



WITNESS Sermon Study Guide

Week 10: New Hope

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In a world that often measures success by material wealth and achievements, it's easy to get caught up in the pursuit of things that ultimately leave us feeling empty. True hope, however, is not found in these temporary pursuits but in the eternal promises we have in Christ. This hope is steadfast and unchanging, providing a firm foundation even amidst life's struggles and uncertainties.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-25

The first recipients of Peter's letter were early Christians who faced enormous pressure and persecution because of their decision to follow Jesus. Peter writes to encourage them, not with trouble-shooting solutions, but with a powerful reminder of where their hope is found.

Followers of Jesus live with real and certain hope—secured through His death and resurrection. Christ has won. His kingdom is here. His people live in victory!

And yet, the original audience of Peter's letter were still suffering, and if we fast forward 2,000 years, the brokenness remains. We live in a “now and not yet” tension—a space between Jesus' victory and its full expression. Some people may try to alleviate the tension by leaning too far one way or the other. Some may swing toward despair: “What's the point? This life is a bust.” Others fall into spiritual overconfidence: “The victory is won, so if I have enough faith, everything will work out perfectly.” Neither extreme is helpful.

The Christian life involves a delicate balance between living in the victory of Christ and acknowledging the reality of suffering. We don't own the victory fully yet, but we do have hope. Not just wishful thinking, but robust, grounded, hard-won hope.

1. In what ways have you experienced the tension between victory and suffering in your life?
2. Do you tend to lean towards one over the other? When have you found yourself leaning into despair or overconfidence?



3. How does the idea of “now and not yet” change the way you see your current struggles?

How do we respond?

So, what does it mean to have robust hope in a broken world? Let’s reflect on three challenges from Peter: live as foreigners, live in joy, and love each other.

Live as Foreigners (1 Peter 1:17)

As followers of Christ, we are called to live as foreigners in this world—not withdrawing from it, but living as though this isn’t all there is. The world may have expectations around each stage of life and how it should look (eg. get into a good uni, have a successful career, marry this kind of person, buy the right house, etc.) but we are invited to reject the ‘tick boxes’ and instead ask God what He wants for us. When we shift our focus from earthly gains to eternal treasures, we can invest in what truly matters and navigate life’s challenges with a sense of purpose and direction, knowing that our true home is with God and our identity is in Him.

1. Are you living more like a resident or a foreigner in this world?
2. What comforts or pursuits might be holding you back from living more fully for God’s kingdom?
3. In what ways can you begin to live with an eternal perspective in your daily life?

Live in Joy (1 Peter 1:6 & 8)

The Christian journey is not exempt from trials and suffering, but it is marked by a joy that transcends circumstances—a joy that is rooted in hope. The early Christians were persecuted, misunderstood, and scattered. And yet Peter told them to rejoice. Not because life was easy, but because their future was secure. Joy based on Christ and the hope we have in Him, is a powerful testimony to the world.

1. What are some obstacles to joy in your life right now? Are there spiritual practices (like worship, prayer, or gratitude) that help you reconnect with joy?
2. What does it look like for you to live in joy—even when things are hard?
3. How might joy be a witness to others about the hope you carry?



Love Each Other (1 Peter 1:22)

Peter challenges believers to love within the church, across differences, and even toward those who reject or hurt us. Why is this so crucial? Because we're all on the same mission, and we've all received the same hope. Loving each other is not just about kindness—it's about showing the world what the kingdom of God looks like in action.

1. Why do you think Peter emphasised love in the midst of suffering?
2. Are there people in your community who are hard to love right now?
3. What might it look like to love them in practical, intentional ways?

You may like to close with a reflection on the hymn *It Is Well With My Soul*.

Horatio Spafford, who lost his fortune in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, and then, tragically, all four of his daughters in a shipwreck, penned the words of this famous hymn as he sailed across the same waters where his daughters were lost:

“When peace like a river attends my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.”

How could he say such a thing? Because he had hope. Real, unshakable, tested-through-the-fire hope. The same kind of hope Peter wrote about. The same kind of hope available to each of us today.

1. What does this hymn and the story behind it stir in you?
2. Do you think you could say “it is well with my soul” in a similar moment? Why or why not?
3. What does this kind of hope look like in your own story?