

Our Living Hope – Part 1

1 Peter 1:3-12 - NCBC, February 25, 2018

Main Point: **God's great salvation compels troubled souls to praise Him.**

- **Praise God for His past adoption** (3)
 - God fathers our salvation
 - Causing us to be born again
 - Because of His great mercy
 - Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - Resulting in our living and confident hope!
- **Praise God for His future provision** (4-5)
 - Our living hope in our secure inheritance
 - Death-proof
 - Sin-proof
 - Time-proof
 - Our living hope in God's power
 - Threat-proof
 - Fail-proof
 - Our living hope in our final salvation
 - Ready for you
 - Revealed in God's time

Application: **Praise God *today* for your secure future in Christ!**

Opening Announcements:

- Parent-Child Dedication

<<Our Song from Age to Age>>



Our hope firmly rests on the power of God to save! Such comforting truths to sing together this morning as we've gathered to worship our glorious Christ.

Please continue your worship now by opening your copy of God's Word to **1 Peter chapter 1**. Today we return to our study of Peter's letter written to the elect exiles of the dispersion scattered all throughout Asia Minor.



If you don't have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just return it

after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room.

And while you're preparing for the public reading of God's Word, I just want to share how excited I am for our Parenting Conference coming in just 3 weeks!

On **March 17-18** we will be hosting Dr. John Street and his wife Janie, from Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, CA. They are coming to open their Bibles and teach us all how to raise godly children in an ungodly world.

Now parents – I realize we're all busy ...but please do not miss out on this opportunity. The Streets are dear friends of Jody and I – their teaching is very helpful and compelling. Dr. Street is a biblical counseling scholar in many respects...yet his teaching is very down-to-earth and practical. If you haven't signed up to attend yet – please do so this week.

And a quick word to our young single college students and older grandparents as well – we could really use your help serving as greeters and workers in our child-care ministries and just all around serving our parents during the conference on Saturday March 17th.

Just as our parent-child dedication service has demonstrated – the entire church has a biblical responsibility to help every one of our children follow Jesus Christ.¹ So please sign up to serve today, and pray that God will use this conference to enrich our families with greater love, wisdom, and faith in God's saving power.

¹ Matthew 28:18-20.



Now today we focus our attention on our living hope from **1 Peter 1, verses 3-12**. Peter has opened his letter to troubled believers with a reminder of God's sovereign work, and a prayer that God's grace and peace would be multiplied in their lives.

Please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word as I read one single run-on sentence in the original Greek starting in **1 Peter 1:3**, from the **English Standard Translation**:

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious

than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

This is the word of God. You may be seated.

Let's Pray.

Peter is writing to troubled souls. Tired souls. People who are being tempted to give up and give in. At the end of the letter, in **chapter 5, verse 12** he tells us his reasons for writing this letter,

I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

This overarching purpose should influence how we interpret everything he writes. Peter wants us to know

² Luke 4:25-29
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the true grace of God, and stand firm in its promise. He wants to ground his readers in the true grace of God with all its past, present, and future benefits!

Peter knows that a clearer understanding of,



God's great salvation will compel troubled souls to praise God. Even while they continue to suffer pain and loss and intense persecution here on this earth – God's true grace enables them to stand firm. And more than that – when you truly experience God's grace, your heart swells to praise God for all He has done in the past, and all that He will yet do in the future by His sovereign grace.

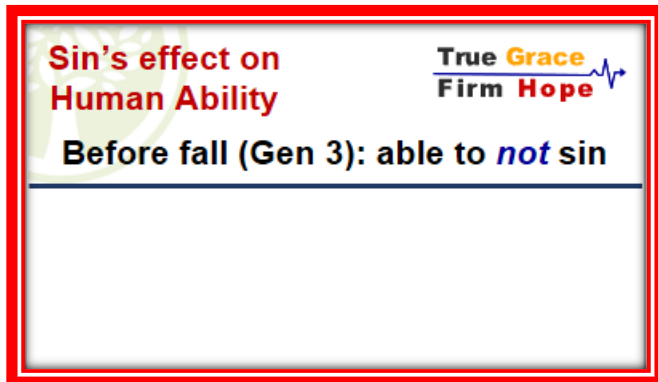
Now I recognize that the sovereign grace of God's election, predestination, foreknowledge, and calling is often difficult for our human minds to understand and even appreciate at times. God's electing grace humbles, and at times can anger,² our pride. There's still a part of us that wants to boast in the fact that we did something right – and that we can be credited with some part of our salvation.³

