

THE PATH TO EASTER



ETHAN MATHIS

THE PATH TO EASTER

WEEK 1 - THE CALM OF CHRIST IN THE PRESENCE OF UNTRUTHS	1
March 24 - Day 1 - Matthew 4:1-11	2
March 25 - Day 2 - Matthew 5:1-12	2
March 26 - Day 3 - Mark 10:35-45	3
March 27 - Day 4 - Matthew 16:21-28	3
March 28 - Day 5 - John 14:1-7	4
WEEK 2 - THE CALM OF CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF DANGER AND NEED	5
March 31 - Day 6 - Mark 4:35-41	6
April 1 - Day 7 - Mark 5:1-20	6
April 2 - Day 8 - Mark 6:30-44	7
April 3 - Day 9 - Mark 6:45-52	7
April 4 - Day 10 - Mark 7:31-37	8
WEEK 3 - THE CALM OF CHRIST IN BETRAYAL AND REJECTION	9
April 7 - Day 11 - Matthew 26:14-25, 47-50	10
April 8 - Day 12 - Matthew 26:30-35, 69-75	10
April 9 - Day 13 - Matthew 26:36-46	11
April 10 - Day 14 - Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14, 27-31	11
April 11 - Day 15 - Hebrews 4:14-16	12
WEEK 4 - THE CALM OF CHRIST IN THE FACE OF DEATH	13
April 14 - Day 16 - Matthew 27:32-56	14
April 15 - Day 17 - Luke 23:26-43	14
April 16 - Day 18 - John 20:1-18	15
April 17 - Day 19 - John 20:19-23	15
April 18 - Day 20 - 1 Peter 1:3-9	16

WEEK 1

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

SUNDAY SERMON TEXT: JOHN 8:31-32, JOHN 14:6

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” -John 8:31-32

Christ is calm because He always knows the truth. In fact, Jesus declares that He is the way, the truth, and the life who came to set us free from the tyranny of the Enemy’s lies. Having peace and knowing the truth go hand-in-hand.

Join us as we explore the peacefulness of Jesus in the face of untruths He encountered throughout his life. We’ll ask the Lord to reveal the lies we believe that fuel our anxiety and replace them with His truth.



MARCH 24 - MATTHEW 4:1-11

This passage comes directly on the heels of Jesus' baptism, where His identity as the Son of God was confirmed by the Father Himself. Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert for the Devil to challenge the identity that was just affirmed in Jesus. The Devil's plan is to undermine Jesus' identity and calling by having Him use it in ways that were not the Father's will. Jesus responds to Satan every time by essentially saying "I know what my Father has said." When the enemy seeks to question or destroy our identity and calling in Christ, that is the exact response we should have as well... "That's not true... I know what my Father has said."

REFLECT

1. Take a look at Jesus' responses in this passage. Why is it important that Jesus overcomes the lies of the Devil with Scripture?
2. What are the lies about yourself that you are wrestling with? What are the words of your Father (Scripture) that you need to be reminding yourself of to combat those lies?

RESPOND

What are the things troubling you right now? Are you feeling overwhelmed, anxious, angry, or alone? Ask the Lord to show you the lies you are believing about yourself or your circumstances and pray for the Holy Spirit to help you uncover the truth.

MARCH 25 - MATTHEW 5:1-12

This passage exists at the opening of what we call "The Sermon on the Mount" and is considered Jesus' greatest teaching on what it means to follow Him. As Jesus begins His sermon He starts by letting us know that what He is sharing is the key to the "blessed" life. A better way to understand it is to think of Jesus saying "These are the character traits of someone who is living 'the good life'." One of the lies we are regularly fed is that "the good life" is to be had only through power, money, popularity, and success. Jesus combats that lie by showing us where true happiness is found... in recognizing our need for God, and living our lives in a way that invites others into His Kingdom.

REFLECT

1. What does Jesus say are the characteristics of "the good life"? Explain each of these characteristics and how they compare to what the world teaches us about happiness.
2. What are you trusting in to bring you peace and happiness? Is it working? If not, how might the words of Jesus challenge you to pursue the true "good life"?

RESPOND

Make a list of the things you are holding on to that don't bring God's peace. Write out a prayer giving each of those things to God, and asking to receive from Him true peace. (Example: Dear God, I give my pride to You and ask that You grant me meekness and a spirit that always acknowledges its dependence on You.)

