

Hope Floats

Know Pain Know Gain series #1

by Bill Aumack

Have you ever heard the term Hope Floats? Yeah. Other than that mediocre 1998 movie with Sandra Bullock. Now I love Sandra Bullock. But that movie was pretty ho-hum. What does hope float means? What does that mean when we say that? Right, Hope Floats! When the storms of life are around you and it feels like you're going under? What do you hold on to? Hope! Why? Because a Hope Floats. Hope helps us keep our head above water. And I hope you were able to catch last week's we did an intro into our series what we're going to be talking about. We went through it kind of at a high level giving you background if you missed that, please catch up on YouTube or Vimeo. It's also on our podcast sites. It's on Spotify, iTunes. I mean, we're just like everywhere, we're taking over. So you should be able to find this out there somewhere.

And as you remember from last week, there were these Christians that were being persecuted, they were facing very real persecution, I mean death, real persecution. For what reason? Because they were Christian. Right, they hadn't done anything wrong. Remember at that time you kind of did what the head of the household did. You worshiped the gods that he worshiped. So if you were married to somebody who was not a Christian, but you were a Christian, if you were a woman, you were expected to worship the gods that the husband worshipped. And if you became a Christian, that was a bad thing. Or if you were a servant, or a slave in a household, it was bad. And so this persecution is very real. And Peter is towards the end of his life, he's in Rome. And he learned to this, and he writes a letter to encourage these Christians. Anybody remember from last week when this letter is written? About 60 AD. So about 30 years, little less than 30 years after Jesus dies, Peters is writing this letter.

Now, sometimes when we look at Paul's writings, we really stop and we really concentrate, because Paul's very technical, and you got to study those sentences. And he's got complex sentences that you know, if you tried to turn that into your English teacher, they would mark you off on because too difficult, too complex, break it up. All the teachers are all laughing and they're like, Yeah, right. Get that back and says, "Simplify. Learn what a period is. Finish your thought." But Paul writes is very difficult thing. And we don't often do that for Peter. And I think we should. And so we're going to take a few minutes and go through the first two verses, a First Peter 1, 1 and 2. Open your Bibles with us the first Peter, first Peters towards the back of the Bible, you've got Revelation, Jude, first, second, third, John, and then First and Second Peter, so just a few pages before Revelation. And we're gonna go through these two verses in great detail. I want to show you a little bit what it's like, remember, pastor preached about this just a couple of weeks ago about how to do this. So we're going to kind of make an example out of these two verses. Okay, everybody there. All right.

First, Peter, 1:1-2, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, exile scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bethynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood, Grace and peace be yours and abundance. Now we can read that and go, ooh, what a great intro and welcome. How would you like my email sounded like that. That'd be

awesome, right? But there's a lot packed into these two verses. So let's kind of look in that a little bit deeper. So right there at the top, it says Peter an apostle of Christ, of Jesus Christ, right? What's he doing? He's identifying who sends the letter. This is from Peter. Not just any old random Peter, but "the" Peter. Right. He's also exerting his authority. I was an apostle of Jesus Christ. Jesus chose me to follow him. And not only was I an apostle, but if you know, I was one of the inner circle, right? I was the guy that Jesus changed his name and said, on this rock, that's me, I'm building my church. You know who I am? And do you know what authority this letter comes with? Right? The apostles got more authority, right? When you get your mail, you flip through it, to see if there's anything good. Right? And it wants to find his good check. Birthday Card. Right, bills now they're not good, but you got to keep them. But then there's all that junk mail and you know, do you want to sell your house? No, I don't want to sell my house. But sometimes you might see a letter that comes with an address on it that you know, is important. The IRS? I have may not be looking forward to that one. But I better read that one. or what have you got one that said from the President of the United States? Betcha I'd open that one first. Right. So certain things come with authority. And Peter say this comes with authority from God. Okay, sit up, pay attention. Okay.