³ 1 Corinthians 2:26-31; Ephesians 2:9

To help us think more biblically about God's all-powerful mercy in election, we must start by considering,



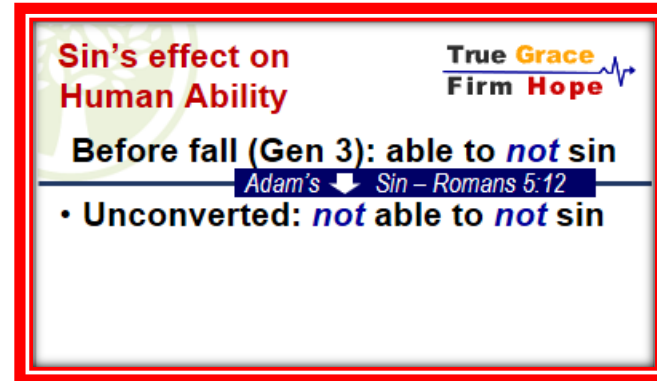
Sin's effect on our human ability. Scripture says much about how our *ability* to obey God is affected by sin.



Before sin entered human experience in **Genesis 3**, people were **able to not sin**. Or to put it positively – before the fall, Adam and Eve were able to obey God.

⁴ Genesis 2:8 implies that the man and his wife would often walk with the Lord God through the garden in the cool of the day.

They had the ability for perfect sinless communion and obedience to God.⁴



But as soon as sin entered the world through Adam, and death by sin, **Romans 5:12** teaches that this death spread to all men. One sin led to condemnation of the entire human race.⁵

Before the fall people were able to not sin. But as soon as sin entered – all people were **not able to not sin**. Or to say it differently – Adam's sin changed every human heart so that it no longer has the ability to please God.⁶ Not able to not sin.

Romans 8:7-8: *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* Unbelievers cannot obey God because **Hebrews 11:6** says that *without faith it is impossible to please God.* Sin so corrupted mankind that every person's own nature only deserves God's judgment and wrath (**Ephesians 2:1-3**).

⁵ Romans 5:18-19; c.f. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

⁶ Romans 3:23

The Biblical witness is quite strong on this point. **Psalm 51:5** teaches that even the unborn child is born in sin and conceived in iniquity.⁷ **Psalm 58** teaches that children are vipers in diapers.⁸ Biblically speaking there is no such thing as an *innocent* child – sin always begets sin.⁹

This doesn't mean that every unconverted person is as wicked as could possibly be imagined. It just means that in their unconverted state – everything they believe or desire or act upon falls short of the glory of God. While unbelievers may pursue the good works of moral citizenship in this world – the unregenerate heart is not able to understand spiritual things,¹⁰ or even seek God.¹¹ As Jesus taught in **John 6:63**, *the flesh is of no help at all in salvation.*


Let this sink in for a moment. Clearly the unbeliever still makes his own choices – and he thinks he's free to do whatever he wants.¹² But in Jesus' own words, he is a *slave to sin*.¹³ So Biblically speaking – people are not sinners because they sin. People sin because they are sinners!

Now this is offensive to the pride of humanism. Especially America's version of self-worship and human empowerment.

⁷ So infants who die do not go to heaven because they are innocent or sinless. The above Scriptures remove all biblical grounds for such an "age of accountability." In fact, their physical death is a testimony to their sinfulness (Romans 6:23). There is only one way to be saved – and that is through union with Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Yet 2 Samuel 12:23 and Jeremiah 1:5 and Luke 1:15 all give biblical witness to the possibility of God's Spirit regenerating the human heart for salvation in the womb. Clearly God knows every unborn child (Psalm 139:13-16). Yet God's sovereign grace is a mystery, and Scripture does not reveal as many details to his electing purposes for infants as we might wish. So our hope for their

But your joy in Christ will be greatly increased if you come to believe God's Word in this point. Because here's where the love of God is demonstrated – that while we were yet sinners – Christ died for us!¹⁴

1 Peter 1 verse 3 excites our praise saying, *according to God's great mercy, God has caused us to be born again to a living hope.*

<p>Sin's effect on Human Ability</p> <p>Before fall (Gen 3): able to <i>not</i> sin</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid blue;"/> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Adam's ↓ Sin – Romans 5:12</p> <p>• Unconverted: <i>not</i> able to <i>not</i> sin</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">God's ↓ Mercy – 1 Peter 1:3</p> <p>• Converted: able to <i>not</i> sin</p>	<p>True Grace Firm Hope</p> 
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Church - Praise God that He is not fair.

eternal salvation is grounded in God's sovereign mercy (not the child's sinlessness) just as David trusted in God's saving mercy towards his own child.

