

Holding onto Hope
Growth Group Discussion
2 Peter 3:1-10

Intro question

- What is your current feeling about the state of the world? Here are some options: Optimistic; Fearful; Hopeful; Discouraged; Other? Please have everyone share an answer, with a one-sentence elaboration. (Leaders: Don't let anyone in the group judge, fix, or correct anyone's answer! This is just an opportunity for people to share where they currently are).
- Peter's words in today's passage are aimed at helping us take hope in the face of a discouraging world.

1. Read 2 Peter 3:1-2, then discuss the following.

- Peter seems to be saying that he wants his readers to recall the consistent message of the Scriptures, so that they're thinking will be stimulated.
 - If you had to summarize the message of the Bible (Old Testament and new), how might you do it?
 - Do you think there's a specific aspect of the biblical story Peter wants his readers to recall? Which one?
 - How might recalling this message stimulate us to wholesome thinking?
- The Biblical authors repeatedly speak of our minds, or our thinking. (See, for example, 1 Peter 1:13, Col. 3:2 and Phil. 4:8.) How does our thinking impact our experience of reality?

2. Read 2 Peter 3:3-7, then discuss the following.

- The phrase, "above all," in v. 3, literally translates a Greek phrase that says, "Knowing this first..." Why is it of utmost importance for Peter's first readers (and us) to know in advance that scoffers will come?
- In your own words, how would you describe the claim that these scoffers will make (v. 4)?
 - Even if you don't "scoff," do you ever find yourself wrestling with the same question? What is that experience like for you?
 - How do you typically respond to that question in your mind?
- Pastor Josh summarized Peter's response (vv. 5-7) as follows: "*If God was powerful enough to create the world by water, and powerful enough to intervene and judge the world by water, he is powerful enough to come and judge the world in a final way.*"
 - Do you think that this summary captures Peter's argument? Why or why not?
 - **Application:** Peter is attempting to encourage followers of Jesus by telling them/us to **remember God's power**. From the Bible, what acts of God's power most encourage you? From your own life, do you have stories of how God has shown his power?
 - Do you find any hope in recounting God's acts of power? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about the fact that Peter is trying to encourage us by assuring us of a coming judgment? How could this assurance be encouraging?

3. Read 2 Peter 3:8-10, then discuss the following.

- V. 9 captures the second reason Peter says that we can be hopeful in the face of the world's realities. How would you state it in your own words?
 - What glimpse do you see of God's heart in these words?
 - God is allowing the world to continue in its current state because he is immensely patient. Does this fact have any practical value in encouraging you? Why or why not?
- In v. 8, what do you see about God's perspective of time?
 - Noting that "a day is like a thousand years," Pastor Josh said, "God sees each day he gives you as holding a thousand years' worth of moments and possibilities." How do you feel about this? Does it encourage or challenge you in any aspect of your life?
- What do you think is Peter's point in v. 10, on the heels of encouraging us to take hope because of God's patience?
- What practical take-aways do you think God wants you to have as a result of this study? Are you encouraged? Challenged? Other?

4. Prayer

- If anyone among you have shown discouragement or other difficulties throughout this discussion, take some time to pray for them.
- Take some time to share and pray about other needs and concerns that may be weighing on your minds.