



THE MESSAGE OF 1 PETER FOR TODAY
GROWTH GROUP GUIDE

LIVING HOPE

1 PETER LIVING HOPE

When times are tough, where can hope be found? That's what Peter's first letter is all about. We're obviously in tough times as we face a pandemic. Of course, for Peter's audience, their hardship wasn't a pandemic. It was persecution for following Jesus. So, as we read 1 Peter, we will need to keep that difference in mind. But the hope which Peter could offer his audience is the same hope we can have now: the hope that springs from how Jesus suffered in the past to win us a glorious future! And this hope can radically change our lives just as it did theirs.

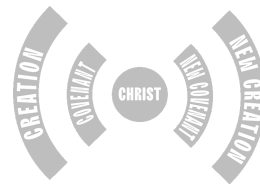
During the pandemic, we can't meet together physically. So these studies have been specially designed to be shared over Zoom. Each study has the Bible passage on the left, and discussion points on the right, all on a single slide which your leader can screen-share. Group members using devices with Zoom's Annotate feature can do things like underline particular words in the passage while you discuss it. You'll need to experiment over the coming weeks to find ways that might be useful! Of course, if you prefer to work with a hard copy instead, you can always print it.

Discussion over Zoom can be a bit harder than in-person. So all the studies have been made shorter than they would be normally. Each study has just one Bible passage of 7-15 verses and just 4-6 discussion points. For most discussion points, there'll be plenty of room for different responses, in which case the leader should explicitly ask each group member to share their own response. This will take longer per discussion point, so it's a good thing there aren't many of them per study! But if your group would like to then explore further, beyond the study, feel free to do so.

To encourage Christians in the present, Peter often looks back to Israel's past and forward

to the world's future. So most of these studies find it helpful to reference the 5 Episodes of [God's story](#) which MPC explored last term:

1. Creation
2. Covenant
3. Christ
4. New Covenant
5. New Creation



These 5 Episodes summarise the whole Bible like this:

God's aim has always been to display his glorious goodness by gathering to himself a people willing to live with him under the blessing of his rule. Because of our corrupted hearts, that doesn't work in Eden (1), and it doesn't work in the land of Israel under their covenant law either (2)... but God shows his glorious goodness as Jesus dies under the curse of that law (3), and rises to call together a people freed from curse to live with new hearts shaped by his Spirit (4), who will finally live with God in his perfected place (5).

Keeping these 5 Episodes in mind will help us understand the hope Peter offers.

Our prayer is that Peter's message about Jesus will give us all hope in these tough times. We pray that others will see the radical life-change that hope in Jesus can make in us, especially at a time like this, and turn to hope in Jesus too.

Dan, Doug, Jeremy, Pete, Phil

April 2020

1 LIVING HOPE

11 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

3 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, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 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. 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. 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, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. 13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

1. Who's the author and audience of this letter? (v1-2)

2. What seems to be the situation? (v6)

3. Which keyword is repeated at the start and end? (v3,13)
Why would this be important in the situation?

4. V10-13 compare the prophets waiting for Christ in Episode 2 of [God's story](#) with Christians waiting for Christ's return in Episode 4. How could this help Christians to have hope?

5. In tough times, what promises can we offer each other?
What promises must we not offer?

6. How would it affect you to read v3-9 every morning, until you find yourself remembering its good news throughout the day?

