



EASTER
AT VINTAGE **2020**

vGROUP STUDY



Easter 2020: vGroup Study

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EASTER 2020

On Easter Sunday, Pastor Dustin led us through 1 Peter 1:3–9. He focused in on 1) faith in Jesus' resurrection assures us of hope, 2) trials proved the genuineness of our faith, and 3) persevering faith leads to lasting salvation.

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:1, 3–9

*** Each individual section below contains both the exegesis and application questions. Each section can serve as a stand-alone mini-study, with the vGroup leader choosing to lead through one, two, or all three sections.

EXILES

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, pins this letter from Rome to the community of churches in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Several decades after Jesus' resurrection, these churches were undergoing a season of persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. Peter writes to these Christians, referring to them as 'exiles'. This is a key idea that Peter repeats in various forms throughout his letter (see verses 1:17, 2:11). Peter wants these Christians to see themselves through the lens of the family of Abraham in the Old Testament. Like the patriarchs of Genesis (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and the Israelites redeemed out of Egypt in the Exodus story, Peter wants these believers to see themselves as wanderers and sojourners in this world, being willing to endure various hardships and trials along the way, before reaching their promised inheritance and homeland.

- Peter obviously had a connection to the family of Abraham—he was Jewish by birth. However, Peter is writing to a mixture of Jewish and Gentile (non-ethnically Jewish) believers. Why might Peter want these non-Jewish believers to feel integrally connected to the story of the family of Abraham?
- Does seeing yourself as an exile or migrant bring out more positive or negative emotions in you? How are these 'exile' characters treated in the Bible? Do we find this consistent with the way exiles and migrant people groups are treated in the world today?
- How might taking the perspective of an exile or sojourner in this world shape how we endure through various trials, for example, like the COVID pandemic? How might this counter-cultural perspective shape our interactions with those outside of our Christian communities?

NEW LIFE

In verses 3–5, Peter rejoices at the glorious spiritual reality that Christians have been given new birth (or are born again) into: 1) a living hope, 2) an eternal inheritance, and 3) a lasting salvation. This new birth is grounded in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus' resurrection on Easter morning 2000 years ago now affords us a new life, a new family, and a living hope. We cannot enter into these by ourselves; they are gifts of God's grace and guarantees of his saving work on our behalf. Peter will go on to explore each of these ideas (our new identity, new family, and living hope) in the body of his letter, but the key supporting principle is introduced here: faith in Jesus' resurrection assures us of hope. Our hope is alive because Jesus himself is alive!

- What phrase or terms in these verses suggests a new identity in Christ? What phrase or terms suggests a new family in Christ?
- According to these verses, what is the source of our new birth? By what means do we receive this new birth?

- Talk about the connection Peter makes between our new birth and our inheritance. In the Jewish mind, what is the significance of an inheritance and the family into which you are born? Where is a Christian's inheritance and how is it described?
- For most of us, recent world events have caused us to wrestle with our own mortality and the fragileness of life. As we face community-wide sickness, uncertain economic times, and fear of the unknown, why is it important to cling to the truths of these verses? What encouragements do they offer us? (This might be a good time to have each group member share.)

SUFFERING & SALVATION

In verses 6–9, Peter reminds these Christians that their new identity and their new future within the family of God should also give them a new perspective on how to face their present trials. Like a refiner's fire, Peter says our present sufferings and trials work to burn away all other false hopes and sinful patterns of living that keep us from experiencing the depth of God's salvation. In this way, Peter says that our present sufferings paradoxically work to our benefit. They lead to a more genuine faith, one that upholds Christ as the most valuable, honored, and praiseworthy thing in our lives. The inherent challenge of these verses is to persevere in faith, under all kinds of trials, until the end when the full measure of our salvation will be revealed at Jesus' return.

- Discuss the metaphor of a refiner's fire and how Peter uses it to explain suffering. Is this a common way we view suffering or not? How did Jesus and the early church fathers, like Peter, model this way of enduring trials?
- How does suffering refine and purify our faith?
- Peter had seen Jesus in the flesh, but these Christians (living after Jesus) had not. Yet, Peter was calling on these Christians (and us) to remain faithful to Jesus and endure sufferings on his behalf. What encouragements are offered in these verses to address this contrast Peter draws out between these different generations of Christians?

- What are some false hopes or securities that the current COVID situation has revealed in our lives? Be honest with yourselves. How has God been refining your faith during these challenging times?