

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

“Jesus give hope to His Church” 1 Peter 1: 3-13 by Jean Davies, 9th May 2021.

An Easter Day banner fixed to Highcliffe church fencing declares “New Life, New Hope.” This hope, and the One who embodies it, is the focus of our study. Peter is writing to believers in Christ, some of whom would have been added to the church at that first Jerusalem Pentecost (Acts 2:9,10); others then added to the church through faithful preaching of the Gospel throughout those regions (v1). Written in the early AD 60’s, copied and taken from church to church, some of which may have only been small, “house group” in number, Peter’s letter has been preserved by God throughout the ages for His church today. Jesus, through His Holy Spirit in Peter, is giving hope to these believers, and to us also. **Pray, and read the study verses 1 Peter 1:3-13 and Colossians 1:15.**

In v3, Peter begins with praise to God. **Q1 How can you begin your day with praise to God?**

The worldly way to hope is not one of certainty, rather the “making-a-wish”, crossing-your-fingers” or a “looking on the bright side” sort of way. But the hope for which Peter thanks God is described as a “living hope” which comes with a promise of an inheritance (v4). **Ponder this eternal inheritance, and the phrase “... that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you”. Compare it with any earthly inheritance you may have received.**

Worldly hope fades and dies with the passing of time, changing circumstances and disappointments. This living hope for believers, however, is through the resurrected Jesus Christ (v3). In James 1:17, we are assured that God never changes, and as Jesus “is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), this unchanging nature is His also. Earthly inheritances are received because someone dies, but our eternal inheritance is because the resurrected Someone, Jesus, died, but now lives eternally. As much as He is firstborn (supreme) over all creation (Colossians 1:15), the hope He gives is supreme over all earthly hopes.

Q2 Where or in whom have you ever placed your hope, and have been disappointed? Will you now place your hope in Jesus who never disappoints?

When do believers receive this promised eternal inheritance? V5, 7 and 13 tell us when. **Q3 What event do you think this phrase “... when Jesus is revealed” refers to?**

What is this eternal inheritance? In v5, 9, 10, Peter tells us that it is the “salvation of your souls”; and he goes on to describe in vs 10-12 how the OT prophets predicted the sufferings, and then the glories of Christ who has secured our salvation. As to believers suffering griefs and trials, Peter acknowledges the “all kinds of trials” (v6,7) that the believers are suffering, and comforts them with V8, 9. **Q4 How can we at Highcliffe and Bransgore churches (or your own church if you are further afield) seek out and help those who are suffering as believers in Christ in our day?**

How do believers hold on to this heavenly inheritance? Peter straightaway in v3 declares that it is through God the Father’s great mercy, that He has gifted us with “new birth” and that it is through faith, described beautifully in vs 8, 9, and by grace v13. **Q5 When do you find it hard to “hold on” to your gift of faith? Will you be assured by v5 which speaks of God’s power to shield your faith?**

With the word “Therefore”, Peter now encourages the early church to act, to hope fully on God’s grace in Christ, and to live in the light of the One on whom their hope is set. Surely they would sing with us “In Christ alone my hope is found” as we would agree with Paul in Colossians 1:27 “... Christ in you (and us) the hope of glory”. Amen.