

Blessed 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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **1 Peter 1:3-5**

Back Story

Peter's front row seat: Eye witness of the resurrection, and fortunate recipient of the gifts of Easter through the resurrection of Jesus.

THE GIFTS OF EASTER: We have received...

➤ **Great Mercy**

Peter's Story

After an epic fail, the denial of Jesus, Peter is forgiven and welcomed back by Jesus. He is a recipient of God's great mercy.

But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." **Mark 16:7**

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **1 Peter 5:10**

➤ **New Life**

Peter's Story

When all hopes were dashed after the death of Jesus, Peter is the first to examine the evidence of the empty tomb, and the see first hand that Jesus defeated death.

Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **John 20:4-7**

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, **1 Peter 3:18**

➤ **Living Hope: An Imperishable Inheritance**

Peter's Story

A once fear-filled man now lives with confidence knowing that Jesus is alive, which propelled him to live securely in the present and future realities of his salvation.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. **Acts 4:12-13**

For Further Study

1) Peter experienced an amazing before and after transformation through his relationship with Jesus. Prior to the resurrection, Peter experienced some epic fails. (Look at these in **Mark 8:31-33** and **Mark 14:66-72**.) But after being forgiven and restored by Jesus, and after seeing Jesus resurrected, we see a new Peter. Look at his boldness to proclaim Jesus to the crowds in **Acts 2:14-41**, and before the Sanhedrin, the same governing authority that sentenced Jesus to death, in **Acts 4:1-13**.

2) After Peter's epic fail of denying Jesus three times, Jesus welcomed Peter back and showed him mercy and forgiveness. Read **John 20:19-23** and **John 21** to see Jesus' interactions with Peter after the denials. Then read Peter's first hand summary of what Jesus did for him, expressed in **1 Peter 5:10**.

3) After the resurrection, you could not shut Peter up from talking about Jesus coming back from the dead. He set the tone for the early church, the risen Christ is their hope. Here are some passages where Peter proclaimed the resurrection: **Acts 2:22-36**; **Acts 3:11-16**; **Acts 4:1-4**; **Acts 4:8-12**; **Acts 5:27-32**; and **Acts 10:34-43**.

Discovering Salvation through Jesus

- **Recognize the mercy of God:** Instead of punishment for your rejection of God, God shows mercy by Jesus laying down His life.
- **Turn from a life lived for yourself, and surrender to Jesus:** Repent of your sin, and trust in Jesus.
- **Receive and enjoy forgiveness, your new life living for Jesus.**
- **Live with hope in your new inheritance:** This world is broken and needs redemption. Jesus promises to return to make all things new and live with us forever.

Discussion Questions for Community Groups

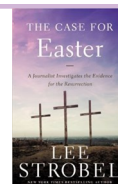
1) Read **John 21:15-19**. Peter was forgiven for his denials and restored as Jesus' disciple. Why did Jesus question Peter three times? Where do we see a message of forgiveness and restoration to you (**1 Peter 5:10**, **John 10:10**, **2 Corinthians 5:17**, **1 John 1:9**, **Ephesians 1:7**)? How does this influence and shape your life?

2) In **John 20:1-10** we learn that **Jesus has risen from the dead!** Peter's last interaction with Jesus was public denial. What do you think was running through Peter's head when he found the empty tomb (excitement, fear, shame, etc.)?

3) Many of us live trying to carry our shame, or always feel like we are disappointing God, but the resurrection delivers us from shame and performance. The resurrection of Jesus is the Father's stamp of approval on the work of Jesus, and this is great news for weary hearts. How does the work of Christ set us free (**Romans 5:1-5**, **15-17**)? Do you struggle to live in this freedom? If so, how?

4) The gift of Jesus' mercy and peace fueled Peter's boldness, and many scholars have suggested this boldness is good evidence for the resurrection. In your own words describe how Jesus' mercy and resurrection impacted Peter. How can you relate to Peter's experience?

5) **Resurrection Sunday reminds us that Jesus is alive!** And yet, it's easy to live out our faith as if Jesus is still in the grave. How can you cultivate a spiritual life that consistently recognizes a living Savior? As a Community Group, how can we challenge and encourage one another to remember Jesus is alive?



If you are new, visiting, or would like to learn more about Jesus, please visit the Connect Center located in the foyer, where you can talk with someone and receive information about upcoming Parkview events! If you'd like to investigate the true claims of the resurrection, there's a gift and free book for you at the Connect Center called **The Case for Easter**.