

**1 Peter 1:3-5**  
**(Micah 7:18-20; John 3:1-8)**  
**“Born Again to a Living Hope”**

## **Introduction**

Most Christians today think of the gospel merely in terms of forgiveness of sin, rather than in terms of being reborn into a whole new way of thinking and living. We want what the world around us wants. We spend our time and money trying to acquire what the surrounding culture tells us we need in order to be happy. Churches tend to grow by asking what people want and then giving it to them. If we treat people as spiritual consumers, why are surprised when people act like consumers of spiritual products rather than acting like disciples of Jesus?

How different Jesus was in his approach to spiritual seekers: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?” (Matthew 16:24-26).

So, what is a Christian? A Christian is a disciple of Jesus: one who leaves everything to follow him. A Christian is a new creation, someone who has been brought from death to life through Jesus’ resurrection victory. A Christian is part of God’s new community, reclaiming human history for him, the rightful Lord of history.

This is precisely what the apostle Peter is describing in this letter we are studying together. Our culture tells us that to live meaningfully, we must be physically healthy and sexually attractive, must have lovely homes and cars, and enough money to enjoy the trips and toys that we see advertised on TV and in magazines. We spend an astonishing amount of money on ourselves – more clothes, more athletic equipment, more junk for our children to sort through when we die. And then what? How often do most of us ask ourselves this simple question: When I stand before Jesus, will he say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” or “Depart from me. I never knew you, for you did not do my Father’s will”? Peter is aiming in this letter to show us just how radically countercultural the gospel really is, and is reminding us that it all flows out of God’s “great mercy” (1:3).

## **Body**

- 1. In a world of death, God offers us eternal life.**
- 2. In a world of despair, God offers us living hope.**
- 3. In a world of instability, God offers us a lasting inheritance.**
- 4. In a world of danger, God offers us salvation.**

## **Conclusion**

If you have only been born once, then you have every reason to fear death. For you, death will mean eternal separation from God who is the source of love, truth and beauty. But if you have been born again, you have every reason to live in hope, hope that your inheritance is not here, but in heaven, and that whatever you may face – whether physical disease or financial failure, whether betrayal and rejection by those you have trusted or the death of your most cherished dreams – nothing can finally destroy you, because you are guarded by God’s own power through faith for a sure and certain salvation, and eternal life surpassing all that you have most loved and enjoyed here.

But make no mistake: If you have been born again and therefore have biblical grounds for holding fast to this living hope, then your life is being transformed and your behavior is being shaped increasingly by your glad obedience to the Lord’s commands. You know that his ways lead to life and that in disobedience and rebellion is disillusionment and death. The church must begin telling people the truth again: According to Jesus, and according to the rest of the Scriptures, there is no forgiveness for those whose lives are not being transformed; there is no living hope for those who continue to run their heedless ways in reckless disregard of God’s Word.

I plead with you not to leave this room without searching your heart and reflecting on your life to see whether or not you have grounds for claiming the promises of our text. And if you are still running from God by doing your will rather than his, deal with yourself now before you leave this place. Ask the Lord of grace and mercy to help you to renounce Satan and his lies, to believe God’s Word, to receive his promise of life to those who turn to Jesus and cast themselves upon his mercy.

As the prophet Isaiah said in calling Israel to repentance, “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7).

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