MARCH 26 - MARK 10:35-45

James and John come to Jesus with a request fit for a king: “Give us important and powerful positions when you rule the world.” Jesus’ answer was completely unexpected: “You have no idea what it even means to be great in My Kingdom!” The world likes to tell us that power, influence, money, and fame will make us great, but the only thing they do is make us worry about what people think of us, and afraid that they will one day go away. Jesus’ words and life show us that true greatness comes from sacrificial service in following Him.

REFLECT

1. Jesus let the disciples know that to follow Him in greatness they would need to “drink the cup he drinks,” and “be baptized with the same baptism” as Him. What do you think this means?
2. How does Jesus’ definition of greatness differ from the world’s? Does that surprise you? Why or why not?

****Note:** If you’re struggling with the phrases in question #1, you can look to verse 45. Jesus is referring to the way He was going to give up His life as a payment for our sin out of His great love for us and obedience to The Father’s will.

RESPOND

Take a moment to thank Jesus for his sacrificial love and ask Him for ways that you can follow in His footsteps in your own life. Whenever you feel the struggle to serve yourself over others, take a few deep breaths and repeat these words: “Greatness is found... as I lay my life down.”

MARCH 27 - MATTHEW 16:21-28

Jesus begins by sharing with His disciples some hard and unexpected truths about the mission He was on. Jesus would have to suffer in the hands of religious leaders, die, and be raised from the dead. Peter was having a hard time accepting that God’s Messiah, the one who was to save God’s people and rule in victory, would have to endure anything as terrible as what Jesus was describing. Jesus firmly corrected Peter, and went on to let all his followers know that the things of God are much more valuable than any immediate comfort that may be lost along the way. The implied question here for all who seek to follow Jesus is this: “Will you believe the lie and chase immediate gratification, or will you give everything, no matter how difficult, to follow God’s way that, while maybe more difficult now, leads to peace that lasts forever?”

REFLECT

1. What was the lie that Peter was believing when he tried to correct Jesus? In what ways are you believing that same lie today?
2. Take some time to meditate on Jesus’ words in v.25 and v.26. What do you think it means for us to “gain the world” and still “lose our soul”? What does it mean for Jesus to say that those who “lose their life” for Jesus will ultimately find their lives?

RESPOND

Journal through a time in your life when God brought redemption through difficult or even tragic circumstances. How does remembering God’s faithfulness and power calm your heart with regard to potential difficulties that may lie ahead?

MARCH 28 - JOHN 14:1-7

Jesus himself is deeply troubled by the prospect of His betrayal and crucifixion. Yet, he takes this moment to provide words of comfort to His followers so that, as they faced the trouble that was in front of them, their hearts could be untroubled. There was anxiety and pain at the thought of Jesus leaving the disciples, so He reassures them with three truths: 1) Jesus is going to the Father. 2) Jesus is making them a place with the Father and plans to take them there. 3) They can be confident of going to the Father because Jesus was about to give His life to make the way. As followers of Jesus we can rest in these same three truths today when the enemy seeks to tear us down with worry or fear.

REFLECT

1. Jesus starts with the call to “let not your hearts be troubled.” What reasons does He give us to rest in?
2. Jesus doesn’t promise that trouble won’t come, instead He promises that He will make a place for us with God our Father to rest in after He helps us through whatever trouble may come. How does that truth help us through the tough times in our lives?

RESPOND

This entire week has been about finding the “Calm of Christ” by replacing the lies the enemy feeds us with the truth of God’s promises in His Word. On the next few pages will be a list of common lies the enemy tells us, and the truth we can use to respond to those lies. What lies are you believing in your life? Use this list as a starting point to meditate on the Truth of God that brings authentic peace.

LIES

I am alone.

God doesn’t care.

I don’t need community.

I can’t move forward.

My feelings or my experience define the truth.

God would move in my life if I had more faith.

My addiction makes me despicable.

My worth is attached to my success.

It’s all my fault.

My life doesn’t matter.

I have to defend myself.

