

Rock-Solid Faith in a Rocky World
When Faith is Tested
April 16, 2023

Overarching Theme: 2023 – Living the Dream

Instructions: When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point: 2023 can be a year of living the dream of faithful discipleship as we take a next step forward in following Jesus Christ.

Reflect on this Scripture: 1 Peter 1:1-9

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Commentary: In this passage we hear God praised for the way in which Christians have been elected and redeemed. God is explicitly acknowledged as (above all) the Father of Jesus Christ. The writer, who portrayed grace and peace for the readers, now insists that God has already provided mercy to those who are chosen. In the face of distress and suffering, what God’s mercy provides is “new birth” and “living hope.”

For the earliest generations of Christians, it was clear that Christian life was “new birth.” One was not born into the faithful community, but chose it, often leaving behind the security or the good reputation of the old life for the insecurity – and blessing – of the new. Hope lives because death cannot overcome it. Hope lives because even in the face of tribulation it does not back down or grow faint. Living hope is hope that gives life.

The qualities of this heavenly hope, this heavenly inheritance, that it “is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (vs 4) suggest what it means to say that Christians are born anew to a living hope. It is a hope that no power can destroy, tarnish, or mar. What can keep believers

steadfast while they await their heavenly inheritance is faith. Faith is, in part, the confidence that believers do have a treasure laid up for them that neither moth nor rust can corrupt. 1 Peter throughout helps its readers to find what does not perish in a perishable and perishing world.
~adapted from

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. The greeting of this letter (vs 1-2) offers the reader “grace and peace”: “grace” being a gift of relationship with God and “peace” referring to wholeness, health, and well-being. How do you experience grace and peace in your life?
2. Living hope is hope that gives life, never backing down even in the face of tribulation. When has your hope in the future been challenged? How has faith restored hope?
3. Think about those things in your life that can perish, spoil or fade. How valuable are they compared to this hope that cannot be destroyed? How secure are you in the thought that your hope cannot be destroyed?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: *³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4).*