

1 Peter 1:1-7

Living in Light of Christ, Our Living Hope

Have there been times when life didn't go as you expected?

There can be a big gap between our idealistic expectations and reality.

One unrealistic expectation that dating or engaged couples often believe is: "The problems we face now will all go away once we're married."

No one prepares you for the deathmatch battles over the proper way to load and unload the dishwasher, how to operate a motor vehicle, fold towels, sweep the floor, or use coasters. (I'll just go ahead and confess: my wife is right about all these things. I have had a lot to learn and still do.)

The book of 1 Peter is a letter written to first-century Christians who were concerned, confused, and discouraged. Their new life in Christ wasn't going the way they expected. They were facing troubles within the church and persecution for their faith. Peter writes to remind them who they are in Christ and what they are called to endure as they follow Him until He returns.

Life is often more difficult than we expect:

- Marriage in a broken world is hard.
- Parenting is hard.
- Family relationships can be strained.
- Careers can have unexpected setbacks.
- Health can suddenly decline.
- Living as a citizen of both a nation and the Kingdom is hard.
- Loving everyone in the church can be a challenge.
- Add to this: loss, poverty, natural disasters, and persecution.

1 Peter 1:1-2 — You Are Elect Exiles in Christ

"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."

The Author: The Apostle Peter

- Apostles were the first Christian leaders, commissioned directly by Christ.
- Peter was one of the twelve, in Christ's inner circle. He walked on water and sank. He confessed Christ and later denied Him three times.
- Peter had a past. But he was redeemed, filled with the Spirit, and sent as a witness.

Does anyone else have a past that needs redeeming? Praise the God who gives new life!

Peter reminds us: **Your past does not define your future.**

Many in our church are starting new school years, new grades, new seasons. Thank God for fresh starts. His mercies are new every morning.

Who is Peter writing to?

He writes to the **"elect exiles of the Dispersion."**

What does "elect" mean?

- Those who have put their faith in Christ and become children of God.
- God has a plan to ransom sinners, adopt them, and prepare them as His bride.

Romans 8:28-30 affirms God's foreknowledge and purpose:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good..."

God's desire is not limited to a few:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world..."

1 Timothy 2:3-6: God "desires all people to be saved."

2 Peter 3:9: He is "not wishing that any should perish."

God is sovereign, and He has made salvation possible through Christ. If you have faith in Jesus, God will use every twist and turn, even suffering, to shape you for eternity.

Therefore, the Church must share the gospel and make disciples.

What does "exiles" mean?

- The church was together in Acts 2.
- Persecution arose, scattering believers (Acts 8:1-4).

Acts 8:1-4 describes Saul's role in scattering the church.

Peter is writing to Christians living as **foreigners**, suffering persecution. But God used this scattering to fulfill **Acts 1:8**: the gospel going to the ends of the earth.

Tertullian once said:

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

August 6, 2025

Christians throughout history have endured immense persecution.

What does persecution look like today?

- India: woman watches her sister dragged away.
- North Korea: man beaten in a prison camp.
- Nigeria: pregnant woman flees Boko Haram.
- Afghanistan: pastor receives death threats.

2023 Persecution Statistics:

- 360M+ Christians face high persecution.
- 5,898 killed.
- 5,110 churches attacked.
- 6,175 imprisoned.
- 3,829 abducted.

Top 10 Most Persecuted Nations: Afghanistan, North Korea, Somalia, Libya, Yemen, Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, India.

Despite this, Peter reminds us:

We have a living hope in Christ!

1 Peter 1:3:

"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."

We are:

- Born again
- To a living hope
- Through the resurrection of Christ

In English, hope implies doubt. But in Scripture, **hope is confident expectation.**

Hebrews 11:1: Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

(Story of a Muslim student who only hopes to go to heaven.)

Our hope is **living** because Jesus is **alive!**

Colossians 3:1: "Seek the things that are above..."

August 6, 2025

(Story of a young father with terminal cancer clinging to Christ.)

1 Peter 1:4-5:

"...to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you..."

Because Jesus is alive, our inheritance is secure.

1 Peter 1:6-7:

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while... you have been grieved by various trials... so that the tested genuineness of your faith... may be found to result in praise and glory..."

Trials are:

- **Temporary** (v. 6)
 - **Proving grounds for genuine faith** (v. 7)
-

Other Scriptures of Hope:

2 Timothy 4:6-8: "I have fought the good fight..."

Romans 5:1-4: Suffering produces endurance, character, and hope.

James 1:2-4: Trials produce steadfastness.

Bottom Line: In a world of trials, pain, and persecution, we have a **living hope** through Christ, an **imperishable inheritance**, and a **faith more precious than gold**.