

## ***New life new HOPE***

### *Heads Hearts and Hopes*

*A three part series about the new life in christ*

#### *1 Peter 1*

*SLIDE – Stuart Diver*

*'No matter what happens to you and no matter how bad it can all get, there is hope. I'm living proof that hope can survive even when it seems there is none.'*

*Stuart Diver*

Those are the words of Stuart Diver. Who you might remember was the only survivor from the Thredbo disaster of 1997. A landslide collapsed two alpine lodges. And Stuart was trapped under the rubble. 18 others were killed...including Stuart's wife. But after 65 hours trapped in the freezing temperatures. They pulled him out alive. It was so exciting. I still remember them passing him along the chain of rescue workers.

For him it was a kind of gift of new life. When he so easily could have been crushed to death like the others. And it's been that event that's changed his life and become such a pivotal moment. An anchor for hope.

So Stuart takes a message of hope around as he speaks to people. He points to that event and he says. You can have hope.

Now, the gospel message....is a message of hope as well.

And it's also a message that also points to a particular event.

And that event. Is the resurrection of Jesus.

Listen to the way Peter puts it here in chapter 1. He says.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

So Stuart Diver says. My experience tells me and shows you. That you can have hope.

The gospel says. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS bears that weight. The resurrection says. There's hope. Not because a man survived two nights close to death. But because a man was dead. He was dead and buried. Three days. But came back to life. Never to die again. And that's something worth taking note of. More than that. Something worth resting your hopes on.

Praise God says Peter.

Peter's got some good reasons to say praise God for our hope. And we'll have a look at them in a minute. He's also got some things to say about how we ought to live our new life in light of it.

But first. There's just one point worth making. Something we can get wrong. And that is. That the **object of our hope** is the important thing. Rather than the strength of the hope we have in it. Our faith, our hope isn't in our hope. That's not unimportant. But what's really important....is what that hope is in. The object of our hope. Which is Jesus.

So last year. Geoff and Nathan and I were moving a piano from the back of this truck into Geoff's house. And the footpath and the house were pretty much at the same height. Which is good. But in between...the steps went down...and then they went up. And if you've ever moved a piano you'll understand why we didn't want to heave this thing down and then up again. So we spent a fair bit of time looking around for ideas. How to take it straight across. Rather than down and up. We came up with some planks sitting on top of some bricks I think it was. Or sleepers or something. Whatever it was. We set it up. Then spent some time asking the question. Will it be strong enough? Will it bear the weight?

Important question.

Because no matter how much faith we have in it. The planks have to bear the weight.

It's important that we be convinced. But not nearly as important as the strength of the wood in which we were placing our hope. Which is why I think I sent Nathan up there.

Important point. Which is why Peter points us to Jesus the living object of our hope.

Now, in some ways you might say. If that's the gospel message. If it's a message of hope in a risen saviour. If that's what it is. What's so objectionable about that? Why would Jesus warn his disciples about trouble over something like that? Why would it come? Why would Paul guarantee it for Jesus followers in every generation?

And I think if you understand it properly there's good reason. See. It's not just an invitation to consider the hope of the gospel. Like you might invite someone to try a new skin cream. It's not something you can add to your other hopes. It's more invasive than that.

See, whether you like it or not. It's a challenge to what you've already got your hope on. It's a call to examine those hopes. And to transfer those hopes. So in a nice way..... By presenting the hope that it does. it's a massive threat.

The things we'll look at in a moment. The only hope for eternal life. The only hope to know God the Father. By presenting that hope. There's an inherent challenge that says. Where's your hope at the moment? To examine that. To weigh that up and that's a scary thing.

It's a threatening thing.

See there's a thinking that says. Prove to me that christianity is true. Show me to the nth degree, obliterate every doubt, answer every question.

As if. Where I'm already standing is rock solid ground. But usually. The same rigorous tests we'll put to the gospel. We haven't put to our own faith. Whatever that is. Is there a solid grounds for your atheism? Have you put the same rigorous tests to that? For your agnosticism? For your all truth is relative-ism? Even your non commitment to anything. If you say you're non-committal. That doesn't mean you don't have a hope. Probably just means you're hedging your bets! Does your hope, whatever it is. Does it stand up? Does it bear weight? Important question to ask.

