

# Session 2

## BORN AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE

*1 Peter 1:3-12*

### Memory Verse

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...*

— 1 PETER 1:3, CSB



## Born Again to a Living Hope

**THEOLOGICAL THEME:** In His great mercy, God gives us the gift of salvation, and with it, a hope that is alive and well. Unlike earthly possessions, this hope can never be taken away from us.

**CALL TO ACTION:** Believers are called to rejoice and persevere through trials because their living hope in Christ provides an unshakable foundation for their faith and guarantee of eternal inheritance.

The year was 1936. Louis Zamperini qualified for the Summer Olympics to be held in Berlin. At age 19, he was the youngest American to ever do so (a record he held even after his death). Though he didn't take home a medal, he did later set a collegiate record at the University of Southern California.

But in 1941, Zamperini shifted gears and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. His military career took him to Hawaii, where, in 1943, his aircraft had mechanical issues and crashed in the ocean some 850 miles south of Oahu, Hawaii. Zamperini was one of only three survivors.

Zamperini and two other soldiers survived for weeks on inflated life rafts, drinking rain water, and eating birds and fish. Zamperini survived a curious shark, a Japanese bomber, the death of one of his fellow soldiers, and a storm. After 47 days adrift, he and the pilot he crashed with landed their raft on an island and were taken prisoner by the Japanese sailors stationed there.


As a prisoner of war in a notoriously vicious POW camp (Naoetsu POW camp in northern Japan), he not only held onto hope, he shared hope with his fellow POWs, describing Italian family recipes to take their minds off their dire situation. Zamperini survived unimaginable

horrors and, after the war, when he was deeply struggling with PTSD and alcohol abuse, he attended a Billy Graham rally and found a new kind of hope—the hope of knowing Christ.

You might recognize Zamparini’s story from the book “Unbroken” by Laura Hillenbrand, or the movie of the same name. Whether or not you recognize his story, though, you may recognize the hope he had. Today we’re going to explore this type of hope that comes from the Lord. It is hope that lasts even in the darkest moments.

 How would you describe hope to another person?

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 How do Christians define hope differently than the world?

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## 1. A Living Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

 How did Peter describe salvation in these verses?

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 What do you think it means for a Christian to have a “living hope” (v.3)?

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The passage we’re reading today is all one sentence in the Greek. This kind of run-on sentence would dock us points on English papers today, but in the ancient Greek, being able to compose a thought like this was considered a skill! Our English translations add punctuation, and we’ve broken it up into three parts for our study today.

Peter opened this passage in praise: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3). God is worthy of all our praise and here Peter offered praise for the thing we should

be most thankful for, our salvation in Christ. This gift is given in God's great mercy. God shows us mercy by not condemning us for our sin (though it is within His power and right to do so) but rather offering us the gift of eternal life with Him thanks to the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!"  
-Ephesians 2:4-5

In the CSB, Peter's words are translated to describe salvation as a "new birth into a living hope" (v. 3). This "born again" language is used elsewhere in the New Testament, too:

"Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."" -John 3:3

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" -2 Corinthians 5:17

Before we knew Jesus, we were spiritually dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13-14), but when we place our trust in Him, we experience a "new birth." We are now new creations. The "old" us, who was a slave to sin, "has passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and now we have a "living hope" (v.3) that is alive and well, just like Jesus.

As believers, we have this hope because we know that, after our earthly body passes away, we are promised a glorious eternity of living with God. There is no greater hope than that found in Jesus.

The inheritance we receive in Christ can never be taken away (Peter described it as "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading," v. 4). Peter's original audience may have been displaced (v. 1) or experienced losses, but this eternal future was completely secure.



**How does God protect us by His power (v. 5)? How have you experienced this protection?**

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## 2. Trials of Faith (1 Peter 1:6-9)



What reason do Christians have to rejoice, even in the middle of grief and trials?

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What did Peter mean when he wrote, “so that the proven character of your faith . . . may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 7)?

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Rejoicing in unfavorable circumstances is a biblical theme that surely makes no sense to the nonbeliever:

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”

-James 1:2-4

Peter’s writing suggests that suffering isn’t an if scenario but a when scenario. Our suffering today looks quite different from Peter’s original audience, but we do suffer. Trials are simply a part of the Christian life.

Jesus spoke to this reality in John 15:

“Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . .”