TRUTH

God will never leave me or forsake me. (Deut. 31:6-8)

My walls are ever before the Lord. He collects my tears and rises to show me compassion. (Is. 49:16, Is. 30:18)

I was designed to know and be known. (Ps. 133:1, Ecc. 4:9-12)

In Christ I am continually being transformed from one glory to the next. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Jesus Himself defines truth. (John 14:6)

God is free and sovereign and bound by no one. (Job 42:2)

Nothing can separate me from the love of God. (Romans 8:38-39)

My value is demonstrated by the price Jesus paid for my redemption - His very life. (Eph. 1:5-7)

No broken situation is beyond the Lord’s ability to redeem. (Eph. 1:7-8)

I am chosen and have good works prepared for me to do. (Eph. 1:4, 2:10)

The Lord will vindicate and uphold the righteous. (Ps. 138:8, Ps. 37:17)

WEEK 2

AWE OVER ANXIETY

SUNDAY SERMON TEXT: MARK 4:39-41, MATTHEW 10:26-33

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Mark 4:39-41

Christ is calm because He is awesome; His power is beyond comparison. Though at first God’s mighty power may be frightening or overwhelming, there is much healing for our anxiety in recognizing that He wields His might for our good.

This week we’ll explore scenes from the life of Jesus that demonstrate His majesty and might. We’ll consider how filling our lives with wonder at His authority over creation, evil, and disease drowns out our fears.

MARCH 31 – MARK 4:35-41

Here Jesus displays His calm presence in the middle of a terrible storm. The area where Jesus and the disciples were sailing was prone to storms of this type, but it seems that this storm posed a particular threat to those on the boat. Notice Jesus' response here. He does not panic, he does not present as anxious, he doesn't even permit the idea that things are anything other than okay. Why? Because all He had to do was speak, and the wind and waves would obey His voice. Our ability to feel peace is directly related to the strength of whatever we are trusting to give us peace. Boats break, weather changes, and our own strength will eventually run out. But, we can find unshakable peace in Jesus who is strong enough for even the wind and waves to obey His every command.

REFLECT

1. What was the disciples' response to the storm? How is this similar or different to how you respond when things go wrong in your life?
2. Jesus' actions demonstrate that He is in control of even nature at all times. How can that truth reassure you when you feel afraid or uncertain?

RESPOND

Sit in a comfortable, quiet spot and take a minute to relax with a few slow breaths. Read today's passage one more time and imagine yourself as a disciple in the boat with Jesus. In your mind's eye, what do you see? What do you feel? What do you hear? Do you smell anything? Imagine Jesus commanding the winds and waves to be still. Now imagine Jesus speaking His peace to whatever storm you are currently experiencing in life. How do you feel when the sea is calm?

APRIL 1 - MARK 5:1-20

Picture this... A man possessed by many demons has been living around the burial grounds of the town terrorizing people, screaming, and harming himself... Sounds scary right? That's what everyone in the town thought. Jesus, however, showed no hesitation at drawing near to the man and commanding the demons away. Notice how the demons that had the entire town fearful were afraid of Jesus! The very thing ruining the life of this man and creating fear in the people around him was simply commanded away by Jesus. He is not afraid of the things that we fear, and he has no hesitations about drawing near to you when you are going through something scary.

REFLECT

1. Contrast how the man who had been delivered and the people in the area responded to Jesus' awesome act of power and authority.

THE MAN

THE PEOPLE

2. Why do you think the delivered man and the crowd of people had such different responses to Jesus? What made the man want to draw near to Jesus' power but the people terrified of it?

RESPOND

Keeping in mind the welcoming, compassionate presence of Jesus, share with the Lord something in life that makes you feel afraid. Then repeat the below practice several times.

Breathe in for 3 counts and say to yourself, "Jesus, you are the master..."
Breathe out for 4 counts and say to yourself, "...of heaven and earth."

APRIL 2 - MARK 6:30-44

In the middle of this great miracle there are two things that should stand out to all who read it: 1) The heart of Christ for His people, and 2) the ability of Jesus to meet their needs. As Jesus looks out at the thousands of hungry people who have followed Him into the wilderness His heart is moved to compassion by their need. He compares them to lost little sheep looking for a shepherd to care for them. Out of this great compassion Jesus takes an impossibly small amount of food and multiplies it to feed thousands. Jesus shows Himself to be both the God that cares for His people, and the God who is able to provide for them.

REFLECT

1. Take a minute to think of the amount of need that was present in this situation. How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to find food for that many people?
2. Notice how Jesus took what little His followers had available and multiplied it to meet a great need. What does this teach us about God's ability to meet our needs today?

