

1 PETER

MINISERIES

The True Story

Identity

Hope

▶ EPISODE 3:

Hope, Melanie's Story





Foundational Principle:

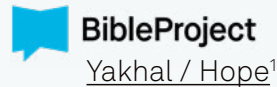
When our lives are grounded in the gospel found in the True Story of the Whole World, even the most discouraging times can become opportunities to grow in perseverance and hope.



Read and Watch:

Key Verses in 1 Peter - HOPE

- Chapter 1—verses 3-5, 6-9, 20-22
- Chapter 2—verses 22-25
- Chapter 3—verses 5, 15
- Chapter 4—verse 19
- Chapter 5—verse 10



The months between my 39th and 40th birthday were dark ones. My family and I were living in New England following a call to plant a church in that part of the country. For 10 solid years I had been fully immersed in helping my husband establish the body of Christ in that area. Anyone who has tried to start something from nothing knows how exhausting it can be. Especially when it comes to church ministry.

My responsibilities were vast and many. I helped organize child care on Sundays, hosted mission teams, led small groups, planned women's events, and cooked lots and lots of big meals. All while raising three little ones and managing our home in a place that didn't feel like home due to a shocking hostility to the Christian faith. Even the dreary weather promoted an atmosphere of bleakness and gloom. And my natural inclination to be a glass-half-empty kind of person only made my situation worse. When life gives me lemons, making lemonade is not my first thought. Despite my deep faith in Christ, hopelessness and despair are often my closest companions, especially when life brings conflicts and challenges.

As you can imagine, all of this left me completely depleted. My melancholic tendencies finally turned into full-fledged depression. Massachusetts felt like an exile within an exile at times. We moved there with the greatest of missionary hope, but ten years in, my hope was all but gone.

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Thankfully, my husband heard my cries and took them seriously. He adjusted his schedule to give me time to rest. He got up with the kids and brought hot tea to my room every morning, allowing me more time to pray and read my Bible in quiet. He would slip a notecard under the bedroom door with a Scripture that comforted me. Thankfully, nobody tried to push me into feeling better.

There were others who extended consistent kindnesses. My weekly running partner checked in with a genuine “How are you?” on our six-mile trek. Another friend referred me to a Christian counselor—a godly 70-year-old woman who turned out to be just the spiritual mother I needed. It took some time, but the Lord used all of these intentional people to refresh my weary soul and point me back to the True Story of hope.

At one point during that season of despair, my husband said, “I think we have to give it ten more years.” Ten more years of this? Ten more years of giving myself tirelessly to a place and a people that feel so foreign? I couldn’t imagine staying there that long. We had struggled to raise up and retain mature leaders in the church, which made it clear we still had far to go. Could I keep going with hope despite all that I had already endured? Do you ever feel that way?

Sometimes, finding the will to press on in the waiting literally felt impossible. Over and over again, I needed the reminder that Jesus wasn’t leaving me and that there were people in my life who could help provide places of rest, respite, and hope. I needed to be still in my longings, entrusting my tired heart to God. This was God’s invitation to fill my spiritual and emotional cup full once again.

Take a minute and reflect on experiences where you’ve felt discouraged or hopeless. What were those situations that caused you to feel despair?



The True Story of the Whole World

The concept of hope is one of the most important topics found in the True Story and is referenced in almost every book of the Bible. We are going to take a look at the kind of hope that God supplies to His people in times of uncertainty and hopelessness, and even in the depths of rebellion.

Maybe you have heard the story of Abraham and Sarah. God promised to bless their family and cause it to grow and increase. In fact, we read in Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, that God promised Abraham that he would be a father of many nations. The only problem was that they had no children! And to top it off, they were quite old. So the prospect of producing an heir seemed impossible. Abraham, however, responded with hope—not wishful thinking about his circumstances, but hope in God’s promises (Genesis 12, 18; Romans 4:17-21). God finally came through, blessing Abraham and Sarah with a son named Isaac after many long years of pining for a child. Their story serves as an example of what trust in the waiting could look like.

