

Post-Exile Prophets
LIVING HOPE
Friday, September 19
Reading: 1 Peter 1:1-8

1 Peter 1:6 *In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

“In reality, hope is the worst of all evils, because it prolongs the torments of man.”
(Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Human, All-too-Human’)

“Hope is a horrible thing, you know. I don’t know who decided to package hope as a virtue because it’s not.
It’s a plague. Hope is like walking around with a fishhook in your mouth
and somebody just keeps pulling it and pulling it.”
(Ann Patchett, ‘State of Wonder’)

These statements were made by people who obviously do not know Christ. The Apostle Peter wrote his letter towards the end of his life to Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire who were suffering because of their faith in Christ. He gives them hope because of the wonderful salvation they have and the inheritance awaiting them in heaven. It is “a living hope.” Hope is a confident assurance that God will keep His promises. Hope is something we can be confident in and it can give us peace in the trying times of life.

Because of God’s mercy and Christ’s redemption we have hope for the future. There is an imperishable inheritance awaiting us in eternity. We also have hope for the present. God’s power protects us and He uses our trials to refine and strengthen our faith. Like Peter’s readers, we have not seen Christ personally, but these precious promises should fill us with joy.

Peter addresses this letter to “God’s Elect.” He locates his readers both physically and spiritually. The places mentioned put these believers in what is now northern Turkey. More important was their spiritual location in Christ. He uses the word “exiles” which refers to someone who is living temporarily in a foreign country. As Christians, we remember that “this world is not my home; I’m only passing through.” We are located in Christ because we have been chosen by God, set apart by the Spirit, and live in obedience to Christ. Because of this, our lives should have an abundance of God’s grace and peace. How is your spiritual location? Are you where God wants you to be? Or are you lost?

It may seem strange to connect joy with suffering, but this is a theme Peter will return to throughout this letter. Despite the trials and persecutions of life, believers can experience the joy of the Lord because of our living hope in Christ and the blessings God has in store. How a person responds to tribulation will tell us much about their faith and relationship with Christ. Trials will skim away the impurities and refine our faith. Having joy in the midst of trouble will prove our faith is real. Peter proclaims that our proven faith is much more precious than pure gold. Our faith will receive the praise of heaven while gold will merely be road pavement! How do you respond to trials in your life? What steps might you need to take to respond with joy and trust during these times?