

SERMON NOTES: 1 PETER 1:3-6

Focus on 1 Peter 1:3-6: *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.*

- **Main teaching point of the passage:**

Christ is the only hope for us individually, for our neighbourhood and for those across the world who are unreached with the gospel of Jesus.

- **Key points from the passage to support and demonstrate the main teaching point:**

- The way we use the word 'hope' in Britain includes a large amount of doubt. The way the Bible uses the word 'hope' is more like 'confident expectation'
- v. 3 Our hope is living because Jesus is alive! The author of 1 Peter is the same Peter that denied Christ three times. Since then Peter has lived consistently for Christ and from John 21 we know that Peter was martyred for Christ. What made the difference? The resurrection! Peter can hope in Christ because he is alive - and so can we!
- v. 4 Living hope has a future. Knowing that, one day, we will be with Christ, with all our friends and family who trust in him is a wonderful hope. Knowing that there will be no more pain, sorrow or death and we will be with him enables us to live for Christ now (Rev 21:4).
- v. 5 Hope that shields us by God's power. It's such an encouragement to know that God is actively protecting us now - even though, at times it doesn't feel like it. 1 Peter 1:7, recognising that our faith is more precious than gold, our Father allows us to go through tough times.

- **Illustrations to help with key points:**

- **Shawshank Redemption.**

This is a film that was made in 1994 about a guy called Andy, who is sent to prison for life for a crime he didn't commit. A key part of the film is the growing friendship between Andy and 'Red' the local prison contraband smuggler played by Morgan Freeman. Red can see that there is something different about Andy and so in one scene Red asks Andy what keeps him going in prison:

Andy: "There's something inside that they can't touch."

Red: "What are you talking about?"

Andy: "Hope"

Red: "My friend, hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane."

One of the saddest parts of the film is when one of Andy's friends, Brooks, is paroled. After serving 50 years in prison he cannot adjust to the outside world and hangs himself. We graphically see what can happen to someone when they don't have hope.

Towards the end of the film, after lots of adventures with Andy, Red is himself finally paroled after serving 40 years in prison. We see Red go through the same struggles with life on the outside that Brooks went through and we, the viewer, start to fear that he will finish up the same way as Brooks.

But then, Red remembers a promise he made to Andy. They had talked about a particular tree on a hill, and Andy made Red promise to visit it. So Red goes and visits the tree and to his astonishment he finds a box containing money and a letter from Andy, asking him to come to Mexico. Red violates his parole, crosses the border into Mexico. In the final voice over, Red finally admits that he now has hope. He finds Andy on a beach and the two reunited friends happily embrace.

Not surprisingly the subtitle of the film is “They can hold you prisoner ...hope can set you free.”

- Andy Meakins.

In 1997 Andy Meakins was flying from Ethiopia to Kenya. Andy, together with his wife and three children had served the Lord Jesus in Africa for many years with the Christian relief organisation, Tearfund. Just after the plane had taken off three men stormed the cockpit and demanded the pilot turn the plane east for Australia or otherwise they would blow the plane up with their bomb. Despite the pilot telling the hijackers that they didn't have enough fuel to reach Australia the three men demanded he obey. Within a few hours the plane ran out of fuel as they were approaching the Comoros islands 200 miles off the coast of Mozambique and the pilot informed the passengers that they needed to brace for a crash landing.

As soon as he heard that, Andy got up out of his seat and called out: “Many of us might die in this crash, so there's something you need to know.” Andy then began explaining the gospel simply and urgently, moving to each part of the cabin so that everyone would have the chance to hear. One of the air stewardesses was one of the twenty people who trusted in Jesus. She survived the crash. Andy's widow said: “Andy never made it back to the safety of his seat belt. But he took twenty souls with him to Paradise.” Out of 175 people on board, 125 died.

For more information go to: <https://www.godreports.com/2015/04/he-preached-the-gospel-as-hijacked-plane-hit-the-water/>

To hear Andy's son talk about it go to <https://ruclip.com/video/DYFapJVtw0c/the-pain-of-an-ethiopian-plane-crash-caleb-meakins.html>

- **Suggested applications for congregation**

- Examine our hearts. Have we lost heart? Are we hoping in other things outside of Christ? We need to repent and turn back to Christ. Fix your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) and invite him to restore you and renew you. Life is meant to be lived in his strength not ours.

- Jesus is the hope for your neighbourhood. We can get become disappointed or dejected if it appears as though God is not moving. Recognising afresh that our communities have no other hope, Jesus is all they need. Let's recommit ourselves to prayer, to loving those around us and sharing Christ whenever we have the opportunity.

- Jesus is the hope for the whole world. There are thousands of whole people groups that have never had the chance to hear of the hope of Jesus.