

Youth Teaching Resources

April 19, 2020



Lent / Easter / Pentecost—All Things New

Psalms 118:1-4, 19-29—“A New Foundation”

Colossians 3:1-17 (RCL 1-11)—“A New Wardrobe”

1 Peter 1:3-9—“A New Future”

1 Peter 1:13-25 (RCL 1:17-22)—“A New Birth”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A New Future

1 Peter 1:3-9

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

Our students make hundreds of choices every day. Sometimes they choose differently that we would. How do you interact when your students makes a different choice than you would make? How do you support your students when they make choices that aren't healthy choices for them to make? How do you support your students when they make choices that are healthy for them? Do you think your student recognizes the difference? It might be easier to talk about the decision making process then the decision that was made.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip "Hope" from *The Hunger Games*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Why do they have a winner for the Hunger Games?
- 2) Do you agree that hope is greater than fear?
- 3) How can hope be dangerous?
- 4) Where do you draw your hope from?
- 5) How is hope influenced by your faith?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading 1 Peter 1.3-9. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Who is this letter written to? Why does this matter when trying to figure out what the rest of the passage means to us today?
- 2) Why does Paul begin his letter talking about hope?
- 3) What does Paul use to describe the "eternal inheritance" that we are to receive? What else would you include in this list?
- 4) How were the people of the early church persecuted? Why does this make hope even more valuable for them?
- 5) Why is faith so important to the people of the early church? How might their faith have faltered because of being such an early part of the followers of Jesus?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Who wrote 1 Peter?
- 2) When was 1 Peter written?
- 3) What persecution did the early followers of Jesus encounter? Is there still persecution that Christians witness?
- 4) Have you ever been put down because of your faith?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": What does it mean to have a living hope?

Transformation

Conclude the session by distributing sticky notes and writing utensils. Challenge your students to write down all the different things that they feel that the world is calling them to do. When the students have finished with their list, have them come and place their sticky notes on the wall. Then, challenge the students to write down all of different things that they feel like Jesus is calling them to do. When they have finished with this list, have them come and place their sticky notes on another part of the wall and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Which list was easier for you to create? Which list was more comfortable for you to create?
- 2) Which list would be easier for you to live out? Explain.
- 3) Which things on these lists were contradictory? How do you choose what to do in these situation?

Transformation *continued*

- 4) How easy, or hard, is it for you to live your life as a Christian in your community? Are you able to be honest about who you are and what you believe?
- 5) What supports do you have being a Christian in your community? What challenges do you face being a Christian in your community?
- 6) What hope do you have for the church in the present? In the future?

Close with a prayer of strength and patience to live a life of Christ in the challenges that we face daily.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Who wrote 1 Peter?—The letter we call 1 Peter is written in an excellent, almost literary style of Greek, and it seems to address Gentile converts more so than Jews. Many modern scholars are convinced that the apostle Peter could not have written this book, since he is believed to have died before the outbreak of widespread Roman persecution, was described as an uneducated man (Acts 4:13), and was primarily known as a rustic fisherman who became an apostle mainly to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-9). Thus, they usually assign the book to one of Peter’s disciples, or to another early leader who used Peter’s name as a pseudonym, a common practice in the ancient world. Other writers find those arguments lacking and confidently assign the book to the apostle Peter himself. Some suggest that a professional writer in the church at Rome could have worked with Peter to compose the missive.

Several other ancient works were attributed to Peter, though they are clearly apocryphal. These include The Acts of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Judgment of Peter.

For a recent comprehensive and accessible discussion of these matters in more detail, see Richard Vinson, “1 Peter” in 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentaries (Smyth & Helwys, 2010), pp. 1-26.

When was 1 Peter written?—Empire-wide outbreaks of persecution against Christians arose under Nero (c. 62-64 CE), Domitian (ca. 90-97 CE), and Trajan (ca. 111 CE). However, Peter’s readers probably faced local pogroms of a more personal nature. Those who accept Petrine authorship date the book from 60-64 CE, since an old church tradition holds that Peter was executed in Rome during the persecutions of Emperor Nero. The tradition claims that Peter insisted on being crucified upside down, saying he was unworthy to die in the same way as Jesus. Roman Catholics hold that the Clementine Chapel, beneath St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, marks the site of his execution. A tomb said to hold his bones is also inside the basilica.

