

KNOW THE BELIEVER'S LIVING HOPE

1 PETER 01:03–05

Introduction: Hope

This is a rich, rich passage of Scripture. It is one of those passages that is so rich that it would take an eternity to grasp all that is taught herein. And note the most wonderful thing: it has to do with the believer's glorious hope. What is the great hope of the believer? It is eternal life – the glorious privilege of living forever with God. Just imagine living face to face with God forever! No greater privilege could ever be given man. Note that our hope is said to be a *living hope*.

=> A living hope means that it is not a dead, lifeless hope. It is not the kind of hope that we use to stir positive thinking for the moment but does nothing for us beyond the grave; not the kind of hope that gives us meaning and motivation for life but is dead and lifeless beyond this life. Despite all the earthly benefit we get from positive thinking and motivational hope, these have no meaning beyond this life and the grave.

=> A living hope means that it is not a *probable hope*; it is not the kind of hope that may or may not come to pass.

The hope that God gives is a *living hope*, a hope that is real and true, that actually exists. A *living hope* is active and functioning; it acts and works both within the heart of the believer and within heaven apart from the believer. Eternal life is a *living hope* because it is reality; it is a life that really exists in another world, the spiritual world, that is more real than the world in which we live. The believer's hope for eternal life lives, acts and works within the believer now, even while he is on earth. It is not that the believer is going to receive eternal life; he has already received eternal life. His hope for eternal life is living, acting and working within him right now. This is the glorious hope of the believer, the living hope of living forever with God face to face.

I. The source of the hope: the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3).

II. The inheritance of the hope (v. 4).

III. The assurance of the hope (v. 5).

I. 1 Peter 01:03 Source of the Believer's Hope: Mercy

There is the source of the hope. The source is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Note who our Lord Jesus Christ is.

=> He is *our Lord*, the One to whom we have surrendered and subjected our lives; the One who sits in the spiritual and heavenly world at the right hand of God the Father.

=> He is *Jesus*, the carpenter from Nazareth, the Man who claimed to be the Son of God and who was sent into the world as the Saviour of men.

=> He is *Christ* the Messiah who was promised by God to save men.

This means a most wonderful thing: if we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, then the God and Father of Jesus Christ becomes our God and Father. And note: He is the God who gives eternal life. This too means a most wonderful thing: God is not off in outer space someplace, far removed from us, a god with little or no interest in our welfare. God is near at hand, all about us, living within the spiritual world and dimension, longing to relate to us and to look after and care for us, and to give us eternal life. Jesus Christ shows us this. This was the way His Father took care of Him; and if we follow Christ, it is the way God, *even our Father*, takes care of us. He gives us the most wonderful of gifts: eternal life — the *living hope* of living forever with Him even as Christ our Lord is now living with Him in heaven.

Thought 1. Note: eternal life exists nowhere else. Only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ possesses eternal life. Therefore, if a person wants to know God and to receive eternal life, he has to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. The person has to trust Christ if he wants the God and Father of Christ to give him eternal life. And we must always remember: only the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ can give a person the living hope of living forever.

Now, how does God go about giving us the living hope of eternal life? This is a critical question, for when we look around our world all we see is corruption and death. We are born and then before we know it, it is time to die. There is so little time in between birth and death. And even while we are here on earth there is sin, shame, accident, disease, suffering, evil, cursing, lying, stealing, deception, assaults, murders, wars — so much corruption that death just seems to engulf the earth. The thinking and honest person knows that he and everything else including the world itself are dying. How then does God stop this process of corruption and death? How does God go about giving us the living hope of eternal life?

1. The living hope comes by the mercy of God. This is the basis of our hope; it could be no other way. Man is just so sinful he has only one hope: the hope that *God will have mercy upon him*. Just think how we have treated God. We have...

- ignored Him
- disobeyed Him
- neglected Him
- sinned against Him
- failed Him
- disbelieved Him
- rebelled against Him
- turned away from Him
- rejected Him
- cursed Him

The list could go on and on, but the point is clearly seen. Our only hope is the mercy of God. If we are going to ever be accepted and given the living hope of living forever and ever, then God has to be merciful. He has to have mercy upon us.

The word “mercy” (*eleos*) means feelings of pity, compassion, affection and kindness. It is a desire to succor; to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for. Two things are essential in order to have mercy: seeing a need and being able to meet that need. God

sees our need and feels for us (Eph. 2:1-3). Therefore, He acts; He has mercy upon us. How? By doing two things:

=> God withholds His judgment.