The book of Psalms in the Old Testament also highlights the theme of hope. It contains 150 hymns of praise as well as songs of lament. They’re written by people like us who were faced with challenging circumstances and seemingly hopeless scenarios. The psalmists expressed gritty, raw, and vulnerable feelings directly to God. They modeled the belief that through tears of defeat, fear, uncertainty, frustration, and even anger, God was the source of all true hope.

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Moving on to the Book of Jeremiah, we see the prophet, for whom the book is named, lamenting and searching for understanding. The destruction of Jerusalem and the enemy's capture of God's people is beyond devastating. Often referred to as the weeping prophet, he is in desperate need of hope. Jeremiah cries out to God as the people who are left in the city cry out for food and search for shelter. Jeremiah is brutally honest in his despair, but, somehow, he finds hope.

"I have forgotten what happiness is....
My soul continually remembers it
and is bowed down within me.
But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in him'" (LAMENTATIONS 2:17-24).

Once we flip the pages to the New Testament (the second part of the True Story), we find Jesus conceived by God's Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He is the ultimate expression of hope for humanity. He lives a perfect human life, is unjustly condemned to die by crucifixion, is raised from the dead, and ascends into heaven as the King. For these reasons, Jesus Christ is the plumb line of our hope and this episode helps us to understand His significance.





Maybe you're wondering where HOPE fits into the book of 1 Peter.

Peter had walked with Jesus and had seen Him bring hope to hopeless people during a time when the True Story's theme of redemption was most vivid. Peter is empathizing with the recipients of this letter, greeting them with a powerful pep talk. He bursts out with a blessing and reminds them (and us) that though our immediate circumstances feel a bit like a dumpster fire, we still have a literal and living hope—Jesus Christ.

Peter reminds his audience, right from the start, that although it seems that the Roman government is responsible for their predicament, they are in fact chosen and dispersed according to the foreknowledge of the triune God the Father, Son, and Spirit. Let that just sit with you a minute.

God chose these believers to be removed from the comfort of their homes and then scattered across foreign lands in order to neighbor among all sorts of different people. We can tell from the contents of this letter that some people are being made fun of for their faith. Others are suffering under the weight of all sorts of trials. Peter reminds them of their hope—their living hope—Jesus.

You might be thinking, "How can they be expected to have hope at all, let alone a vibrant and living hope?" Being able to give an explanation for hope when you're just not feeling it might seem a rather impossible request. But God has so much to say about what we consider impossible.



Now it's your turn. Let's dig into specific verses in 1 Peter.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-5

Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, which essentially means that he spent time in the presence of Jesus and was one of the original followers of Jesus.

- Why might this be an important thing for this group of believers to know?

As we've discussed already, Peter describes the recipients of this letter as sojourners, exiles, and aliens.

- Is there a reason Peter chose these terms to describe their situation? How might this description encourage them to persevere?

Peter begins his letter by reminding them that they have been born again into a living hope.

To more fully understand this concept, let's compare 1 Peter with 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 and 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time.”

(1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-5)



What do these three verses tell us is the connection between having hope and the resurrection of Christ?



What difference does it make that you and I believe that **Jesus is the Source of hope?**



Next, let's flip back to 1 Peter and look at chapter 1:18-21 where Peter turns his attention to the crucifixion of Jesus.

“For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which loses their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. **God chose him as your ransom long before the world began**, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.

Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory” (1 PETER 1:17-21 NLB).

Read this passage aloud and then highlight the words Peter uses to describe Jesus and the purpose of his death. Now compare this passage with 2 Cor. 5:21. What more do you learn about Jesus's death?

“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

- Why do you think Peter makes a point to talk about Christ's death?

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Peter goes on to remind us again that the resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us every reason to trust in God. 1 Peter 1:21 says this:

“Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.”

- Why do you think Peter emphasizes the resurrection?
- How does this encourage you or what questions do you have?

