

Message Summary

Hope is a confident expectation of a yet future event. The world offers a plethora of cheap imitations of hope, such as, "I hope it doesn't rain this afternoon" or "I hope my child sleeps through the night tonight." A christian's hope is altogether different, because its object is the steadfast love of Christ. First Peter calls us to shift our hope from this tumultuous world's present to the certainty of our future with Christ. Peter terms this "living hope" (1:3). As we look more and more to this future hope, it changes everything about how we live in the present.

Our hope in being "born again" is grounded in the fact of Christ's resurrection (v. 3). We have confidence in both what Christ did and what Christ promised, such as in John 11:25: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."* Hope teaches us both to look back at what Christ has accomplished for us in his death and resurrection, and forward to the future resurrection at the throne of grace. There, no Christian will just "squeak in as the door closes." Rather, Christ will embrace those who are his as sons and daughters. By grace we have been saved through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). Thus, we don't work to achieve our salvation, but to feel and experience the reality of the resurrection.

Such hope does not happen by accident. Peter exhorts us as those *"preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded"* (v. 13). This sobriety of mind comes by looking to Christ, our only source of assurance, rather than our circumstances. The power of God guards us through faith, a faith that is always strengthened by exposure to the word of truth (Rm. 10:17).

Living hope produces a living community. We must come to church to give, not to get. The bonds of community are forged through the common hope of a future grace that drives us to serve God and one another. Hope also enables us to humbly endure suffering, not out of fleshly strength but patiently enduring while doing good (2:19-20). Suffering, especially for the gospel, should not take us by surprise. The world will hate truth until Christ comes. But hope compels Christians to engage in bold evangelism all the more, knowing that this world is not our home, and having Christ as our absolute confidence.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

"A man can live weeks without food, days without water, minutes without oxygen, but not a second without hope." Based on the message today, why is hope such an integral part of the Christian life? What distinguishes a Christian's hope from the world's?

What does hope in future glory with Christ have to do with the way we live in the present? See esp. 1 Cor. 15:58.

How does exposure to the word of God nurture and strengthen our faith? See Jn. 15:1-11; Rm. 10:14-17; 1 Pt. 2:1-2.

Eric brought out events in Peter's life before he wrote this letter: walking on water, betraying Jesus before a servant girl, continuing to fish when he saw the resurrected Christ. How did these (any other) events in Peter's life secure his hope in Christ rather than in his circumstances?

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.

1. Where is your hope?
2. What present things of this world distract you from the future glory of the coming kingdom? Do you live the Christian life looking forward, or distracted by the present?
3. How can you more firmly plant yourself in gospel hope this week?
4. How can you improve your Bible intake this week (e.g., reading, memorizing, meditating, praying, applying) to nurture your hope and faith?
5. Do you come to church to get and consume or give and serve? How can you serve the church more faithfully this week?
6. Does fear over potential earthly trials prevent you from evangelizing as you should? How can you be a bolder evangelist this week?

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for the certainty of hope we have in being born again through Christ's resurrection, and of our joining Him in our own resurrection in the future.
 - Pray for summer CF College classes, including "How to Understand and Apply the New Testament." Pray that the Lord would use these classes to better understand and soak in the Word, and better prepare us to bring that Word to others around us.
- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray that God would lead us to bold evangelism, and give grace to grow and learn through the trials which often accompany it.
 - Pray for Christ Fellowship's VBS on site next week (June 5-9) and at the Dream Center (June 11), that God would use it to greatly reach the surrounding community with the message of Christ's victory over sin and death.
- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray for the many Muslims around the world who are observing the annual fast of Ramadan (May 27-June 25, 2017). Pray that the Lord would teach them to hunger and thirst for salvation only found in Christ, and that they would see the truth of Acts 4:11-12: *"This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*
 - Pray that the Lord would use CFC to reach many Muslims, here in Gadsden and around the world.