And the thing is. I'm a Christian because I've asked those questions about the hope of the gospel. Does it stand up? The bible invites us to ask questions. And for me it stands up.

I don't want to be taken for a fool. I don't want to believe something that's obviously wrong. Do you?

So by all means. Ask about the historicity of the bible. By all means..ask about the faithful transmission of the text. Can we trust in what's come down to us?

Examine the evidence for the resurrection and for the life of Jesus. Test what the gospel says against your experience of life and your knowledge of yourself. Look and see if there's an internal coherence to the bible. Ask those questions. Take the time and effort. But do the same whatever your hope is in.

In the tennis this week Jim Courier and Lleyton Hewitt were commentating the match between Federer and Nadal. And Jim asked Lleyton what I thought was a

ripper of a question he said. In a match for your life. Between these two. He said. Who would you go for? Who would your money be on? Hypothetically.

What a great way to get a carefully considered answer. And the gospel hope does that. It turns up the heat. The gospel invites us to take a serious look. Because there's a lot at stake. Whatever your hopes are in....can they bear the weight?

New birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's what calls for transformed hearts and minds. And lives.

In fact. So transformed. That Peter says. I'm writing to strangers here. The original word means temporary residents, or refugees. Some translations use the word aliens to get the meaning. There in verse 1.

If you thought christians were a weird lot. There's your proof. Scripture says. They're ALIENS.

Now sometimes I think that's because we do stuff that's just weird no matter which way you look at it.

Which is a problem I think.

But Peter says. We ought to be different because ur hopes ought to be alien hopes.

Alien in the sense. That they're not hopes that are ultimately fulfilled by time bound physically limited stuff. They're not the hopes of the hostile and futile mind. They're not the hopes of the perverted heart.

They're transformed hopes. Because of Jesus our living hope.

So let's spend some time thinking about the alien hope. A couple of things Peter's got to say. First one's there in verse 2.

That it's something we've been GIVEN.

Peter says. To God's elect, strangers and the world, scattered throughout those places there, who've been CHOSEN. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Now when you've been chosen. You can either be proud or thankful. Proud if you think you've been chosen because of your inherent choosworthiness. In other words. Because you're so good. Why wouldn't God choose me in his foreknowledge? You can be proud or you can be thankful because you realize you had no hand in it. Because you realize you're utterly dependent on the chooser.

And that's the angle here because Peter goes on to say in verse 3. That God chose you out of mercy. If you've come to him.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his GREAT MERCY he has GIVEN US new birth into a living hope.

So praise God. That's the right response. For God's mercy. Arrogance is never appropriate for christians, only humble gratefulness.

For the great gift we've been given.

Which brings us to the second thing. What've you been given?

And the answer's there in verses 3 down to 6. Peter says it's new birth into a living hope through Jesus.

In other words. Temporary residents have hope beyond the temporary. It's not fleshed out just here although it's clearly implied.

SLIDE – 1 Thess

In 1 Thessalonians Paul says. We grieve differently because of our different hope. Talking about christians who've died. He says we don't grieve like the rest who have no hope. Rather we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. Along with us. And so he says....we will be with the Lord forever.

You know I reckon Lazarus got a rough ride. Poor guy great to come back to life I suppose. But he had to die twice.

That's not Jesus. Jesus didn't just rise from death to die again. He's the living never to die again hope. That we might live never to die again. That our hope would be fulfilled by the eternal salvation the eternal life Jesus has secured.

And according to verse 4. And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

Which again, reminds you of that exchange idea we've been seeing the last couple of weeks. We've made some bad exchanges in our thinking and desires of the heart.

But the hope of the gospel is the opposite. It's the exchange of the temporary and unsecure for the sure and permanent.

SLIDE Timothy.

You get the idea in I Timothy. Paul says

<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Why hope in wealth? It's a bit of a lotto.

But look what he says about the security of the living hope.

One it's ever lasting. And inheritance that can't fade or perish. Two it's kept in heaven. It's shielded by God's power.

So....it can't perish... and it can't be taken.

Brisbane – property can be taken away to build a tunnel – can't happen you your living hope.

When you're investing they say protect yourself and diversify. But Peter says. Buy futures that can't be taken away. Because they're protected by God's power until the coming of the salvation that's ready to be revealed in the last time.

So that's Peter's little summary of what the hope is.

But that's not all because he goes on to talk about what the hope does.

See, hope's strongly motivational isn't it.

Helps you endure. That's what Stuart Diver says.

And Peter's talking to Christians that are doing it tough. And you don't have to read too far in the New Testament to get an idea what sort of things they might be facing.

And Peter says. In this. Verse 6. In this. Your living hope.

.....you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

So the hope isn't that you'll be removed from tough stuff. The pain of shedding the old life. The sacrifices you make. The shame you face. Maybe even abuse.

The hope isn't to be removed from that stuff. It's to give you confidence. Even joy .....as you endure it.

All kinds of trials. What were they for you in 2011? You might list a few off.

Maybe your loaded up already for this year.

Well Peter says. He says a couple of things.

One. It's a little while. In light of your hope.

And that resonates. After all, we do it all the time. You suffer for things that are worth it. Even if you don't enjoy the process.

But more than that. They're a little while. But also.

They're not purposeless annoying and useless like they might look at the time. In fact he says. Verse 7

<sup>7</sup> These have come SO THAT. In other words. There's purpose. These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

So not only is God protecting his investment by shielding your eternal inheritance. He's proving your hope here and now.

Which is how it works.

Because true faith is tested faith. The walk proves the talk. It's the difference between real life and theory.

True hope is tested hope. And tested hope. Gives you assurance. Which is beneficial to you. But it's not just for you. Which I think is what Peter's getting at here. But for the world.

These trials come so your faith would be tested and proven. But also so they'll result in praise and glory when Jesus is revealed.

Surely it's God honouring that you suffer for his name. Is says he's worthy. He's worth it. If it's a credit to the jersey to come off the field muddy and dirty because you've played a hard game of footy. Surely it's God honouring to have put your hope in the living God and suffered for it.

What greater testimony can there be than someone who's willing to suffer for the hope they have. In fact. You read stories of people. Who become christians. Through seeing christians suffering for their hope. Stephen Neil in the History of Christian missions mentions the sufferings of the early christians as one of the six main reasons the church grew so rapidly.

So when Jesus appears. To God's glory. There'll be plenty there because of christians whose hope was so clear because they suffered.

So your living hopes at work already so that Peter can say even now even though you can't see him you love him and you're filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, because it's happening already. You are receiving the salvation of your souls.

Which by the way is exactly what the prophets of old were pointing to. Things that even angels long to look into.

So to summarise. The hope of the gospel is in the real historical person of Jesus who rose from death. It's God's merciful gift. It's the living eternal hope of life and the inheritance he's got for you that can't be taken. It's worth suffering for. It's being proven in suffering and will result in God's glory. Christians are receiving it already.

Verse 13. To finish.

Therefore. And there's a few things here about how life ought to be lived in light of your hope. Because the new birth into a living hope. Changes how you think. We looked at that two weeks ago. Changes your desires. That's the heart bit last week. It changes how you live.

So therefore. Do these things. Live this way.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Now that seems a bit strange. It's like saying. You've set your hope on being a tennis champion. So set your hope on being a tennis champion. Doesn't make sense.

You've got a living hope in Jesus. So set your hope fully on that living hope. Similar to the last couple of weeks. Be transformed in your thinking. Because you've been transformed.

See here's the danger. The danger is. You lapse. The danger is. You go back to the old thinking. To the old hopes and desires. That's what happens if you get lazy. If you let your guard down.

So don't do that. That's the point. Prepare your minds for action. Think about the way Federer might prepare for a tennis match.

He doesn't arrive on the court surprised because his opponent's left handed. He knows that. Because he's prepared in his mind. He knows what to do.

Peter says. Get your head ready for action. Sounds like Paul doesn't it. Be transformed in by the renewing of your mind. And let your actions follow. Be self controlled.

Get your head set. And your heart as well. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. And live in accordance with that. The new life is new birth, heads hearts and living hope. Which will change how you live as well.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.