**FOCUS** in 2020

September 13, 2020

Dr. Jerry Edmonson, *Lead Pastor*

**THRIVE –** *A Study of 1 Peter*

***Our Living Hope – 1 Peter 1:1-12***



**What causes you to lose hope?**

**For many, it is about waiting it out, staying alive, or just putting it in survival mode, and hoping for better days.** For some, it is about feeling helpless and victimized by all that is going on. **But what if there is more of God to be had when there is more trouble in your life?** What if difficult times are not about hanging on, or just getting by, or surviving … **what if God calls us to a life that thrives when the heat is turned up, when the waters rise, when the winds blow?**

**What if instead of holding on we are called to ... let go and let God.**

**Today we embark on a journey** of **letting go** and of **holding on**. Letting go of all that is **temporary** to grab hold of all that is **eternal**. Letting go of all that is **empty** in order to embrace the **fullness** of God. Letting go of the **perishable** to experience what is **imperishable**.

**Today we begin a journey of learning to THRIVE!**

**THRIVE** - to make progress or grow despite or even because of our circumstances

***Blessed is the man*** *who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night****. He is like a tree planted by streams*** *of water that* ***yields its fruit in its season****, and* ***its leaf does not withe****r. In all that he does, he prospers.* Psalm 1:1–3

**How are we to live now**, not **giving up or giving in**? There is hope, help and the promise of a future for all who are in Christ.

**Background and Context of 1 Peter**

This book is written by the Apostle Peter. His name was Simon, meaning reed, but when Jesus saw him, he said I will call you Peter, meaning rock. **From a waving reed to a solid rock**. We read of Peter as the reed. He was constantly making bold statements only to waver ... and fall. In Peter, Jesus saw one who would eventually stand firm in his faith like a rock upon when the early church would continue to grow.

Simon means – reed

Peter means – rock

**Peter wrote this circular letter somewhere around 62-64 A.D.** during the time Nero. Christians were persecuted under Nero in Rome after its disastrous burning July 19, 64 A.D. It is believed that when Rome burned, Nero was accused of setting the fires, and he quickly looked for a scape goat, so he blamed Christians. This was the beginning of a great persecution.

**That is the world in which 1 Peter was written.** A world where followers of Jesus were driven from homes, persecuted, tortured, crucified, thrown to lions and worse in Rome. Peter sends this letter the churches in an area called Asia Minor to encourage these Jewish Christians as they face persecution and suffering. There are sources that say Peter even watched his own wife be put to death. Peter uses imagery throughout 1 Peter of the Exodus from Egypt and the Jews relationship to God to remind them of God’s power and provision for them of a messiah.

**Hope Killers**

* **Shame** – when my hope is that I might be good enough
* **Materialism** – when my hope is in stuff to make life meaningful
* **Regret** – when my hope is in a mistake free life
* **Worry** – when my hope is about controlling an uncertain future
* **Self-sufficiency** – when my hope is in me

Hope is what you **have** when all you have is **Jesus**.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace* ***in believing****, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you* ***may abound in hope.*** Romans 15:13

**Bring Your Hope Alive** 1 Peter 1:1-12

1. Recognize that God has a **plan**, right where I am.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,* ***To those who are elect exiles*** *of the* ***Dispersion*** *in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the* ***foreknowledge*** *of* ***God the Father****, in the* ***sanctification of the Spirit****, for* ***obedience to Jesus Christ*** *and for sprinkling with his blood:* ***May grace and peace be multiplied to you.***

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy,* ***he has caused us to be born again*** *to* ***a living hope*** *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to* ***an inheritance that is imperishable****,* ***undefiled****, and* ***unfading****, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith* ***for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time****.* 1 Peter 1:1-5

2. Embrace life’s **trials** as a part of the growing of my faith.

*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary,* ***you have been grieved by various trials****, so that* ***the tested genuineness of your faith****—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in* ***praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ****. Though you have not seen him,* ***you love him****. Though you do not now see him,* ***you believe in him*** *and* ***rejoice with joy*** *that is* ***inexpressible*** *and* ***filled with glory****, obtaining the outcome of your* ***faith****, the* ***salvation of your souls****.* 1 Peter 1:1-9

*Now faith is the assurance of* ***things hoped for****, the conviction of things not seen.* Hebrews 11:1

3. Celebrate the story of **salvation** – past, present and future.

*Concerning* ***this salvation****, the prophets who prophesied about the* ***grace******that was to be yours*** *searched and inquired carefully, inquiring* ***what person or time*** *the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.* ***It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you****, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who* ***preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven****, things into which angels long to look.* 1 Peter 1:10-12

**What do you need to do this morning to have a Living Hope?**

1. Repent of the **hope** **killers** in your life.

2. Confess that **Jesus** is all you need.

3. Embrace your **circumstance** with faith and hope in God.

Imagine if we lived with a living hope in Jesus alone. He is our hope, our only hope!