Those who believe another author who was influenced by Peter’s teaching typically cite evidence suggesting that the letter was written late in the first century.

Convolution—One bit of evidence against Simon son of Jonas being the author is that he was said to be an unlettered man, but the Greek of 1 Peter is of a high order, if sometimes difficult to read. For example, in Greek, vv. 3-12 consists of a single lengthy and convoluted sentence, not the sort of structure one would expect from someone with Simon Peter’s background.

Alliteration—The author’s use of alliteration goes beyond the adjectives in v. 4. The word for “inheritance” and the repeated word for “and” (kai) both begin with the letter “k,” so there

Digging Deeper *continued*

is an artful repetition between words beginning with “k” or “a”: klēronomian aphtharton kai amianton kai amaranton.

Persecution—Few Christians in America suffer persecution as did the recipients of 1 Peter. We may feel slighted or disrespected for our faith, but physical or social repercussions are rare.

Sometimes the fiercest criticism we get comes from fellow believers. Persons who hold very conservative social values they identify as “Christian” or as a “biblical worldview” may feel rejected or looked down on by those who take a more liberal or progressive stance and hold different values. At the same time, more socially progressive believers who emphasize Jesus’ teachings about showing preference to the poor may find opposition from conservative folk who preach self-sufficiency.

Some cry “persecution” when the courts do not allow them to open municipal meetings with a Christian prayer, or to erect a monument containing the Ten Commandments in front of the courthouse, or to refuse service to gay or lesbian persons. That is not persecution, but a practice of honoring the constitution in a pluralistic society that respects all beliefs, as the founders intended.

Nevertheless, trials and tribulations are often our lot in life, whatever the cause, and hard times put our faith to the test. Can you remember any experiences in which your faith was tested by fire, and you found yourself strengthened by the experience? If not, have you wondered why?

Faith in what you do not see—Compare Peter’s assertion about belief without seeing to a similar passage in Hebrews:

1 Peter 1:8-9 —“Although 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, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Hebrews 11:1 —“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

And as the Apostle Paul put it, “We walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Love and persecution—Can you think of a time when you felt ridiculed or put down because of your faith? Has something like that happened recently? If so, how did you respond?

Jesus’ central command is for Christians to love God, and to love each other (Mat. 7:12). He clearly taught his followers to respond to others with love, even when persecuted (Mat. 5:38-48). If someone should put you down because of your faith, what might be an appropriate response?

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

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What does it mean to have a “living hope”?

The most powerful phrase in this text, in my view, is Peter’s prayerful claim that the resurrection of Christ can bring a new birth “into a living hope.”

We like the notion of being alive, and we know something of the importance of hope that keeps the windows of the future open, but what did Peter mean in saying that we are born through Christ into “a living hope”?

I can still remember a statement from a “January Bible Study” book written almost 40 years ago. In 1 Peter: Message of Encouragement, John McClanahan wrote: “A living hope is hope which refuses to give up and die” (Convention Press, 1982, p. 17). I can also remember times in my life when I was tempted to give up hope, I didn’t. Hope kept me going.

Still, we should acknowledge that there is a difference between just keeping on, and truly living. In a 2013 “Ted Talk,” therapist Esther Perel spoke of growing up among Holocaust survivors in Belgium. Her neighbors could be divided into two groups, she said, “those who didn’t die, and those who came back to life.” Those who simply “didn’t die” became closed in, insecure, unwilling to open themselves to risk and love and the larger world. Those who “came back to life,” in contrast, had hope enough to believe there was life beyond the traumas they had faced. They learned to live again.

Richard Vinson, in his commentary for Smyth & Helwys, emphasizes that “hope is ‘living’ because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead” (p. 52). It is Christ’s life that give life to our hope.

Those who have a living hope don’t just muddle through, continuing to breathe but with no discernible purpose or joy. When we have a living hope that is grounded in Christ’s resurrection, we can learn to find growth and strength even on difficult days. We can trust in God’s good future for us. We can refuse to give up or hide from risk, opening our hearts to live fully into every moment of life, even the hard ones. That is a living hope.