

# A Living Hope

Advent – Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> of November

1 Peter 1:1-9

To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

## A Living Hope

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice,<sup>[a]</sup> even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen<sup>[b]</sup> him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Yesterday we learnt Omicron Variant from the African continent is starting its insidious spread across the globe. I must admit I did feel deflated with the possibility that the coronavirus had mutated again. As I listened to the News reports regarding this South African variant, I prayed this would not equate to us all being under threat again.

Before this news, I had decided to preach for Advent to preach of the four realities of the Christian faith. Today's being *Hope*.

What is the source of their Hope?

When Peter wrote this letter about AD 64, persecutions were still taking place among the young Christian churches. They had been alienated from society because of their faith. Peter was reminding them of the grace of God and that they must remain faithful to their calling. Life is a difficult pilgrimage, one that demands insight and endurance. There is a heavenly reward for staying faithful to the end. Hope, however, is not only in the future. It is also in the present. "Salvation" has already begun.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, we join our prayer with the Psalmist: Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Now may the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)**

Peter promised the early Christians a “living hope.” Incidentally, the word “salvation” has nothing to do with life after death. In this context, the term salvation means health or wholeness. It is also very close to the Hebrew word SHALOM, which means peace. The Hope that Peter advocated has to do with wholeness or peace that is possible today. For Peter, Hope is an active and living reality. He says that this living Hope is one that can never perish, spoil or fade.

The living Hope that Peter talked about is a hope that never wears out. It will be there longer than any antique. The Hope of God is a hope that never dies or fades. **It is infinite, permanent.**

In our English understanding – we do not see the permanent nature of the term Hope. We tend to add the word so, I hope so ... yet this is far from the original language – to place your Hope on something – it was like building upon a sure foundation. There was not a hint of doubt.

The early Church was in danger of giving up their faith because of the persecutions they endured. They were required to take stock so they could keep the Hope that was given to them. They were required to express their faith. The Apostle Peter assures Christ’s followers that God is with them in the present moment. They were to live with a **hope** that would never perish, spoil or fade. With Hope like that, they could withstand any sufferings, hardships or crises that came their way; and for us, another coronavirus variant?

When all seems hopeless, we have three choices.

1. The first is to abandon Hope.

When all seems hopeless, do you give up? Do you abandon your faith and resolve that nothing can be done?

***Abandoning our faith will only make things worse.***

2. The second choice we have is to pretend. We can either abandon Hope or pretend. Both lead to hopelessness.
3. There is a third choice. We can believe, just as Peter did, that there is indeed a living hope.

Erickson wrote:

*The one who has Hope, who knows the why for his existence, will bear almost any problems in a real sense. The why the purpose of existence is related to the future and what one anticipates will occur:*

*The Gospel offers its blessing of peace, joy and satisfaction in a way that is contrary to what we expect. Because the Gospel has been, is, and will always be the way of salvation, the only way, the Church must preserve in the Gospel at all costs – sadly, when the Gospel is modified, the vitality of the Church is lost.*

Hope is the eternal promise of God:

**By his great mercy, he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,**

- ✓ In God, we trust.
- ✓ In God, we have placed our faith;
- ✓ In the promises of God, do we have our Hope!

What the future holds – we don't know. God continues to guild his people to green pastures, and he has placed this Hope in our hearts. If I can close with the promise for our whole welfare, we have set our Hope on the living God.

To God be glory forever!

**References:**

David Helm: preaching the Word of God – 1-2 Peter & Jude  
Millare Erickson; Christian Theology - *Hope*.