



Living Hope

LIVING HOPE

1 Peter 1

Teaching Notes

INTRO

The Apostle Peter wrote both 1 Peter 1 (v. 1) and 2 Peter. Peter was clearly the leader of the early church. Whenever the New Testament listed the apostles, Peter was always at the front of the lists (Matthew 10; Mark 3; Luke 6; Acts 1). Peter was originally known as Simon: “And Jesus responded, ‘Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in Heaven’ (Matthew 16:17). Peter’s family were fishermen along the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum. Fishermen were the equivalent of blue-collar workers. Peter did not come from the religious elites of the day.¹

MacArthur points out that Peter was called as a disciple early in Jesus’ ministry: “He also appointed 12—He also named them apostles—to be with Him, to send them out to preach, and to have the authority to drive out demons. He appointed the 12: To Simon, He gave the name Peter” (Mark 3:14-16). As part of his calling, Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter, which meant “rock.” Throughout the Gospels, Jesus regularly singled out Peter to learn lessons.²

After identifying himself as Peter, the apostle of Jesus, Peter addressed his letter to five specific places that were considered to be the northern regions of Asia Minor. While addressing mainly Gentiles, Peter’s audience would also have included some Jews.

MacArthur notes that the burning of Rome devastated its citizens: “Their great temples, shrines, and even their household idols were burned up. This had great religious implications.”³ Afterwards, the people of Rome began to feel hopeless and helpless. As a result, Nero blamed the fire on Christians and persecution began. Persecution spread from Rome to the north into the regions to which Peter wrote this letter. This letter was probably written around the summer of AD 64, after Rome was burned, but at least a couple of years before Peter was martyred.

Our phrase for 1 Peter came down to two options. The first was Chief Shepherd: “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4). When persecution arises, it’s good to know that the Good Shepherd has your back. However, the phrase for 1 Peter is *Living Hope*: “Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” As they faced persecution, it was important for the believers to remember to hold onto their hope in Christ.

While Peter is credited with writing the letter, Silvanus actually wrote it at his dictation: “I have written you this brief letter through Silvanus (I know him to be a faithful brother) to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Take your stand in it” (1 Peter 5:12)! Paul used this same system of dictation: “I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord” (Romans 16:22).

TEACHING

1 Peter 1:1-2: Peter addressed his readers as “temporary residents.” Believers were foreigners on grounds that were not on their native land. They were pilgrims in process who had been “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (vv. 1–2). MacArthur defined foreknowledge as “a predetermined relationship in the knowledge of God.”⁴ God planned beforehand that believers would be chosen for salvation. God has “pre-thought and predetermined, or predestined each salvation.”⁵ That means that we are “set apart for obedience” (v. 2). Because we are meant to be holy, this world will not feel like our home.

1 Peter 1:3–9: Because of God’s great mercy, believers have “a new birth.” Hebrews 6:19 says, “We have this hope as an anchor for our lives, safe and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.” This anchor is in our lives and tethered to Christ. As persecution came, the believers had living and active hope “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (v.3).

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), pp. 1899.

² MacArthur, p. 1899.

³ MacArthur, p. 1900.

⁴ MacArthur, p. 1903.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 1903.



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MacArthur outlines ten implications of the living hope in the life of the believer⁶:

1. **It comes from God**—“Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God” (Psalm 43:5).
2. **It is a gift of grace**—“May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace” (2 Thessalonians 2:16).
3. **It is defined by Scripture**—“For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures” (Romans 15:4).
4. **It is a reasonable reality**—“But honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).
5. **It is secured by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**—“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if He dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?’” (John 11:25–26)
6. **It is confirmed in the believer by the Holy Spirit**—“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).
7. **It defends the Christian against Satan’s attacks**—“But since we belong to the day, we must be serious and put the armor of faith and love on our chests, and put on a helmet of the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8).
8. **It is confirmed through trials**—“And not only that, but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance” (Romans 5:3).
9. **It produces joy**—“Happy is the one whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (Psalm 146:5).
10. **It is fulfilled in Christ’s return**—“While we wait for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

CLOSING

This *Living Hope* to which believers have come is “imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading” (v. 4). Believers are “protected by God’s power through faith” (v. 5) that is ready to be revealed at Christ’s return.

⁶ MacArthur, p. 1904.