

If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

## Getting Started

- Share how you celebrated this Easter weekend (Good Friday through Resurrection Sunday). As you read John 20:19-23, how was this Easter celebration similar or different to the first Easter celebration with those initial disciples of Jesus?
- Many people will attend just a Christmas or Easter Service (in person or this year online) once a year yet leave unchanged and never respond to the gospel and connect with a local church. Share your observations and your thoughts about what contributes to this reality.

## Discussion

- Read Mark's account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (16:1-8) and then discuss why Jesus told the women to go, tell his disciples and Peter, that 'he is going ahead of you into Galilee and there you will see him, just as he told you'. Why do you think Peter was singled out?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5:

- Peter encourages his readers to **praise God**, a helpful remedy for hearts weighed down with discouragement because of suffering. He then lists the reasons for praise. Define and discuss each of these statements and reasons for praising God. Consider how the statements relate to and build upon each other.
  - 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 of fade ...
  - kept in heaven for you ...
  - through faith ...
  - shielded by God's power ...
  - until the coming of salvation to be revealed in the last time.

- Ephesians 2:1-10 reminds us that before we were saved by God's grace through faith, we were spiritually dead. How can a spiritually dead person do anything to make himself alive or re-born? Based on John 3:3-8, Titus 3:3-7 who is agent of this new spiritual birth? (Look up the term Regeneration in a Bible dictionary and share what you learn.)
- Salvation has a past, present and future reality. Salvation is described with reference to the past (Christians have been given new birth by God's mercy), to the present (Christians are being shielded by God's power) and to the future (at *the last time* will come the final deliverance from evil). Discuss how the terms Justification (past), Sanctification (present) and Glorification (future) relate to the richness of our salvation. How would this have encouraged the believers in Peter's day? How do these truths encourage you to stand strong in your faith today?

Pastor Lee listed several things that we often trust in for security such as other our own abilities, other people, our wealth, the government, our jobs, our good intentions, our good works. Many of these things are falling apart all around us today. Natural responses to this instability are anxiety, fear, anger, confusion and despair. The truths of 1 Peter 1:3-5 provide many reasons to praise God and to maintain an eternal perspective in the midst of trouble.

- Read and respond to the commentary below from 1 Peter 1:3-5 and then close your time together praising God for all these blessings and asking Him to give you eyes to see through His eternal perspective.

Peter here (v. 4) reminds his readers that in the New Covenant, God's rewards are less material, physical, and earthly. There is less emphasis on present material prosperity as a reward, for God has 'chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith' (James 2:5, a statement which does not and could not appear in the OT). The enjoyment of physical health is also less prominent, for 'though our outer nature is wasting away our inner nature is being renewed every day' (2 Cor. 4:16). There is less emphasis too on freedom from persecution, for 'if you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you' (1 Peter 4:14). Having many children is not regarded in the New Testament as a necessary sign of God's favour, for both marriage and celibacy are his gifts (1 Corinthians 7:7).

Christians should not be dismayed at this relative lack of present material rewards, however, for faith recognizes the New Covenant reward as something far greater: a present sufficiency for material needs (Philippians 4:19), a present spiritual fellowship with Christ (1 Peter 1:8), and a future inheritance both material and eternal, which is 'imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you' (1 Peter 1:4).

Just as God in the Old Covenant encouraged his people to look forward to the future Messiah with faith, so he now encourages us, for whom the Messiah's coming is a fact of history, to look forward to our full heavenly inheritance. Here is great comfort for every New Covenant believer. 'So we do not lose heart ... For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal' (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).<sup>1</sup>

## Prayer

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<sup>1</sup> Grudem, W. A. (1988). [\*1 Peter: an introduction and commentary\*](#) (Vol. 17, pp. 64-65). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.