

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
May 5, 2013

A Living Hope

Read 1 Peter 1:3-12

Key verse: “May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

Though many people see only a hopeless end, the Christian rejoices in an endless hope. This hope, Biblical hope, is not just wishful thinking or airy optimism. It is a “living hope,” a firm conviction based on what God did when He raised Jesus from the dead (v. 3). Our hope is also based on the *salvation* that Christ has provided for us (vv. 10-12).

When we consider what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we can “rejoice in this hope” (v. 6), even as we face trials or suffering. For we know that this life’s struggles are not our final experience. Eventually we will be with Christ forever!

1 Peter 1:3-12 gives several reasons for *rejoicing in hope* during times of trial:

1. We rejoice in hope because, in Christ, we’ve been given NEW LIFE.

Through Christ, God “has given us new birth” (v. 3).

The Bible teaches that, apart from Christ, we are *spiritually dead* (see, for example, Ephesians 2:1-2). 1 John 5:12 says, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

When anyone trusts Jesus Christ as Savior, He comes into that person’s life and gives a new start and new life in Him! “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (1 Corinthians 5:17). We rejoice in hope because, in Christ, we’ve been given new life.

2. We rejoice in hope because, in Christ, we’ve been given A NEW HOME.

This eternal home is described in verse 4: “You have a pure and enduring inheritance that cannot perish—an inheritance that is presently kept safe in heaven for you.” We rejoice in an eternal hope, even when we face trials, because this short earthly life is not all there is. Through Christ, we are headed not into an eternal sunset but into an everlasting sunrise. And that is good reason to *rejoice in hope*.

3. We rejoice in hope because even our present trials serve an eternal purpose. When gold is heated, impurities rise to the top and are skimmed off. So trials serve to refine our faith: “You now rejoice in this hope, even if it’s necessary for you to be distressed for a short time by various trials. This is necessary so that your faith may be found genuine. (Your faith is more valuable than gold, which will be destroyed even though it is itself tested by fire.) Your genuine faith will result in praise, glory, and honor for you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (vv. 6-7).

A living hope that enables us to rejoice even in times of trials or suffering—this is the birthright of every believer. It is ours today, just as it has been from the early days of Christianity. The third-century Christian martyr, Cyprian, wrote a letter which began by describing how bad his world had become. Cyprian’s letter ends by describing the living hope that enabled him and all believers to rejoice:

“If I were to ascend some high mountain and look out over the wide lands, you know very well what I should see: outlaws on the highways, pirates on the sea, armies fighting, cities burning. In the amphitheaters men are murdered to please applauding crowds; selfishness and cruelty and misery and despair are under all roofs. It is a bad world, an incredibly bad world.

“But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians—and I am one of them.”

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