

**INTRO**

- What's a hope of yours for 2021?

**READ**

1 Peter 3:8-17

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

In this passage, Peter's vision for living life in adverse times of disruption, suffering, and even persecution, is both inspiring and challenging! Despite what may be happening, we're to be a people of hope that transcend circumstances.

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY HOPE?**

Hope is vital to human existence and what we believe about our future determines how we live in the present. Scripture pictures hope like an "anchor for the soul" (Heb 6:19). Biblical hope is not wishful thinking or even optimism. It is actively waiting in expectation, not so much for circumstances to change, but for God *himself* to show up, act, and fulfill his promises.

*Qu: how do you understand the difference between optimism and hope?*

One of the key differences is what our hope is anchored in: *the reason for our hope*. Peter calls us to anchor our hope in Christ by examining what's of ultimate importance in our heart:

**"in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." - v15**

**YOUR HEART, THE HOME OF HOPE**

The heart is your control centre and therefore what we put our hope in reveals what's of real control of our lives. For example, we can put our hope in a government to realize our desire for peace or prosperity. We can put our hope in our own success to realize our desire for comfort or

security. (What other examples can you think of?)

*Qu: what are you prone to place your hope in, outside of God?*

**JESUS, THE SUBSTANCE OF TRUE HOPE**

We can't have the kingdom (righteousness, peace, joy, beauty, justice, truth) without the King. What needs to be hallowed/honoured as ultimate in our hearts is Christ the Lord.

What has Jesus done specifically to provide us grounds for hope? He came, died, rose, reigns, and will return. In every way, Jesus has demonstrated God is for us and with us. God hasn't given up on his world or us. Neither should we no matter what reality may look like! We are invited to see reality from a different vantage point, through true hope:

May the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope**. (Rom 15:13)

*Qu: Practically speaking, what can we do to be this kind of people of hope?*

**RESPOND & PRAY**

- Pray Rom 15:13 over one another in your group.
- Pray for opportunities to give a reason for your hope to anyone who asks.
- Pray our church would be a community abounding in hope as we move into 2021.