

A Living Hope!

Peter proclaims in 1 Peter 1:3-5, *"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, 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"*. Our hope in life is built on something more than the temporal things of this life! Our only hope is built on Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection. We believe not because of who we are or what we have done, we believe because God has worked in us a new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus has provided for us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. In New York City, down on 5th Avenue at the entrance of the RCA building, there is a gigantic statue of Atlas struggling and straining, holding the world on his shoulders. Across the street at St. Patrick's Cathedral, behind the high altar, there is a small statue of Jesus as a little boy holding the world in his hand with no effort at all. When we are struggling and hurt, feeling the pain, wondering about tomorrow and anxious as to what it may bring, may we remember that Jesus Has the Whole World in His Hands.

Peter continues in 1st Peter 1:6-7, *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed"* People are a lot like tea bags. You never know their real strength until you put them in hot water and for a really long time! Every crisis has both danger and opportunity. It can Make Us or Break Us. It can Refine Us or Destroy Us. Life is determined by the way we handle the hot spots of our days. The refining process includes heating up and cooling down. The flames make us tender so we can bend without breaking, be shaped without shattering. And the cooling teaches us the fine art of waiting until we are strong enough to live into our new reason for being. May the Refiner's fire become souls our desire.

Peter concludes in 1st Peter 1:8, *"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy"*. It is joy, unspeakable and full of glory. The Greek term CHARA means "rejoicing with a joy that is beyond expression." It is knowing that no trouble enjoys everlasting life. It is believing that this too shall pass. (And It Will!) It is in all things giving thanks for the goodness of God. For us to have this "Living Hope" that Peter proclaims We have to let Go and Let God! When we do, we become grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are refined by the refiners' fire and we experience the inexpressible joy that gives us a calm assurance that we can face uncertain days of our Living and Eternal Hope in Jesus Christ!