

Living Hope That Will Never Fade
Life Group Discussion and Reflection

Open Up:

How would you describe “hope” to a friend who is hurting?

Read: 1 Peter 1:3-9

1. Hope

- A. When was a time you felt heartsick over a “hope deferred”? What comforted you during that time?
- B. **Read Romans 5:3-5:** This passage talks about suffering and hope. Frank Thielman wrote on this passage that “it is the love of God that provides a firm foundation for the hope of believers... God’s love for them is clear from the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and from the sacrificial life ...and death of Christ.” This verse in Romans shows that God does not exempt believers from suffering but that God’s love for them in the present and the past are signs that point to a future world free from suffering and full of God’s love. How does God’s love for you give you hope?

Talk about some of the ways God’s love for you in the past gives you hope that God’s faithfulness and love will remain in the future.

2. An Inheritance that won’t perish, spoil, or fade:

- A. Peter reminds his readers, who are suffering all kinds of trials, that the inheritance that comes from being children of God is 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.”

Peter says that this inheritance, and even your faith in God’s promises, is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power. This does not mean you won’t suffer. But it means you suffer with great hope that God is shielding what is most important. Your faith.

In a world where many trust in money, wealth, comfort, how should knowing that we have an unfading, non-perishing, unspoilable inheritance affect how we live our lives?

Share any recent examples from your life.

- B. In the message, Pastor Dave shared with us a helpful quote from Henri Nouwen, *“While optimism makes us live as if someday soon things will soon go better for us, hope frees us from the need to predict the future and allows us to live in the present, with the deep trust that God will never leave us alone.”*

How often do we try to “predict the future” when things are tough? What does this usually look like?

What does it mean to live with a deep trust that God will never leave us alone, despite the unpredictability of the future?

- C. How does this passage encourage you to live in light of where you are heading? Does it give you confidence in *how* you are going to get there? What difference does the knowing of the inheritance you have in heaven, and the shielding power of God for your faith, make as you go about your lives in this broken world?

3. God Protects what is most important - Our Faith:

- A. Pastor Dave and Colton spoke about how when faced with death and sickness, we can rejoice in the faithfulness of God, who preserves our faith. Are you at a place in your faith, that if all else were to fall away, it would stand, and that you could rejoice? Why or why not?
- B. Juan Sanchez asks a good question about this text: “How have past (and present) trials shown you the genuineness of your faith? How might that change the way you think about those times of hardship?”

4. Faith that Results in Praise, Glory, and Honour when Jesus Christ is revealed:

As we seek to see our faith strengthened in trying times, we looked at two practical ways we can do that. Take some time to consider each of these ways, and how you can put these into practice in your personal life and as a group and family.

- A. Prayer: “The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.” (1 Peter 4:7)

- i. The phrases “be alert” and “be watchful” appear alongside the command to pray for one another numerous times in the New Testament. Why do you think it’s important to “be alert” and “watchful” when it comes to prayer?
- ii. Take some time to go to this week's bulletin. Each week we include a list of prayer requests, including new and regular requests, as well as some focused prayer requests for the week. Take some time as a group or family to focus on prayer and pray through these. And, just by way of reminder, praying is not just “a way to start your time and/or a way to end it.” It is a significant *work* and command from God that we are called to do, in private and together. Let’s take this time together and *really focus* on praying for one another, and for those in need.

B. Connecting in Life Groups: “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:8-10)

- i. “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” What does this mean and why does ‘not grumbling’ matter? Hospitality during the pandemic has been very challenging. As the regulations change and we are able to host people again, what changes do you need to make in order to ‘reopen’ your home and your life to others? Think of where you can start and make a plan.
- ii. “Use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” These gifts, whether they are gifts of service, words of encouragement, or other various forms of gifts that God has given, are given by God to serve others. What are some of these gifts that you have been given?

Think of a few practical ways you can use those gifts to serve others and write them down. If you are in a life group, what are some ways you can come together to use your gifts to serve others?

Wrap Up

As you close, here is a poetic prayer prompt as you pray for those in our community: for Amanda and Aaron and family, for Myrtle, for those mourning the loss of Aline, and for those in Ukraine as well as others. Let's pray diligently this week.

"Dear Lord, for all in pain
We come to Thee;
Oh, come and smite again
Thine enemy.

Give to Thy servants skill
To soothe and bless;
And to the tired and ill
Give quietness.

And, Lord, to those who know
Pain may not cease,
Come near, that even so
They may have peace."

- Amy Carmichael