=> God provides a way for us to be saved.

And note that God is said to have great mercy (overflowing, abundant, endless, boundless mercy). His mercy just flows on and on; it is ever covering us and creating the living hope and presence of eternal life within our hearts.

Rom 11:32 *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*

Eph 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

Psa 103:17 *But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.*

Lam 3:22 *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.*

2. The living hope comes by the new birth. Note the words *new birth* or *born again*. There is no hope for eternal life unless a person is *born again* by the Spirit of God. A person has to be regenerated and made into a *new* person, a new self before he can ever live forever.

John 3:3 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

John 3:5-7 *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

1 Pet 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

3. The living hope comes by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to live forever in heaven with His Father. How does His resurrection give us the hope of living forever? By three things.
 - a. First, God has proven that He has the power to raise the dead. There should never be any question about this; for God, if He is truly God, has unlimited power to do anything. But His power to raise the dead and to keep them from ever dying again is now proven beyond all question: it is proven by the fact that He has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and exalted Him into heaven never again to die.
 - b. Second, the fact that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead proves that Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of God who came into the world to save men. God would have never raised Christ if He had been a liar and deceiver. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; therefore, God raised Him from the dead.
 - c. Third, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Perfect and Ideal Man who lived a sinless life when He was upon earth. Therefore, He stands before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man. What this means is most significant. Being the Perfect and Ideal Man, whatever He does is acceptable to God. When He arose from the dead, His resurrection was the perfect and ideal resurrection. Therefore, it can stand for and cover every man's resurrection. If we are *in Christ* — if we really *believe in Christ* — then God can *count us* in the ideal resurrection of Christ. God can raise us up to live with Him forever and ever just as He did with Christ. Remember why — because Jesus Christ arose and has given us the ideal and perfect resurrection, and the Ideal can stand for and cover the resurrection of all others.

Rom 4:25 *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

1 Cor 15:1-4 *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Eph 1:19-20 *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

1 Th 4:14 *We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

1 Pet 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

II. 1 Peter 01:04 Believer's Hope – Spiritual Inheritance

There is the inheritance of the hope. The inheritance is the eternal life that God gives us, but the inheritance of eternal life involves the most wonderful gifts imaginable.

There Shall Be the Inheritance of a New Nature or State of Being

- => Being adopted (receiving the full rights) as a son of God (Gal. 4:4-7; Jn. 3:1).
- => Being made blameless and pure (Ph. 2:15).
- => Being given eternal life (Jn. 3:16; 1 Tim. 6:19).
- => Being given better and lasting possessions (Heb. 10:34).
- => Being given a glorious body (Ph. 3:11, 21; 1 Cor. 15:42-44).
- => Being given eternal glory and honour and peace (Rom. 2:10).
- => Being given eternal rest and peace (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:13).
- => Being given the blessings of the Lord (Prov. 10:22).
- => Being given the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Ph. 3:8).
- => Being given enduring wealth and prosperity (Prov. 8:18).
- => Being made priests (Rev. 20:6).
- => Being given a crown that will last forever (1 Cor. 9:25).
- => Being given a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).
- => Being given a crown of life (Jas. 1:12).
- => Being given a crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4).

There Shall Be the Inheritance of Work or Position and Rule

- => Being made exalted beings (Rev. 7:9-12).
- => Being made ruler over or put in charge of many things (Mt. 25:23).
- => Being given the Kingdom of God (Jas. 2:5; Mt. 25:34).
- => Being given a position of rule and authority (Lk. 12:42-44; Lk. 22:28-29; 1 Cor. 6:2-3).
- => Being given eternal responsibility and happiness (Mt. 25:21, 23).

- => Being given rule and authority over cities (Lk. 19:17, 19).
- => Being given thrones and the privilege of reigning forever (Rev. 20:4; 22:5).
- => Being given the privilege of surrounding the throne of God (Rev. 7:9-13; 20:4).
- => Being made priests (Rev. 20:6).
- => Being made kings (Rev. 1:5; 5:10).

There Shall be the Inheritance of Wealth

- => Being made an heir of God (Rom. 8:16-17; Tit. 3:7).
- => Being given an inheritance that can never perish, spoil nor fade away (1 Pet. 1:3-4).
- => Being given the blessings of the Lord (Prov. 10:22).
- => Being given enduring wealth and prosperity (Prov. 8:18).
- => Being given unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8).
- => Being given treasures in heaven (Mt. 19:21; Lk. 12:33).

