’ of believers, since that hope immediately follows the resurrection. In the latter case, the hope of believers, since that hope immediately follows the resurrection. In the latter case, the hope of believers is their future resurrection. Believers have an unshakable hope for the future. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a pledge of their own future resurrection.

1:4 The hope of verse 3 is now described as an inheritance, which in the OT typically describes the Promised Land and Israel’s place in it. But the OT inheritance points ahead to an even greater inheritance, reserved in heaven for the people of the new covenant. Nothing can tarnish or extinguish that secure inheritance.

1:5 Salvation in this context is a further description of the inheritance of verse 4 and the hope of verse 3. Peter lifts his readers’ minds to what will be revealed in the last time. They will certainly receive this future salvation, for God will protect them through his power by sustaining their faith to the end.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Group Bible for Leaders

The Bible Knowledge Commentary on the New Testament