⁸ Psalm 58:3-5

⁹ John 3:6; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Job 14:4

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:18

¹¹ Romans 3:10ff; John 6:44; Romans 7:18; Isaiah 53:6; Psalm 58:5

¹² John 8:33

¹³ John 8:34ff

¹⁴ Romans 5:8

Sure God is righteous and just.¹⁵ But if God was fair – every human being He ever created would end up destined for hell – and that would be completely fair and right – for the wages of sin is death.¹⁶

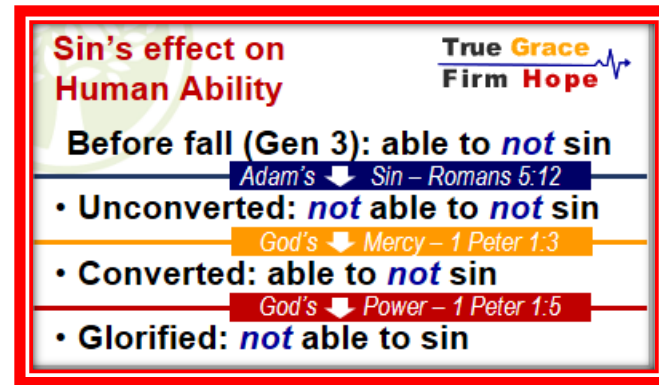
But God is also a God of great mercy and love! And according to His mercy He causes sin-enslaved souls to be born again or converted¹⁷ so now, believers are **able to not sin**.

Galatians 5:1 says that for freedom Christ has set us free!¹⁸ By the power of the Holy Spirit, the converted person can now please God with a progressively growing faith¹⁹ and love.²⁰

We'll talk more in a minute about how God's mercy brings about this radically new life for Christ-followers...but for now – just glory in God's mercy!

You see from a biblical understanding, the question of God's election is not why doesn't God elect some...but rather – how could God even elect one sinner to salvation?!

Peter knows that a right understanding of God's true grace will humbly motivate the heart to thanksgiving, praise, and a lifestyle of obedience and love!²¹



And of course, Peter urges suffering believers to look forward to the day when God's power will reveal our final salvation by transferring us into the very presence of Christ Himself.²² And in our glorified state, we will forever be like Jesus Christ – **not able to ever sin again!**

Such a comprehensive and complete salvation of ruined sinners like you and me causes our souls to sing of the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable his ways!²³

Sin's effect on our ability is staggering, so Peter urges suffering Christ-followers in **verse 3** to,

¹⁵ Romans 3:26

¹⁶ Romans 6:23

¹⁷ Titus 3:5; John 3:3-8;

¹⁸ C.f. John 8:32

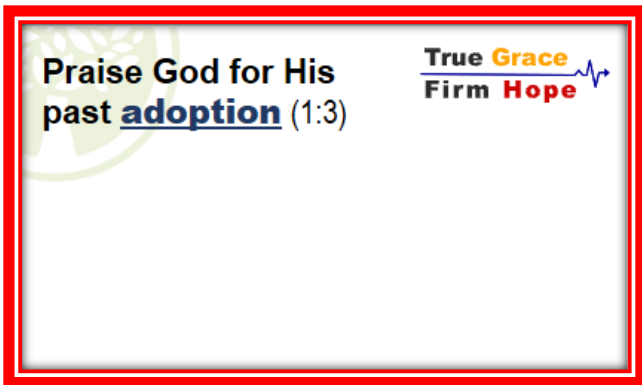
¹⁹ Philippians 1:29

²⁰ Galatians 5:13

²¹ 1 Peter 1:13; 1 John 3:3

²² 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18

²³ Romans 11:33-36



Praise God for His past adoption (3)

Peter starts this long run-on sentence with a command.

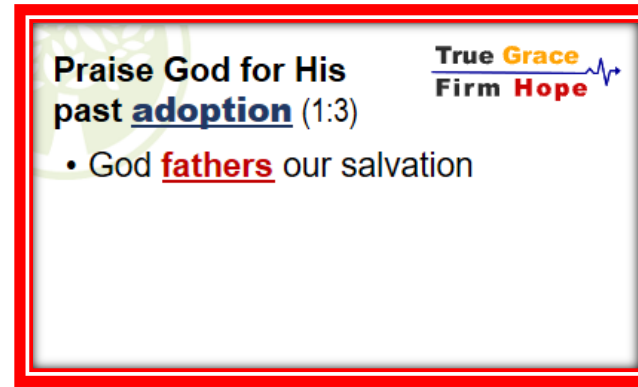
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

God is to be blessed or praised for this grand salvation He has provided to us. Before Peter gets to our ethical responses in **verse 13** – we must first consider all that God has done for us in Christ!

Notice first that Peter says God is the *God* of Jesus, and the *Father* of Jesus. There's so much here that we could preach a whole sermon on just this opening phrase – but for now – just praise God that Jesus is both 100% man, and 100% God. In His *humanity*, God is His God. In His *deity*, God is His Father. So this distinctly Christian opening emphasizes that Jesus is now forever the God-man – who is our Lord, and Savior, and Promised Deliverer.

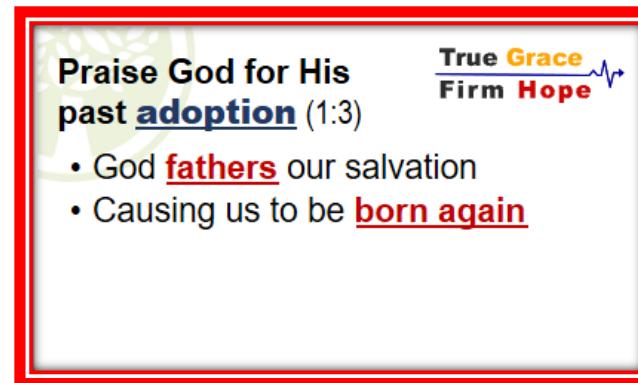
And here's the good news: God is not just the Father of Jesus. This text goes on to teach us that,

²⁴ See earlier discussion on “not able to not sin”; c.f. John 8:42-47



God fathers our salvation...and thereby adopts you as one of His children!

Just as no human being can choose their earthly biological father – so likewise no one has the *ability* choose their spiritual father.²⁴ But good news – God Himself has determined to be the spiritual father of the elect ... how does **verse 3** say it?



He has caused us to be born again!

Now that word “born again” should bring back memories of Jesus talking with Nicodemus in **John chapter 3**.²⁵ It means new birth. A spiritual conversion. Paul referred to this as the new creation.²⁶ A radically new life experienced in the human heart through the operation of God’s Spirit.²⁷

So now you might ask, “How does God cause human hearts to experience spiritual conversion?” “How does God cause a sinner to be born again?”

And the answer is found in **verse 23** where the same verb is used. Saying,

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

Verse 25 explains further through *the good news that was preached to you.*

Translation? God fathers our salvation by causing us to be born again through the preaching of His Word!²⁸ God’s Spirit brings about new life as He gives human hearts faith in His Gospel.

James 1:18 says, *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth.* **Romans 10:17** says saving faith comes from hearing the preaching of the word of Christ.

²⁵ John 3:3, 7

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a

²⁷ The active voice of the aorist participle underscores that the begetting anew is God’s work in them – it is not procured through human effort but is

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, perhaps an illustration will help us understand how God saves sinners.



First, God’s Spirit empowers someone to preach or sow the seed of the life-giving Gospel.²⁹ Now we know from our introduction this morning, and verses like **1 Corinthians 2:14** and **Ephesians 4:18**, that sin has deadened the human heart to God’s Gospel – so that no amount of human persuasion is able to awaken saving faith in God’s Word. Sinners are not able to not sin. The enslaved sinner will always choose to reject God’s Word.

possible only through the operation of God’s mercy and power. Hiebert

²⁸ C.f. Ezekiel 16:6, 37:1-10; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

²⁹ Matthew 13:18-19ff; Psalm 19:7ff

Praise God for His past adoption (1:3) **True Grace**
Firm Hope

- God **fathers** our salvation
- Causing us to be **born again**

God's Spirit → Faith → God's Spirit

But because of God's great mercy and by His grace, His Spirit grants the gift of faith to the sinner. **Philippians 1, verse 29** teaches that it is God's grace which causes us to believe God's Word. **Philippians 2, verse 13** says it is God who works in you to even desire God. **2 Timothy 2:25** teaches God is the one who grants repentance so hearts can come to a knowledge of His truth.