Note how our inheritance is described in verse four. It is most descriptive, an astounding picture of the new heavens and earth that are coming and of our life in God's new and eternal world.

And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you. (v. 4)

1. Our inheritance “can never perish; it is incorruptible” (aphtharton). The word means that it cannot perish; it does not age, deteriorate or die; it does not have the seed of corruption within it.

Thought 1. Mathew Henry points out that everything on earth changes from better to worse, but not our inheritance. It is perfect and incorruptible. It never changes, and it shall never cease to be the most perfect inheritance and gift imaginable (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 6. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, p. 1005.).

2. Our inheritance “can never spoil” (amianton). The word means that it cannot be polluted or defiled, dirtied or infected. It means that our inheritance will be without any flaw or defect; it will be perfectly free from sickness, disease, infections, accident, pollution, dirt — from any defilement whatsoever. There will never be any tears over what happens to oneself or over the damage or loss of some possession.
3. Our inheritance *can never fade away* (amaranton). It will last forever and ever. The splendour and beauty of it all — of life and of all the positions and possessions which God shall give us — none of the splendour and beauty shall fade or diminish whatsoever. Nothing, not even our energy and bodies, shall wear out or waste away.
4. Our inheritance is in heaven; it is kept there for us. It is actually being held there by God for us. God is simply waiting for us to finish our task here on earth and to come to Him. Then He will give us our inheritance.

Note a critical point: the persons who are to receive the inheritance are those who have received the mercy of God, been born again, and are trusting the resurrection of Jesus Christ to cover their resurrection (v. 3).

Acts 20:32 *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

Acts 26:18 *‘To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’*

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Gal 3:29 *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Eph 1:11 *[Christ] In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.*

Eph 1:18 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.*

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

Col 3:24 *Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

Titus 3:7 *So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

Heb 1:14 *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

Heb 6:17 *Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.*

Heb 11:7 *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

Heb 11:26 *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

James 2:5 *Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?*

1 Pet 1:4 And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you.

III. 1 Peter 01:05 Assurance of the Believer's Hope

There is the assurance of the hope. How do we know for sure that we will receive the inheritance? The temptations and trials of life are so forceful and threatening, how do we know that we will receive the living hope of eternal life and its glorious inheritance? How do we know that we will not fall and come short of the great day of redemption? There are two answers.

1. There is the assurance of God's power. God's power shields us. The word "shielded" (phrouroumenous) means to guard; to garrison; to protect. It is a military term; therefore it has the idea of might and strength. The might and strength of God's power protect us throughout our journey in life — through all the trials and temptations of life — and God will see to it that we shall reach the glorious end of life: salvation. God Himself, in His sovereign and omnipotent power, will see to it that we receive eternal life and the inheritance that is being kept for us.

John 17:11 "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one."

Rom 16:25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past.

2 Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

2 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

1 Pet 1:4-5 And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 1:24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Rev 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

Gen 28:15 "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Psa 37:28 *For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off.*

Psa 121:4 *Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

2. There is the assurance of faith. We are kept and shielded not only by God, but...
 - by our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - by our faith in God's power.

No person shall ever receive the hope of eternal life or of God's glorious inheritance unless he truly believes in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Belief in Christ is absolutely essential. But once we have truly trusted Christ as our Saviour, we are saved; we shall receive eternal life and the great inheritance of God's promise.

But note: a true faith is a *continuing faith and trust* in God's power. And a *continuing faith* is diligent and vigilant. It is a faith that loves Christ with all its heart and life. It is a faith that seeks to follow Christ and to please Him in all that it does. Therefore, a continuing faith is a faith that lives a holy, righteous and pure life and that serves the Lord Jesus Christ. Simply stated, the person who truly believes in Jesus Christ gives *all he is and has* to the Lord Jesus Christ: he gives *all that he is and has* to spread the love of Christ around the world. True faith is a real commitment that obeys and follows Christ and that trusts the power of God to deliver him through all the trials and temptations of life. This is the kind of faith that keeps a person. The person who has this kind of faith has the assurance that he will receive eternal life and the promise of the inheritance. God gives the true believer this kind of assurance.

John 3:15 *"That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."*

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

John 12:46 *"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."*

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Acts 10:43 *"All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."*

Acts 13:39 *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household."

Rom 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

2 Tim 3:15 And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ■