

Finding Hope in the Change

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READ: 1 Peter 1:3-7

"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, 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 the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

I consider myself a positive person. On any given day, I start out with good intentions. I expect that my girls will have a great day and make good choices. I believe that the messages they listen to help them grow in health and wholeness. I choose to believe they will wear clean socks and that I will look put together. I plan to have a productive day at work and to live with strength and purpose. This positive mindset helps me to believe that each 24-hour period will go well and free from pain.

If I'm honest, sometimes I get exhausted from being so positive. Not because being positive is wrong, but because it all depends on me. If I am strong enough, good enough, capable enough, smart enough, then positivity will prevail. Have you been there? If you have then you know, this kind of life is difficult to sustain, and very often will let us down.

That is why Peter begins his first letter to followers of Jesus by reminding them that they have been given a "living hope" not a positive outlook. They have a new birth because of Jesus, not simply a new mindset. The hope and new birth Jesus created for us is so much more than gritting our teeth and believing the best. Our faith may fail but the hope of Christ will never let us down. In fact, Peter says it can never be destroyed, it will never spoil or fade.

This hope doesn't mean we get a pass on hardship. It doesn't mean that there won't be moments of loss, frustration, or pain. Peter says those days will come. Those moments will certainly be part of our reality. But those right turns and stops signs of life have the potential to create in us deeper faith, more compassionate service, and greater praise for God.

What is changing in your world these days? What loss is that change creating? God doesn't command you to smile, stay positive, and pretend that your heart isn't hurting. He offers you hope in something greater than the loss: the transformation of your heart and the world around you. Embrace that hope right now and allow it to fuel your reaction to the inevitable ups and downs you will face today