



ICEBREAKER

We all have some Christmas traditions in our families. What was your favourite tradition when you were a child? What is your family's favourite tradition now?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read together as a group: **1 Peter 1**. Take turns reading a verse at a time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• **Read:** 1 Peter 1:3

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

This verse has four important parts to reflect on. The **Action** - that we praise God; the **Reason** - that His mercy is great; the **Result** - that we have been born again and the **Assurance** - in Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Read: John 3:3

Read: John 3:8

Being born again is necessary to inherit eternal life.

What does "born again" mean to you? Share about your salvation experience and what happened to you when you were born again.

• **Read:** 1 Peter 3b-5

Now we live with great expectation, (A living Hope) and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by His power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

Why do we need a living hope? Contrast a time in your life when your hope rested in people and/or stuff and a time when you placed your hope in Jesus.

• In the concentration camps of WWII, prisoners of war had four responses to suffering according to Dr. Viktor Frankl. Those responses were:

- **People got mean:** They were brutal and trampled on anyone just to survive.
- **People gave up:** They lost their hope and couldn't be motivated into action.
- **People got depressed:** They thought if I can just stay alive and get my hope back.

• **People kept their inner liberty:** Life only had meaning if they had hope that death couldn't destroy.

Do you recognize yourself in any of these listed responses?

How can a living hope help us process suffering?

• In our reading of 1 Peter 3-5, Peter is telling us and perhaps asking us, "Do you know what the foundation of your life really is?"

Do you?

Continue to read 1 Peter 1:6-7. How has God used sufferings in your life to mature your spiritual foundation?

• **Read:** Psalm 33:20-22

Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

How is it possible to rejoice during a time of personal suffering?

• Jesus calms a storm in Mark 4:35-41. It often takes a storm in our life before we invite Jesus to take His proper place in our life.

Recall a "storm" in your life and share about where your hope was during this time. What lesson did you learn after Jesus "calmed the waters"?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

As we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent (Hope), we have a knowing that our hope is in Christ Jesus. When trials come what foundation have you laid in your life? When storms rage how do you react? Do you allow God to be your living hope?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

The holidays are upon us and life tends to get busier than normal for most all of us. It is a time that may bring great happiness or for some deep sadness. Be intentional this week in sharing the reason for the hope you have with those you encounter.

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