Now, who is Peter writing to God's elect exile scattered? Right. He's writing to Christians. Okay. Sometimes we talk about inreach. And outreach. Are you familiar with these terms? Outreach is when we reach out to people that are outside the church that are don't have a relationship with Jesus, we try and bring them in, get them, you know, involved. That's outreach you're bringing people in. Inreach is when we're doing stuff to build up the people that are already here. So ideally, we're always doing inreach, and outreach and outreach and outreach. But it's a little bit different. Right? If I'm going to go try and reach people for Jesus, I don't necessarily start with the super in depth study of First Peter. That may not be the best spot to start. But when we're here with the people that are in the church, that's a good thing to do. Right? So we do this inreach and outreach. So what is Peter doing here? Is he doing inreach or outreach? Inreach! He's writing to Christians. He's not trying to convince Jews and Gentiles to become Christian. He's writing to people that are Christians, okay? And he's saying, Listen, you are exiles you're scattered around. Why? Because this world is that our home. Some of you remember an old song, This world is not my home, I'm just passing through. Right? Now, heaven is our home. And so Peter kind of acknowledges that. And then he goes through all those regions where he's writing to all those people. And interestingly enough, if you go back to Acts chapter 2, which is the day of Pentecost, remember this, right? The Jews are gathered in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit comes down, and it's like, pretty amazing day. Some of these regions are referenced in that text. Pontius, Cappadocia, and Asia. So it could be that some of the Christians that Peter is now writing to where they're on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and they're hearing from Peter again. Okay. Imagine what that was like. I remember him. I was there on that day. That was like, amazing. All right. So there's a lot going on in the background.

Now, verse two, it says, who had been chosen for the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit did Be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood. So we've mentioned all three members of the Trinity. Right? As you know, Christians, we worship one God, three parts the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. Kinda weird, don't really quite know what that means. The best I can come up with, it's like triplets that are really identical and work together. But I think that's far short of what reality is. Okay? But we worship one God, and he mentions the three parts. And furthermore, he tells us some of the work they do, what does God the Father do?

He chooses the people. Right? Says, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, God chooses the people. Now we know that Ephesians 1:4 that God says He chose every buddy before the world was created. So it's not like he said, like, choose you and not you and you and not you, not you, and you, but not you. He chose everybody. Okay? What does God the Holy Spirit do? He sanctifies us. What does sanctify mean? To make you holy? What does make you holy mean? To be set apart, okay, doesn't mean perfect, because we're never going to be perfect this side of heaven. But it means set apart for a special use by God. So the Holy Spirit sanctifies us makes us holy. And what does Jesus do? God the sun. He cleanses us, right? With the sprinkling of his blood. In the Old Testament, we use an animal that was spotless that was killed, and we were sprinkled the blood to cleanse. Now, it's been Jesus's blood that cleanses us. And so we have all of this going on, we could go a lot deeper there on the cross and everything. But, you know, we, as we sin, Jesus's blood is there to cleanse us.

And then he ends with Grace and peace be yours and abundance. It was interesting. Alberto prayed for grace and peace today, in the prayer. Why do we pray for grace and peace? Pastor Chris says at the end of the sermon, grace and peace, why? Well, grace is something that we get. God gives to God's people, right? We don't deserve it. We don't earn it. We don't get it because we paid tithe. We don't get it because we went to church enough times. We don't get it because we helped the little lady across the street. We don't deserve it. But we get grace. Because God gives grace because he is generous. God is a generous God, and He gives us the gift of grace. Now we talked about peace. In Hebrew, the word that would have been used here would be shalom. This is a word that we see in the Old Testament, and Jews still use it today. In fact, we had the Shalom Orchestra here a couple of weeks back, right? This word means peace. And sometimes we think of peace is the opposite of noise or war. It is not. Now, certainly, there's a part of it that is that because you know, if you're been in the house, and the kids are being loud, and somebody's running the vacuum, and the gardener's outside with the blower, you're like, I just want some peace and quiet. Right? And that's a part of it. But that's not the full definition of it. See, peace is to have God's gift of a quiet heart. This involves every part of our lives, every part of our relationships. And when you have a quiet heart, you can have peace, in the midst of chaos, and noise, and even war. And it's okay to want to know if you're in a war zone, I get that you want peace. I mean, there's nothing wrong with that. But you can have peace, even in the middle of a war. Because it's God's gift of a quiet heart. And Christians have already received grace and peace, but Peter prays that they may know God more and have grace and peace in what abundance there's a lot in those two verses.

