



“High Impact Hope”

1 Peter 1

Small Group Plan

Early in the story of Jesus his popularity is attracting so many people that “normal” life is becoming difficult. Here is how Mark describes it:

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

The verb “out of his mind” literally means “beside himself” and is commonly translated in other New Testament writings as “astonished” “astounded” or “amazed.” One of my Greek professors in graduate school defined the verb here in Mark as “traveling in a different orbit.”

Jesus was not like other people. His goals, his purpose, his approach to relationships, his choice of words, all were very different. And so, while some of those watching thought he was *amazing*, and others concluded he must be out of *his mind*, everyone knew he was traveling in a *different orbit* around a *different center*.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How would you describe the “center” of Jesus life?
- How did that center direct his actions and his words?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— GOD WIRES US WITH HOPE —

1 Peter 1:1-4a

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

- At first glance the terms “elect” and “exile” do not seem similar, and yet Peter puts them side-by-side as synonyms. How do they each describe the life of the Christian?

- Describe the time you first realized that Christians were not like other people?
- To be “wired” means we were designed to speak, act and live in a particular way. How would you describe that way?
- Why did God give us a “new birth” a new beginning (v. 3)?
- What makes our “hope” alive (v. 3)?

— GOD PROTECTS US BY FAITH —

1 Peter 1:4b-5

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- There is sense of future here — “kept in heaven ... revealed in the last time.” How does God “shield” us until that time arrives?
- How is the salvation that comes **then** different from our salvation **now**?

— GOD SHAPES US WITH LIFE —

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

- With real life comes real difficulty — “grief ... trials” (v. 6). In a life that is filled with “all kinds of trials” how can Peter say not only rejoice, but also “greatly rejoice”?
- What does a “genuine” faith (v. 7) look like?
- What is the “fire” that refines our faith?
- Describe the refining process of suffering and trials.

— GOD FILLS US WITH LOVE & JOY —

1 Peter 1:8-9

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- In what sense have they (and we) “not seen” Jesus?
- How can they (and we) still “love” and “believe” in one we have not seen?
- Notice the present tense “you **are** receiving the end result of your faith” (v. 9). How can Christians (then and now) live their lives **now** in view of the **future**?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What keeps hope alive — “*an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade*” (v. 4)?
- How can we more completely put ourselves under God’s “*shield*” (v. 5) of protection?
- How can a life that is being shaped and “*refined*” (v. 7) by God change over time?
- How will “*an inexpressible and glorious joy*” (v. 8) show itself in a Christian life?
- Close with a time of confident, hopeful prayer.