RESPOND

Jesus cares about the things you are going through, and is powerful enough to see you safely through them. Ask the Lord to show you all the ways He is present in the middle of the storms (struggles) you have in your life.

APRIL 3 - MARK 6:45-52

Jesus sent His disciples to go ahead to the next town while He said goodbye to the crowds He had just fed. As He was taking a moment to pray, He noticed the disciples struggling against a great wind and immediately set out to help them. Along the way He demonstrates His great power by both walking on the water and commanding the wind to stop. As we follow Jesus we are often met with hard situations. Some of them just happen to us, others are situations we find ourselves in trying to do our best at following Jesus. Either way, Jesus sees us as we struggle, and loves us enough to come near to us as He helps us along the way.

REFLECT

1. What does this passage teach us about Jesus' heart for His people?
2. Translations of Jesus' response to the disciples include, "Take heart," "Have courage," and "Be of good cheer." How would you describe what He was communicating to them in your own words?

RESPOND

Jesus cares about the things you are going through, and is powerful enough to see you safely through them. Ask the Lord to show you all the ways He is present in the middle of the storms (struggles) you have in your life.

APRIL 4 - MARK 7:31-37

As the reputation of Jesus grows, people begin to seek Him out for healing. The friends of this deaf man bring him to Jesus in hopes that something can be done. Maybe they thought Jesus could heal the man, but it doesn't seem like they were expecting how it would be done. As Jesus lays His hands on the man, He simply commands him to hear and speak again. The conclusion is clear in verse 37. If Jesus can command the deaf to hear and the mute to speak, then surely He can handle anything else.

REFLECT

1. What must it have been like to be a deaf and mute man at a time when medicine and technology were not advanced enough to help him live a normal life?
2. Around 2,000 years later, modern medicine and technology have come a long way, and can help a lot of people. But have we been able to simply command something as complex as deafness to go away? What does that say about Jesus' power?

RESPOND

Anxiety is an unavoidable part of the human experience. In dangerous scenarios, fight-or-flight is necessary for our preservation. It can also be helpful when a deadline is looming as that positive pressure sparks us into action on a project!

Experiencing a troubled heart can also drive us to Jesus. When our worship of Him outweighs the fear of what we're facing, we turn to our mighty Savior in assurance of His willingness to help us.

Think through the day or days ahead. As you do, notice any place in your body that feels tense as you anticipate upcoming events, tasks, interactions, gatherings. Bring that tension to the Lord in prayer. Allow it to drive you to Him!

WEEK 3

HEALING POST-TRAUMA ANXIETY

SUNDAY SERMON TEXT: MATTHEW 26:36-42,
HEBREWS 4:14-16, EZEKIEL 26:36

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Christ is calm even when suffering. In the final week of his life He experienced horrific trauma, yet He displayed perfect peace as the One who knew that Resurrection Day was coming. He is certainly the High Priest who is well-acquainted with our griefs and able to sympathize with every temptation and pain we have experienced, opening up the help and healing of the Father to us.

APRIL 7 - MATTHEW 26:14-25, 47-50

Judas was one of Jesus' closest friends, one of the twelve people Jesus spent most of His time with. It's clear Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray Him, but that does not make it any less painful. They could have come for Jesus while He was in the temple teaching every day. Jesus knew that He had to go to the cross, so He would have gone either way. But the fact that they used one of Jesus' closest friends to betray Him and they came to Him armed as if He were a criminal on the run adds insult to injury. In spite of all this, Jesus was calm, at peace, in control. He knew both who He was, and what He had to do. He was the Son of God, following the will of God, and no accusation or betrayal could steal the peace that comes from that fact.

REFLECT

1. How hard must it have been for Jesus to share His final meal with a man that was about to hand Him over to be killed?
2. What stands out to you about Jesus' reactions in these situations?

RESPOND

How have you experienced betrayal? Spend a few minutes meditating on the scenes we studied today. Think about how these interactions would have made Jesus feel. Thank Him that He fully understands the hurt you've experienced and wants to give you His calm even in the midst of betrayal.

