

## Hope Because of Christ — 1 Peter 1:1-12

One definition of an expatriate is someone who has been uprooted from their nation, suffering persecution, and seeking signs of hope. These human beings have been rejected, abused, and marginalized—often victims of racism, injustice, and violence. Like the exiles addressed in Peter's letter (v. 1), they have no other hope but to trust God that one day their situation will change for the better. For many, hope helps them hold on, to keep knocking on different doors expecting that someday one will open and let them in. Hope also helps them not to deny their reality, but to look deep within to find strength and a reason to work hard to change their reality.

Imagine all the difficulties, struggles, and pain that people go through if suddenly they must leave behind their home, land, friends, family members, and country because of fear of violence and persecution. Imagine having to leave your home and not having time to collect any of your belongings! This is the reality of those who have been uprooted from their homelands. A friend of mine went through this horrible experience, as have many other people around the world.

My friend, a Bhutanese of Nepali origin, became a refugee for almost 18 years. The Bhutan government expelled the Nepali ethnic group. Nepal took them in as refugees, allowing them to stay along its eastern border, but in refugee camps under the conditions of controlled movement, restricted ability to work, and limited access to the local justice system. The Nepali government refused to settle the Bhutanese permanently. Returning home was very difficult for refugees due to war and ethnic, tribal, and religious violence.

My friend told me, "I grew up learning that I am a refugee boy, expelled from my homeland, abandoned and rejected by the country of my ancestors. I was weak and puny because I was stateless: a refugee. I belong to nowhere. I did not have even a small piece of land to claim as mine. I had once nearly lost my identity and had no hope for the future." One of the things that kept him going was his faith in God, faith that gave him hope. Because of that, he stayed connected to the church, developed a strong faith that somehow gave him a different view of life and new birth in Christ, believing that God had something better for him in life.

After many years in a refugee camp, he arrived in the United States, looking forward with confidence and expectation. He worked hard, got an education, and became a pastor, helping his people and the community where he is located. Life has changed for him.

For my friend, hope was not an illusion but a firm conviction. Hope is faith projected into the future. Faith allows us to believe in the resurrection of Christ and gives us certainty of the new birth—not only of hope for the future, but of an inheritance that is the substance of that hope and is everlasting (vv. 4-5). The inheritance that God gives us cannot be polluted or corrupted. This inheritance is reserved for each one who believes in Jesus' name.

Today, the world is troubled. We have lost our way. People are confused and looking for alternatives, a model to follow that gives them hope, but they do not find it. If they do, it's temporary. We have forgotten our Creator and everything God has done and continues to do for us. Jesus is our only hope, our strength. We must turn to him. He is the only one who can fuel our hope, faith, and the love we need to change our situation on earth and access that incorruptible inheritance that God has promised us.

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My friend's journey taught me how to live with that hope and keep it alive. Jesus Christ is our hope; therefore, we should seek him and be his witness in the community that we are part of and pass it along to others who are desperately looking for it.

- Where do you find deep, abiding hope?

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*Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.*

## Resources for this session

- [Dramatic Reading, Luke 7:11-35 NRSV adapted](#)
- [“Holy, Holy Is What the Angels Sing”](#)