Praise God for His past adoption (1:3) **True Grace**
Firm Hope

- God **fathers** our salvation
- Causing us to be **born again**

God's Spirit → Faith → New Life! → God's Spirit

Now the Spirit of God has sovereignly awakened faith and repentance in the sinner's heart through the

preaching of His Gospel – and the result of that faith in Christ is regeneration! New Life!

No wonder Paul exclaims in **Ephesians 2:8** – *for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.*

Once you understand God's sovereign grace in salvation – it motivates you to pray more and preach the Gospel more doesn't it? Because only God can save sinners. And God uses the human means of Gospel preaching with the power of His Spirit to cause hardened sinners to be born again! There are no hopeless cases. Whomever God chooses to bless with faith³⁰ will believe God's Gospel, and therein be saved.³¹

Now you might ask, why would God ever father salvation for a sinner who rightly deserves God's penalty of hell for their blatant rebellion against His glory?

And **verse 3** in our text answers that, doesn't it?

Praise God for His past adoption (1:3) **True Grace**
Firm Hope

- God **fathers** our salvation
- Causing us to be **born again**
- Because of His great **mercy**

³⁰ Romans 9:11-16
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³¹ Romans 1:16-17

God fathers our salvation by causing us to be born again all **Because of His great mercy**

Not just a little bit of mercy. You might underline that word *great*. It is an overwhelming outpouring of compassion and pity upon helpless slaves to sin. **Titus 3 verse 5** says that *God saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...*

Loved one – do you desire God’s mercy today? If so – that’s an evidence of God’s sovereign grace in your life! Proud hearts never desire mercy. Only hearts who have been awakened to their lost condition through the preaching of the Gospel and the gracious work of God’s Spirit will ever desire mercy. So if that’s you this morning – today is a day for your salvation!!

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Cry out to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – for according to His great mercy He has caused us to be born again to a living hope,

Jesus died our death in our place, so that by faith in Him we could receive His resurrection life! The life-giving Word that is preached to sinners is an historical account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead!!

Only the resurrection of Jesus Christ that defeated death is powerful enough to make spiritual life possible for people enslaved in sin. Christian – the grounds for your newness of life is the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Are you suffering under the injustice of other sinners? Stand firm in this grace of God: God raised Jesus from the dead – and His resurrection brought about your adoption!

Think about this from Peter’s perspective for a moment... when Jesus was hung on a cross and murdered at Calvary...and buried in a tomb... Peter’s hopes were crushed. An internal chorus of crowing roosters left him in constant state of condemnation, guilt, and shame. But then came Sunday morning...and the women rushed in saying that the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen! And Peter raced to the tomb to see for Himself! And his living hope was born!

Praise God for His **True Grace**
Firm Hope 
past adoption (1:3)

- God **fathers** our salvation
- Causing us to be **born again**
- Because of His great **mercy**
- Through the **resurrection** of Jesus

Through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead.

**Praise God for His
past adoption** (1:3)

True Grace
Firm Hope

- God fathers our salvation
- Causing us to be born again
- Because of His great mercy
- Through the resurrection of Jesus
- Resulting in our living hope!

Church – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
Results in our living and confident hope! Praise God this morning for your firm hope in God's future for you!

No matter what we are going through in this life – and how painful our circumstances and grief... every child of God still has hope! Christ followers don't cling to an empty or false hope for their future. We have been made alive by God's Spirit through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and our hope will not put us to shame!³²

Biblical hope is not a "wishful thinking" or "superstition." Peter is writing about a sure hope – a hope that is grounded in the past triumphant resurrection of our Savior from the grave.

So Christian – hear the preaching of good news this morning so you can stand firm in this true grace of God. Look back into the past – and praise God for all that He has mercifully done to bring about your salvation – all by His grace and for His eternal glory.

³² Romans 5:5

And then next week, we will turn our focus to **verses 4-5**, as Peter calls us to

**Praise God for His
future provision** (1:4-5)

True Grace
Firm Hope

- Our living hope in our secure inheritance
- Our living hope in God's power
- Our living hope in our final salvation

Praise God for His future provision.