APRIL 8 - MATTHEW 26:30-35, 69-75

As the hour of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion were coming close, Jesus let His disciples know that they were all about to abandon Him. Peter, in typical fashion, claimed that he could never do such a thing! Jesus goes on to predict that Peter will in fact deny Him three times before the night is over. Sure enough, as the words of Jesus came true, Peter is reminded of how quickly he failed. Yet in all this, there is a word of hope that often goes unnoticed. Verses 31 and 32 let the disciples know that, not only was their abandonment expected, but that they will meet up again where all will be restored.

REFLECT

1. What clue did Jesus give in His prediction of the disciples' denial that points to the reason for his calm demeanor (v. 31-32)?
2. Why do you think Peter wept bitterly when He remembered the words of Jesus?

RESPOND

Keeping in mind the loving gaze of the Father that is upon you in Christ, share with the Lord a place in which you feel the sting of rejection. Then repeat the below practice several times.

Breathe in for 3 counts and say to yourself, "I am accepted..."

Breathe out for 4 counts and say to yourself, "...in the Beloved."

APRIL 9 - MATTHEW 26:36-46

When faced with betrayal, arrest, and death, Jesus models for us the two places to turn. He takes his heavy heart to His community (His closest friends) and to God. How often do we seek to isolate ourselves when we are going through something difficult? The Son of God Himself is experiencing real sadness and, rather than isolating, He looks to surround Himself with people He loves and trusts as He runs to the Father in prayer. Even so, His friends fail Him, but He knows His father will not. As Jesus processes His emotions with the Father, near the people He loves, He is able to face a terrible thing with a calm heart.

REFLECT

1. What emotions did Jesus experience in this passage? How did He handle those disturbing emotions?
2. Unlike many of us, Jesus knew His betrayal was coming and kept walking toward it anyway. What thoughts or feelings does this truth bring up in you?

RESPOND

What is troubling your heart? Take a minute to express those troubles to God the Father and also to the community God has given you.

APRIL 10 - MATTHEW 27:1-2, 11-14, 27-31

How do you feel when you are falsely accused or misrepresented? Does your heart race as your anger flares up? Do you shut down as it feels like no one has listened to you? Does your stomach sink when you know people are making judgments of you that aren't fair? Yet we see Jesus do none of these things. He knows that who He is and what He came to do is unaffected by the people's misunderstanding of Him. It doesn't matter if the crowds call Him their king or not, He still created the universe. It doesn't matter if they falsely accused Him, He still lived a perfect life for us all. It doesn't matter that they mocked Him, He would still rise from the dead in victory.

REFLECT

1. Why do you think Jesus was able to be silent in the face of the most unjust accusations of all time?
2. What is your knee-jerk reaction when you are falsely accused or misunderstood?

RESPOND

The well-known serenity prayer (usually credited to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr) is often incorporated into recovery programs like Alcoholics Anonymous. However, the truth and power of this prayer is helpful to anyone who is facing challenges.

Say this aloud:

***“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”***

What are a few circumstances or obstacles that you'd like to see changed, but don't have power to change? What are some challenges that are in your power to address or correct? Journal about ways that you find it challenging to accept what is beyond your control. For the circumstances that you can control, what are the risks or fears that hold you back?

APRIL 11 - HEBREWS 4:14-16

There is a lie that we commonly hear the world tell us: “If God exists, then He is cruel, uncaring, and has nothing to do with us.” But the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, lets us know that cannot be further from the truth. In Jesus, God came to Earth to live as a human and experience all that human life has to offer. He knows what it means to be hungry, to be thirsty, to be a kid, to be a teenager, to try and make friends, to be rejected, to face physical pain, to feel joy, and to feel sadness. He knows, because He lived it Himself. So when you experience all the highs and lows that life has to offer, know that your God has felt them too. When you pray, you pray to a God that doesn’t just hear you... He truly does know what it is like to be you.

REFLECT

1. What would it be like to have a God that had no interest in, or experience with, your struggles?

2. A high priest acts as a representative on behalf of humans before God. Why is it such a big deal that our High Priest can sympathize with us?

RESPOND

Take a moment to bring a particularly painful part of your story to God. As you do this, remember that Jesus knows how you feel because He has felt pain like you.

WEEK 4

FEAR NOT - BEHOLD YOUR KING

SUNDAY SERMON TEXT: JOHN 12:12-18

*And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,
“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
Behold, your king is coming,
Sitting on a donkey’s colt!”
John 12:14-15*

King Jesus enters Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion on a donkey rather than a horse and chariot, communicating the nature of His kingship. He comes in humility and power. Interestingly, John quotes Zechariah’s prophecy of this moment but adds the phrase “fear not,” perhaps remembering something Jesus said or emphasizing Jesus’ mission of peace.