Wow. Now, we do not have time to go through the whole thing today at that level of detail, unless you want to be here to like 3pm. So we're not going to do that. But I wanted to do this as an example because it's not hard to do. Okay, sometimes we think, man, I don't know how to do that. How do you do that? I used what Pastor said, remember what the questions he told us to ask all the W questions, who, what, when, where, why, and that weird one how? Okay, and ask yourself those questions as you read and stuff. And by the way, a good Bible Commentary helps. Find yourself one. They're free online, you don't have to pay for them anymore. Now, when I was growing up, we had to look up stuff in the Bible Commentary to go to school and go to the library is a Bible commentaries cost, like \$1,000 or something, and they're free. Okay? Now, when you choose your Bible Commentary, one word of advice here. Some of them are super, super, super technical. And if you if you start reading the Bible Commentary and feels like you need a commentary to understand the commentary, go pick a different commentaries. Okay? All right, because some of them are just crazy technical, and they have a point, a place and they're good. But, you know, if you're just trying to understand what's going on, they're a little

tough. So, you know, there's Easy English ones out there, find one of those and use them, they're great, they will help.

Okay, so we're not going to go through everything at that level of detail moving on, but I want to look at a couple of sections here. So First Peter, 1:3-9. What does it say in your Bible above that section, you have a little header there, as I say something. The Living Hope, some other versions of that, but it kind of says the Living Hope there Right. So starting in verse three says Praise be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you. Who, through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all of this, you greatly rejoice, though for now for a little while, you may have to have had to suffer grief and all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which parishes even though refined by fire may result in praise glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him you love him, and even though you do not see him now you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy for you are receiving the end result of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Wonderful, wonderful text here, okay. And right we talked about Peters readers that are suffering, because they weren't they were Christians, and God's showing them mercy. And he says that we get this inheritance right. And look at what it says about that inheritance, it will never what? Perish, spoil or fade. Let's look at this. So the Christian inheritance, when you become a Christian, what do you do? Well, how does it the Bible describe it. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus? You have to be born again. Nicodemus says, You're nuts can't do that. Right? Jesus says not that way. You got to be born into my family, renewed, made different. And once you become part of my family, you're born again into my family, you get my inheritance. Now some of you may have rich parents, I was not blessed with rich parents. So you know my inheritance is the bills that they leave behind, you know. But God's inheritance is pretty cool. Right? And our inheritance is not like anything in the world. He says that it will never wear out or get old. It does not perish. It will not spoil or go bad. No expiration date on it. Have you ever open bad milk? Whew!! It will not lose its beauty. It does not fade. It's kept safe in heaven. Don't have to worry about robbers and gang members getting to your inheritance. It's safe in heaven. Can God take care of it? Yes, yes. Okay. So your inheritance is safe in heaven. Okay?

And he says in verse six, it says, where's verse six here where to go? And all this, you greatly rejoice when you understand what I'm telling you. In verses 3-5, you will greatly rejoice for right now you've got to suffer some, you're suffering through all kinds of trials. I'm not taking that away, you are suffering. But it's just for a little while. How long is our life compared to forever? Nothing, right? I mean, we can't even comprehend forever. Okay? So he's saying, listen, we're going to have troubles in our lives, they're going to make us sad. They don't make us sad forever. This applies to us. We may not be facing persecution, because we're Christians. But we have things that are trials, things that make us suffer, addictions, disease, death, on and on and on. Okay? And he says, it's just for a while. Because in verse 7, he says, these have come so the proven genuineness of your faith, which is of greater worth, and gold may result in the praise and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Okay. James, chapter 1 says, trials come to help make us strong, they refine us. They help us grow. We've kind of seen this a little bit in our society, right? Most old timers like me will say things like when I was a kid, right? Things were tough. I had to get up and walk through shag carpeting to change the channel on the TV. It was tough. Right?

