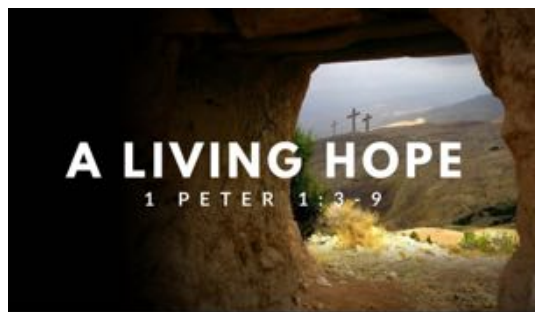


A Heavenly Inheritance – Eternal Life

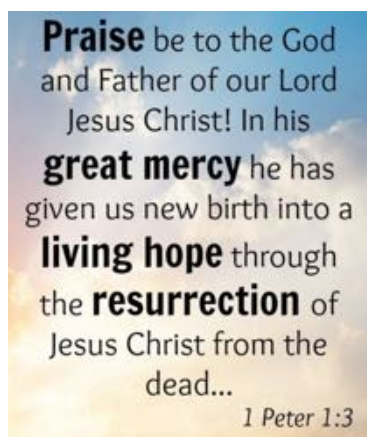


³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation

ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been ^[c]grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Peter starts verse three, praising God the Father, who has begotten us again to a living hope, according to His abundant mercy. He continues this first chapter by accentuating the different roles of the Persons of the Trinity. Remember that mercy is when you do not get what you deserve, and God, in His mercy (not doing anything He had to do), caused us to be begotten again (born again) into a LIVING HOPE. We are not hopeless



as the heathen are. This reminds me of 1 Thessalonians 4, where we are told that when our loved ones die, although we mourn, we DO NOT GRIEVE AS THOSE WHO HAVE NO HOPE. As human beings, we are affected by our emotions. We might be happy. We might become sad. We feel the loss. We get depressed. We feel oppressed at times. But, we have a LIVING HOPE.

The Greek word for living is the word from which we get the word zoo. It is the word not just for living things, **but living as something of vitality**, the nature or manner which

characterizes all living creatures as such.¹ When we are born again by believing in Jesus, we have hope that cannot be extinguished. It is an expectant hope. It is a sincere hope. In the end, it is a hope that doesn't give up. It's a hope that keeps on keeping on. It is a hope that won't throw in the towel. And Peter tells us that this "born again" kind of living hope is based on the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

From the dawn of time, men and women lived out their lives and died just wondering what became of them after they had passed. There was no revelation from God to tell humankind what was to become of them. I have been to the great burial tombs of Ireland, where they would cremate their dead and store the ashes in leather bags that were put on a big plate. They put the remains in there and waited for that one day of the year when the sun's rays would come in, lighting up the inner chamber and taking the person's soul back into the sun. We know that a day will come when we turn back into dust (Genesis 3:19). We will not need to wait a year for the sun's rays to take us somewhere. We will be greeted by the SON OF GOD, Jesus, who will take us to the clouds to be with Him. (1 Thessalonians 4) The pictures below are from Bru Na Boine (Dwelling of the Boyne River) in Ireland. It is called Newgrange in English. I have been there multiple times.



The believer has such a different hope. We have an expectant hope BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD. We have a believing hope and a hopeful hope. As we learned over these last seven years, the evidence that Jesus rose from the dead is overwhelming. We can read the accounts and testimonies of many Jewish Rabbis who not only believe Jesus rose from the dead, but some have put their faith in Jesus as their Messiah and Lord.²

Let's look at verse 4.

¹ Bultmann, R. (1964–). [ζάω, ζωή \(βιόω, βίος\), ἀναζάω, ζῶον, ζωογονέω, ζωοποιέω](#). G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 832). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

² <https://www.messianicgoodnews.org/rabbis-who-believed/>

⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you

This resurrection of Jesus from the dead gives us an incorruptible inheritance. It can't be chiseled away. It cannot be diminished. It is what it is, and it will not fade out. It cannot be taken away. Once saved, a person cannot be unsaved. Once you are born again as a child of God, you cannot be unborn. That inheritance we are promised is eternal life, and praise God; a place is reserved for every believer in heaven. There is no waiting a year to be taken back to the sun in its rays. No, when we take our last breath on earth, our souls and spirits will be present with the Lord. *"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 5:8). Jesus told the thief on the cross, *"Today you will be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:43)

, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Not only are we provided an absolute place in heaven, but Peter then tells us that while we are waiting to go to heaven, we are also sustained BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH. It is our faith in Him that saves us. Our faith in Him sustains us while we're waiting to leave these mortal bodies. He supports us through faith as he helps us get through life. This wasn't always known, but it is something that was only revealed at its appointed time to humankind in Jesus Christ.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

As I said on Sunday, Peter writes these books to encourage believers who are being persecuted and who have fled. He is saying that when we face insurmountable problems, it is HE THAT SUSTAINS US by our faith in Him. He says our living hope, our final hope, is in our secure place with Him, but "for a little while," we may have to go through "various trials." We ALL GO THROUGH TRIALS. That's just part of being on a planet broken by sin. I don't know about you all, but sometimes I wonder why life has to be so hard. The circumstances of life are challenging, and death itself can be brutal, but Peter reminds us repeatedly that we have a LIVING HOPE. It is a hope that follows us and is a salve to the aches and pains of this life.

⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Genuine faith is precious. It is more precious than gold. The trials of life will test your faith and my faith, but that kind of faith should result in praise, honor, and glory being given for the gift of Jesus Christ. He is our shalom. He is our peace. He is our Sabbath rest. He is a friend upon whom we can depend. I remember hearing the song by Simon and Garfunkel called "Bridge over Troubled Water" years ago. I was in the middle of surgery to remove cancer from a tear duct. I remember feeling so alone while two plastic surgeons worked on me. I was listening to my iPod, and for some reason, every song on it had been erased (over 5,000!) The only one left on that iPod was "Bridge Over Troubled Water." When I heard about it, I realized that Jesus is the only bridge over troubled water.

When you're weary, feeling small,
When tears are in your eyes
I will dry them all
I'm on your side
Oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found

Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down

When you're down and out
When you're on the street
When evening falls so hard
I will comfort you
I'll take your part
Oh when darkness comes
And pain is all around

When trouble is all around, He says, "I will lay me down like a bridge over troubled water".

⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.



After Jesus rose from the dead, he came to the disciples, but Thomas was not there. Thomas said, "I'm not going to believe ANY of this unless I see the nail piercings in His hand and the hole in His side." A little later in the evening, Jesus showed up, and John in his Gospel tells us, "²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be

unbelieving, but believing."²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"²⁹ Jesus said to him, Thomas because you have seen Me, you have believed. ***Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (John 20:27-29)**

We are blessed because we haven't seen, and yet we believe. And Peter tells us that in our belief, we can rejoice and have "joy inexpressible and full of glory." And the result of our faith in Him is the very salvation of our souls.

Let us pray.