

Born into A Living Hope – 1 Peter 1:3-9

Our epistle reading this morning was written to a church that was under persecution. The object of the epistle is to encourage, inspire and to provide guidance to the church throughout these difficult times.

The writer of the epistle is Peter. It's commonly understood that this is the Peter who was chosen by Jesus to be the rock upon which his church would be built.

Peter knows what it is to be living with fear of persecution, standing at the cross seeing his Lord and master die. Then within hours and for the fear of his life, he disowns the one whom he said he truly loved.

When Jesus died on the cross it was the end of all Peter's hopes. He knew only bitter sorrow for his own denials. The dawn could not bring fresh hope, for with the crowing of the rooster he heard the echo of his curses.

The resurrection of Jesus was a life-changing reality for Peter. He now writes of a sure hope a hope that holds the future in the present because it is anchored in the past. Peter hopes for God's salvation, God's deliverance from sin and death.

His hope is sure because God has already accomplished his salvation in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Jesus did not stay dead on that Easter morning he conquered death and rose to life.

The resurrection shows that God has made the crucified, both Lord and Christ. At the right hand of the father, Jesus rules until that day he will come to restore and renew all things.

With the resurrection of Jesus and his entrance into glory a new age has begun. Peter now waits for the day when Jesus will be revealed from heaven. Peter's now a living hope is in Jesus. Peter encourages us in that same hope.

Christ's resurrection spells hope for us all, not just because he lives, but because by God's mercy, we also live.

In his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

By the resurrection of Christ, God has given life not only to him but to us also; we are given new birth by God. In Christ's triumph, God makes all things new, beginning with us.

Like those to whom Peter was writing we too are living in troubled times, there seems to always be something coming over the horizon which is revealing new threats to us almost daily.

Recently my wife Ruth and I had embarked on a holiday that was to be a long-awaited trip from Sydney on the "Indian Pacific" train to Adelaide with a few days sightseeing before hopping on to "The Ghan" and travelling up to Darwin and spending a week there. However, on the night before we were to depart Sydney on our holiday, we tested positive for Covid. We had booked this trip 12 months in advance and what we ended up with was 7 more nights in a small hotel room in Sydney which was very basic.

We may feel a lack of hope as there are so many things in this world that are pressing down on us.

Foot & Mouth

Monkey Pox

Covid keeps changing and infections keep rising. What variation are we up to now?

Our region is facing challenges that we have not faced before.

Russia is waging a war upon its neighbour because one man seeks more power, this war is causing problems around the world, food shortages, fuel shortages, financial repercussions, with inflation and interest rates going up many are going to find themselves in financial difficulty.

So how do we feel, react and respond? Hope that all will be ok in the end!

The hope that we have as Christians is not wishful thinking nor is it a hope against all hope which is *hopelessness*. But our hope is a firm conviction of an actuality. The hope that is being preserved for us through Christ in heaven.

Because he has compassion on those he has chosen, God gives us new birth. New birth implies starting afresh. What we were and what we had to look forward to are left in the past. God has transformed us, making us new, giving us both a new hope and an inheritance.

What is this hope? Given the context, I believe it is referring to a confident expectation that we will share in Jesus' resurrection, knowing that where Jesus is now, we will someday be.

That this hope is living, would seem to mean that it is not something that I have put on a shelf to pull down someday. Rather it is an active part of my life now.

We all know that life in this flesh is short; but my hope is in a life that will not end. Why live as though *this* life is all I have?

But we *all* have an inheritance, God has given *us* birth into an eternal inheritance. We often think of inheritance in conjunction with the death of the person leaving an inheritance to others. But here, the only death is, in a sense, ours.

Having a new birth implies that we died to the old life, and in this new life we have an inheritance that is awaiting us; awaiting us until we indeed die to this life and enter into heaven.

This inheritance can never perish, spoil or fade and is safely kept in heaven until we arrive. It does not need polishing or dusting. It is not at the mercy of an investment broker and the economy. And it will not go out of style or spoil.

It is really easy to get caught up in the here and now, focusing on the temporary and volatile things that surround us and make up our lives now. But we have something waiting for us that is so much better.

So, what do we do and how do we live?

We have no reason at all to be concerned about the little we have now.

No reason to hold onto what we do have so tightly.

No reason to fear losing what we have here.

None of it will last.

None of it is worth taking with us.

Something much better is waiting for us.

So let go of the "*stuff*"! of this life and embrace the glorious inheritance that awaits us.

The father who gives new birth to his children through the resurrection of Christ, also through Christ brings them to a living faith. Our faith and hope are in God, his living word, the good news of the gospel has brought life to us.

So we look to the future, to the salvation that was sealed by Christ's resurrection and planted in our hearts. The seed of the word will be revealed completely when Christ comes again in glory.

Our hope is anchored in the past, Jesus rose!

Our Hope remains in the present, Jesus lives!

Our hope is completed in the future, Jesus is coming!

Ask yourself, what is your greatest hope?

The Lord be with you.