Little brother had to hold on to the antenna and do some weird moves so we can see the channel. Okay, and so, you know, we think that today, kids have it too easy. And that's resulted in some of the problems in our society because no one ever challenged, everything's just given to them. You get a trophy if you show up. Right. And so James says these troubles help us grow strong. And this section ends with something that's really important because Peter recognizes that you guys believe in Jesus, and you never saw him, I saw him, I saw the miracles, I saw him die. I saw him afterwards alive. I saw him go into heaven. It's easy for me to believe. But you never even saw him. And you believe that's a special kind of faith. Okay. So there's a lot going on here.

Then in our next section, Peter, First Peter 1:13-16. He says, Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed that his coming As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy, and all you do, for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

So Peter's been kind of teaching us about what salvation means. And he wants us to understand what God has done for us through Jesus. But to know these things, in our minds, is not enough. Right? I can't just know it. I have to do something with it. Okay. And so here comes the practical part. Christians must prepare their minds. Okay, you've got to prepare your mind. What does it say about your mind there right at the beginning of that section with minds that are what? Alert and fully sober? I don't think he's just talking about alcohol here. Because we can get drunk on a lot of things besides alcohol, right? We get drunk chasing money or fame or you know, I'm gonna be the next Tik Tok star or whatever. Okay. And so he says, have a mind that's alert and sober and you're ready to do these things. Okay. Have a clear mind. If you don't have a clear mind, you can't control yourself. Okay.

And then he kind of returns to talk about blessings, in verse 14 says, As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you're in ignorance, but be holy because I am holy. They were seeing kids that look or act just like mom or dad. Right? We all have, right? Especially if you're a teacher, you've seen kids that you'd like, Where does this kid get this? And then dad walks in, like, oh, that's where the kid gets it. Right. Now, like me, I look like my mom's side of the family. I look like her brothers. By standing in line with her brothers. You think I'm one of her brothers. But I act like my dad. So I act like the Aumack side of the family, but I look like the Proctor side of the family. Okay, and we just have the you see kids that that look or act just like mom or dad, because kids and sometimes they want to imitate mom or dad, right? They want to be like mom and dad, they watch and they're learning. Okay? And because we are now children of God, who should we be imitating? God. Right. God wants his children to be like him.

Be holy, because I am holy. Sometimes, if you just read that text, you go, I'm so screwed. Because I can't be holy. I have tried to be holy. And I'm not I'm not very good at it. Holy is not perfect. You are not going to be perfect. Just get away from that. That ends in legalism and it ends badly. Okay. You are to be holy understand the difference. It's a fine line. But there's a difference there be holy, be set apart for something special that God wants you to do. David was not perfect. And God said, What about him? man after my own heart, he's like me. And not perfect. Right? So there's room for us there. This is a very important command. The Old Testament talks about this a lot. Leviticus mentions it five times alone. Okay, so this is important. And when Peter references this, he's quoting the Old Testament and all the

good Jewish boys and girls that have grown up learning the scriptures. They knew what he was talking about when he said that, I remember that verse. Okay. I've read that before. I've heard that.

