

Hope in Exile: Holding it Together

I Peter 1:1-12

Message Outline

I will...

look to God more than adversity.

consider identity more than limits.

choose

love over fear.

trust over doubt.

joy over resentment.

Looking Back

Peter wrote to scattered Gentile and Jewish believers who made up parts of the early church in the Western and Northern parts of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). In the days of Nero's reign, Christians were blamed for the burning of Rome and faced the growing threat of persecution including martyrdom. Some of these believers may have fled from Rome (where Peter wrote this letter) and joined with churches the apostle Paul helped begin in Asia Minor. Peter wrote his letter to encourage these Christians to hold onto hope while facing adversity, and these same words can provide hope for us today...

Thinking It Through

disagree|agree, consider|contemplate

Peter has been called the apostle of hope; Paul, the apostle of faith; John, the apostle of love. The word that conveys the theme, however, is suffering (which, with cognate words, occurs sixteen times). The word hope is tied to it—the Christian hope in the time of trial. ~ J. Vernon McGee

Persecution can either cause you to grow or grumble in the Christian life. It all depends on your response! In writing to Jewish believers struggling in the midst of persecution, Peter reminds them of their 'roots.' They have been born again to a living hope, and therefore both their character and conduct can be above reproach as they imitate the Holy One who called them. ~ Bruce Wilkinson

Only God is able. It is faith in him that we must rediscover. With this faith we can transform bleak and desolate valleys into sunlit paths of joy and bring new light into the dark caverns of pessimism.. ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Working it Out

1. How has facing adversity played a part in your faith and life? What are some of the truths you have uncovered or remembered when facing adversity in the past or present?
 2. Read 1 Peter 1:1-12...
 - a. What actions of God are described in these verses, especially in verses 1-5?
 - b. How does Peter remind believers facing persecution both of their present reality and of their identity in Christ in these verses, especially in verses 2-5, 6-7, 10-12?
 3. What aspect of God's work or of your identity in Jesus do you find meaningful or want to remember right now?
 4. Choose your adventure by picking one, two, or three of the options below. How are you feeling or experiencing...
 - a. Fear:
 - b. Doubt:
 - c. Resentment:
 5. Now consider or discuss the following choice that corresponds to your answer in #4...
 - a. How does love overcome fear and what will you do to choose love?
 - b. How does trust overcome doubt and what will you do to choose trust?
 - c. How does joy overcome resentment and what will you do to choose joy?
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Hope in Exile Reading Plan
Character Study: Abraham and Sarah

The story of Abraham's life stretches from Genesis chapter 11 to chapter 25. The record of his faith in God as well as his failures reveals what it looks like to walk with God even in our weakness. Along with his wife Sarah, Abraham waited for God's promises to be fulfilled while living the life of a nomad. He and Sarah experienced the painful results of mistakes, found patience to wait on God even when they doubted, and discovered an unshakable core of security in God alone even when facing adversity. This reading plan provides an overview of Abraham's life.

Monday

Answering the Call and Stumbling
Genesis 11:27-12:20

Tuesday

Victory and Security
Genesis 14:14-15:21

Wednesday

Human Solutions and God's Promise
Genesis 16:1-16, 18:1-15

Thursday

God Sees and Provides
Genesis 21:1-21

Friday

Faith Tested
Genesis 22:1-19

Saturday Reflection

Psalm 90

Prayer: Lord, thank you for showing me your love and creating a relationship with me. Help me find my security in you. Give me faith to trust your promise and to believe that you will faithfully provide everything I need. I love you. Amen.