For Peter goes on to explain the believer's confident hope in a secure inheritance, a powerful God, and our final salvation as we experience the eternal glory of God's presence forever.

But all of that will need to wait for next week, since we ran out of time today.

Remember – the main point of these 10 verses is simply this,

Main Point



**God's great salvation
compels troubled souls
to praise Him.**

God's great salvation compels troubled souls to praise Him.

So as you go back into the turbulence of your week,

Application



**Praise God today
for your secure
future in Christ!**

Praise God *today* for your secure future in Christ!

Be honest about the goodness of God which has led you to repentance.³³ Rejoice, *though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.*³⁴

³³ Romans 2:4

³⁴ 1 Peter 1:6

Your future is secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ! There is no greater power conceivable than that! If you have been born again – it's only because you were a recipient of God's great mercy. You didn't deserve to be saved any more than the next sinner...but somehow...by the amazing grace of Jesus Christ – His Spirit was pleased to expose you to the preaching of the Gospel,³⁵ and grant you the ability of to trust and obey – so that you might be united with Christ by faith.³⁶

If your future is not yet secure in Christ – and you desire such eternal security for your soul today – then praise God that He is today offering you living hope! Simply believe on Jesus Christ – repent of your sins – and submit your life entirely to His Word. And you will be saved.

Our Living Hope – Part 1 **True Grace**

1 Peter 1:3-12 **Firm Hope**



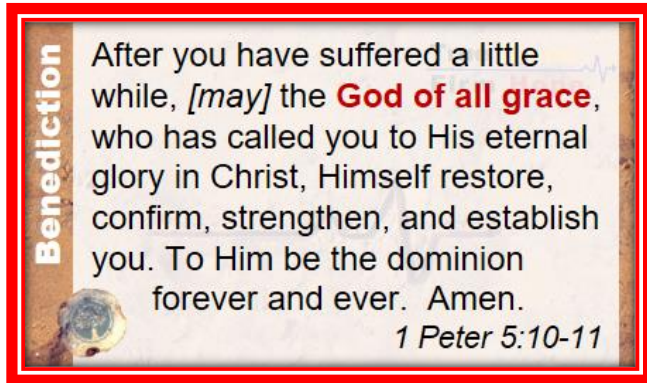
Let's Pray.

<<On Christ the Solid Rock>>

³⁵ 1 Peter 1:12

³⁶ Galatians 2:20

Let's pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,



*And after you have suffered a little while, [may] the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. **1 Peter 5:10-11***



Recommended Resources on Our Living Hope:

- Exodus 33:19
- Deuteronomy 7:6-8
- Malachi 1:2-3
- Luke 4:25-27
- John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 6:37, 39, 44, 63-65; 10:29; 15:16
- Acts 13:48
- Romans 1:6-7; 8:29-39; 9:11-18, 19-24; 10:20; 11:7-10, 29
- 1 Corinthians 1:27-31
- Ephesians 1:3-14
- Philippians 1:6
- Colossians 3:12
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- 2 Timothy 1:9; 2:10
- Titus 1:1; 3:3-5

- http://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/chosen_by_god/
- <http://www.deliveredbygrace.com/doctrine-election-kills-pride/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/unconditional-election.html>
- <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A191/is-the-doctrine-of-election-biblical>

- Finally Alive, John Piper
- Saved without a Doubt, John MacArthur
- Living the Cross-Centered Life, CJ Mahaney
- A Gospel Primer, Milton Vincent

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

** Leaders may benefit from referencing Pastor Kevin's March 2016 Handout on the Doctrines of Election and Predestination posted on Basecamp.*

1. Read Romans 8:28. How does God's sovereign grace of election bring hope and comfort to believers in the midst of trouble? (c.f. 1 Thessalonians 5:24)
2. Read Romans 9:11-18, noting especially verse 16. How does God's sovereign grace of election remove boasting and pride? (c.f. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 4:7)
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:10. How does God's sovereign grace of election encourage and empower our evangelism? (c.f. Acts 13:48; Isaiah 55:11; 1 Peter 1:23)
4. Read Jude 24-25. How does God's sovereign grace of election empower our perseverance and assurance of salvation? (c.f. 1 Peter 5:10)
5. Review 1 Peter 1:3-12. What most encourages your faith in this single run-on sentence? What brings your soul the greatest hope and joy?