Melanie here again –

I thought I'd end this episode by sharing with you a little bit more of my story. We spent twenty-two years with our church in Massachusetts. If you're calculating, that's two years MORE than my husband promised me in the midst of my despair. But it's ok, because not only did God heal my depression during those final twelve years,

He also allowed me to see both the power of the continued working of the gospel in a place notorious for being unfriendly to Christian faith and the “living hope” Peter speaks of throughout the whole letter.

Shrink & Think

This “shrink and think” exercise is to help you summarize what you’ve learned about God, yourself, and others from this episode.

1. Factual Insights
This step helps you to look at the big picture and the facts in this episode
From this lesson, what do you learn about

- The God of hope
- Yourself in relationship to the God of hope
- The world in relation to the God of hope?

2. Revealing Relevance
This step helps you to pinpoint what in the lesson has been most revealing or relevant for you

- Why does what you learned about Jesus being our “living hope” matter?
- What does it mean to you to know that you are chosen by God? (Ephesians 1:4-6; 1 Peter 2:3-5)

3. Summary Statement (10-12 words)
This steps helps you shrink your observations into a short, shareable sentence or summary

Combine the factual insights into a one or two sentence summary.

4. Apply It
This last step helps you to apply what you’ve learned

- Where do you relate to maintaining hope through exile (your office, school, family, or social life)?
- What from this lesson most encourages you to persevere?
- How might you explain the correlation of Jesus’s resurrection and living hope?

Final Reflection

As you consider what you've learned about God, yourself, and others in this lesson, where do you see the theme of hope connecting to your own story?

- What truth from 1 Peter will you choose to focus on this week? Write it down, text yourself, or set a daily reminder that Jesus is your living hope and let this reminder guide your prayer for hope.
- Share with a friend one or two things you're learning about Jesus and the True Story this week.



Your Own Journey

Idea #1 | Add to your LIFE MAP

As you reflect on your own story, when has it been hard to turn your brain off at night? When have you found yourself getting spun up scrolling through social media or checking the news? Take a minute and add a marker to your LIFE MAP that expresses the level of your desire to move beyond wishing things could be better and to place your hope in Jesus.

Idea #2 | Try reframing a situation

As you're comfortable, think about a situation when you longed for circumstances to change, but instead they either got worse or maybe just stayed the same. How does the hope that Jesus offers help you? Write a short poem or song lyric to express your hope and tell one of your friends about what you're learning.

Going Deeper:



- [“When You Want to Give Up”](#)² by John Piper
(A “Look at the Book” video)



- [Hope Heals: A True Story of Overwhelming Loss and an Overcoming Love](#)³ by Katherine and Jay Wolf
- [Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament](#)⁴ by Mark Vroegop
- [Shattered Dreams: God’s Unexpected Path to Joy](#)⁵ by Larry Crabb



- John Piper’s sermon on 1 Peter: [The Power of Hope](#)⁶
- Tim Keller’s sermon on 1 Peter: [Born Into Hope](#)⁷



the **GOSPELPROJECT.**

- [In Jesus, Hope Gets Personal](#)⁸

Endnotes:

1. “Yakhal/Hope,” BibleProject, accessed October 12, 2022, <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope/>.
2. “When You Want to Give Up,” John Piper, November 27, 2018, accessed January 13, 2023, <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/when-you-want-to-give-up>.
3. Katherine Wolf, Jay Wolf, Joni Eareckson Tada, *Hope Heals: A True Story of Overwhelming Loss and An Overcoming Love* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020).
4. Mark Vroegop, *Dark clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament* (Grand Rapids: Crossway, 2019).
5. Larry Crabb, *Shattered Dreams: God’s Unexpected Path to Joy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2001).
6. “The Power of Hope,” John Piper, June 8, 2016, accessed October 12, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB_XQrEruG8.
7. “Born Into Hope,” Tim Keller, Gospel in Life, August 10, 2013, accessed October 12, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNp4oQJ4Njg>.
8. “In Jesus, Hope Gets Personal,” The Gospel Project, November 11, 2019, accessed October 12, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MKRGfEZYqs>.