-John 15:20a

Paul, who knew a thing or two about persecution, also wrote of this truth:

“In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

-2 Timothy 3:12

Here, Peter suggested that we should rejoice even in the midst of grief and suffering, “so that the proven character of your faith . . . may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (v. 7) We can rejoice because, as believers, we know heaven is waiting for us! Our eternal life is secure, even if our life today isn’t.

And God doesn’t waste the trials we walk through on earth. Our faith benefits as we face trials. Charles Spurgeon once said, “We must expect trial because trial is the element of faith. Faith without trial is like a diamond uncut, the brilliance of which has never been seen. A fish without water or a bird without air is faith without trial.”

As James wrote, trials produce endurance in our faith (James 1:2-4), and Peter wrote a faith that has been tested and remained true is “more valuable than gold” (v. 7). In this, too, we should rejoice and “consider it a great joy” (James 1:2).

We can have this counter-cultural reaction because we are rooted in Christ, and when we rely on Him, God shows up during the trials of our lives. God does some of His very best work in the valley. When we are desperate and think there is no way out, He can work in miraculous ways that are bigger and better than any rescue we could’ve dreamed up ourselves.

Our perseverance of faith will “result in praise, glory, and honor” (v. 7) at Jesus’s second coming.



**What can we learn about joy and rejoicing from this passage?**

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Like us, Peter’s original audience loved and believed in Jesus without having seen Him (John 20:29). Like them, we have “inexpressible and glorious joy” (v. 8) because of our salvation.

### 3. The Good News (1 Peter 1:10-12)



What did Peter say the prophets searched for? Why?

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What does this passage tell us about the blessings of salvation in Christ?

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Peter said the salvation God offers us is such an incredible gift that the Old Testament prophets who proclaimed the coming grace in the Messiah longed to know more. Though God revealed some about the Messiah to them, they did not fully comprehend what was coming. The Old Testament prophets' careful investigation revealed that proclamations were for the future.

Peter's letter told the believers that the time that the Old Testament prophets sought after and looked forward to had arrived. So great is the blessing of salvation that "angels long to catch a glimpse of these things" (v. 12).

This great blessing was brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit in everyday people working as a part of God's great design for our lives. Are you open to letting the Holy Spirit use you to bring the great blessing of salvation to those He has put in your life?



How do these verses impact your thinking about the importance of the gospel message?

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The gospel has been revealed to us. Today. Living in America in 2026, thousands of years after Peter penned this epistle. This unimaginable, undeserved blessing calls for praise:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." -1 Peter 1:3

## Conclusion

Peter continued his letter by praising God who, in His mercy, sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so we could be born again. Having received “new birth” (v. 3), believers experience “a living hope” (v.3) in the promise that we will spend eternity with the Lord.

Though the things of this earth, our possessions and everything we have earned by human standards, can be taken away, this future with the Lord is an inheritance from God “that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (v. 4).

Peter reminds us that trials and suffering aren’t optional, but part of the Christian life. Even in light of trials and suffering, we can have hope and rejoice because of our salvation and eternal destination. Our lives on earth are temporary, but eternity with the Lord awaits all believers.

We also rejoice knowing that, even in the hard times, God is working and helping strengthen our faith. Peter wrote that a faith that has been tested and remained true is “more valuable than gold” (v. 7). This honors God today, and will “result in praise, glory, and honor” (v. 7) at Jesus’s second coming.

This great gift deserves thanks, praise, and faithful obedience to live like Christ and share Him with others in our lives.

❓ Consider the truth of salvation that Peter conveyed in his letter. How would you summarize this for someone who doesn't yet know Jesus?

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❓ How does the fact that our inheritance in Christ cannot be taken away give you hope for the future?

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❓ What are some ways you could share your faith with others this week?

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## Memorize

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . .*

- 1 Peter 1:3, CSB

## References

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.war.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2304075/sports-heroes-who-served-olympic-runner-louis-zamperini>/[https://www.the-independent.com/news/obituaries/louis-zamperini-olympic-athlete-who-went-to-war-and-spent-47-days-on-a-life-raft-then-two-years-in-a-japanese-prison-camp-9585335.html?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.the-independent.com/news/obituaries/louis-zamperini-olympic-athlete-who-went-to-war-and-spent-47-days-on-a-life-raft-then-two-years-in-a-japanese-prison-camp-9585335.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>2</sup> John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Pe 1:3–12.

<sup>3</sup> Spurgeon, The Spurgeon Study Bible: Notes (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1668.

<sup>4</sup> John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Pe 1:10–12.