Then our last section, I'm almost done. I'm sorry, I'm trying to move through as quick as I can. And I'm a little over time, the Living Stone. In First Peter 2:4-10. Now, what do you think of when you hear the term Living stone? Yeah, I mean, it's kind of weird, right? The Living Stone right? I have no reference of a living stone. Man. If I picked up a stone and started talking to me, I'd pretty much freak out. Right? I don't know what a living stone is. So let's hear what Peter says. It says, As you come to him, the living stone, rejected by humans, but chosen by God, and precious to him. You also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus. For in the Scripture, it says, now he's quoting Old Testament scriptures here. See, I lay a stone in Zion to be chosen a precious cornerstone, and the one who trust in him will never be put to shame. Now to those of you who believe the stone is precious, but to those who do not believe the stone builders rejected it, it has become the cornerstone, and a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message, which is what they were also destined for you were made to follow God. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possessions, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are a people of God and you have not received the mercy but you had not received the mercy but now you have received the mercy.

Okay, so a lot of going on here. And we don't have a lot of time on this. But you're you've heard about the cornerstone that goes into a building, right. And it's the anchor for the building and supports a lot of the weight to the building. And when they built the temple in Jerusalem, which is referred to as Zion, on a hill in Jerusalem, and that hill's name is Zion. And they leveled the ground, and they put the cornerstone in. Now the kinds of stones they're using in the temple, were cut out of a quarry, right, these aren't just any random stones, there are all kinds of different shapes, these are square or rectangular blocks. And the cornerstone got all kinds of special attention, so that it was perfectly square in every direction. That stone was as perfect as they could possibly make it. And they spent a long, long time getting that stone just right and getting the ground perfectly level. And when that stone is set, it is the guideline for the rest of the building. Because when that side is straight, if I build the rest of the wall, so it stays in line, now my wall is straight. And when I look at this, now I can make that wall straight. And now if I go off those two walls, the other one, I can make the whole building perfectly square. Why? Because that cornerstone was perfectly square, and perfectly set. And it's the living stone that holds the building and sets the guidelines for everything. Understand? That's something we're not to use to right. And so you know, when King Solomon built that temple, that there was a lot that went into getting that stone just right. Okay. And now Peter says, in verse five there he says, Jesus makes people alive in their spirit, that stone that holds the temple is the living stone. Okay? And Jesus makes people alive by that, okay? You also, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood. Be like Jesus, be holy, because he is holy. Doesn't matter how bad life gets, how much trials, how much tribulations when you have grace, and you have peace in your heart. You can be peaceful in the midst of all that, and you can still be holy in the midst of great trials and tribulations. You don't have to return tit for tat. Right? You don't have to get angry because somebody else got angry. We could talk a lot more about that, that stone and what that meant for us. But we're kind of out of time. And some people believe in God, but they don't accept Jesus. And that's not going to get you very far. Because Jesus is the

Livingstone. He's the one whose blood makes you clean. You can't say, you know, yeah, God's cool. I got no problem with God. Yeah, but that's not enough. That's not enough. You have to accept God's message.

All right, next week Pastor is going to pick up we're gonna hit some real practical things that we can do, that's going to help us through some of these things, okay? But Peters really set us up nice and strong. I hope you take time to go back and read through some of this. Of course, we're going to be in our small groups. And if you're not in a small group, I put the readings for next week, there so you can kind of keep up if you aren't able to be in a group. You can keep up with the readings, but take some time and then look at this. And let's look at what our challenges are challenges really long, sorry. But look for the positives this week. Even amongst the trials. You may be going through some tough things. Maybe your health is failing, maybe work, you know, just there's a million things that can go wrong. Look for the positives. Too many times we look for the negatives, amen. Look for the positives. Try to spend some time working On being positive, and remember that our inheritance is out of this world, amen. We must prepare our minds and that Jesus makes us alive.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for these wonderful, wonderful words that have been preserved for us and how applicable they are to our lives of having grace and peace and to be like you and to be part of your family, to imitate you and to be holy because your holy help us to keep these things on our minds and to keep working on this not just one time thing. So yeah, that's great, but something that we strive for every day, every minute. With us this week, Lord, help us to find the positives in our lives. Help us to find the grace and the peace, the quiet heart, that you will bring us so that we can still have peace in the midst of chaos. Thank you so much for what you've done for us. In Jesus name. Amen.