This Holy Week we will explore the death and resurrection narratives of the King of Kings. This Prince of Peace conquered death and destroyed the one who holds the power of death so that His people might not have any reason to fear (Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus served us to the uttermost that we might partake of His untroubled heart.

APRIL 16- JOHN 20:1-18

Think back to week one of this study for a moment. Believing lies are a key way the enemy seeks to steal our peace. Notice Mary's panic... The anxiety she feels as she believes in her heart that Jesus' body had been stolen. Think about the intense fearfulness this would have caused. Now... think about how Mary must've felt when she recognized the voice of her master as He called her by name... As the truth becomes clear to her the panic and anxiety leave her body as peace and joy take over.

REFLECT

1. This scene is a wonderful example of how living out of an untruth deeply affects our perspective and emotions. What is the untruth Mary Magdalene operated under in this passage and what effect did it have on her?
2. What happened to Mary when Jesus called her name? How must she have felt?

RESPOND

"Seeing the Lord" as Mary testified in John 18:20 transforms our perspective and often deeply impacts our emotions. Most of the "fear not" commands in Scripture are coupled with promises of God's presence. As author Paula Rinehart states, "The worst part of pain is not the misfortune itself but the apparent God-forsakenness of it."

Bring something that is upsetting you before the Lord. Pour out your heart to Him about it (Psalm 62:8) and ask Him to open your eyes to see Him in the midst of that difficulty. May the Lord turn your attention to His presence and power that is always working on your behalf.

APRIL 17 - JOHN 20:19-23

Put yourself in the disciple's shoes... You have just abandoned your teacher, who you thought was the savior of your people, you have watched Him die, and now you are hiding in fear that the same people who killed Jesus will find you. All of a sudden, the teacher you saw die is standing in front of you, and the last memory you left Him with was you running away. What do you expect Him to say? Certainly not "peace"! "Peace" was the very thing that Jesus set out to accomplish on the cross, and "peace" would be the word spoken to his disciples to declare it had been achieved. Peace... for criminals, sinners, liars, and disciples who abandon their Messiah.

REFLECT

1. How does Jesus greet the disciples? Why is this surprising given their conduct before He was crucified?
2. How did the disciples' emotions shift upon seeing Jesus?

RESPOND

On the next page, write a prayer in the space provided thanking the Lord that He comes to find you with His offer of peace even when you are unfaithful. you find it challenging to accept what is beyond your control. For the circumstances that you can control, what are the risks or fears that hold you back?

MY PRAYER**APRIL 18 - 1 PETER 1:3-9**

The resurrection of Jesus is an incredible thing! But what does it actually mean for us? That's exactly the question Peter is answering here in his letter. Look at the words he uses to describe it: "living hope", "inheritance" that is eternal, "salvation"... Because Christ has died for sins and risen from the dead in victory over them we can now have hope. Hope that Peter calls "living" because it is something that grows day-by-day and year-by-year into something that carries us, not just through this life, but for all of eternity! Life in a sinful world can be difficult, painful, and messy, but if Jesus can keep His promise to die for our sins and rise from the dead, then He can certainly keep His promise to carry us through the trials of this life into the eternal peace of God in the next.

REFLECT

1. According to this passage, what are the benefits of Christ's resurrection for believers?
2. How does Peter tell us that the troubled heart can find hope?

RESPOND

Look back over the last few weeks of study. How has the Lord increased your peace, hope, and joy as you have heard from Him?

I praise you, merciful Father, that as a part of the new life I have in Christ, you have given me a hope that will not die because it is based on Jesus' triumph over death and the grave! I've traded in an old life headed for destruction for one in which I'll enjoy the wealth of your grace for all eternity. I praise you for guarding me with your unmatched power for heaven. All of this good news brings me an abundance of joy, even though my circumstances are difficult. The temporary, uphill seasons of life profit me by refining my faith that I might bring you greater glory! I see you with eyes of faith, Jesus, at every turn in my story and I am filled with more joy than words can express! Hallelujah!



■ ■ REYNOLDA
■ ■ STUDENTS

reynoldachurch.org