

## Conversation Starters

- What did you do this week?
- How do you choose where to invest your time?

## Discuss

**Peter’s outlook on life changed once he understood what it meant to follow Christ. He looked forward to the real heaven – not a warped heaven that is often painted today. He lived his life with anticipation of the promise of this great reward.**

*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. Now we live with great expectation, 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. (1 Peter 1:3-5)*

- How has your view of heaven been shaped?
- Does your view line up with what the Bible actually teaches about heaven?
- How has this influenced how you live in light of the hope of heaven one day?

**Head knowledge is one thing, but it is another thing to live it out. The first thing to do is to believe in who Jesus was and said he was:**

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)*

- Have you made an honest evaluation of who Jesus is?
- What’s keeping you from exploring?
- Given the consequences, isn’t it worth just giving some honest thought?

**To have a living hope will take more than just believing. It requires you to change your life and how you live it out. Although there will be times that are tough and challenging and may feel like you are at the end of your rope, you can choose to place your joy in the hope you, through faith in Christ, will one day be rewarded in heaven.**

*Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:19-21)*

- When was the last time you thought about heaven?
- Do you find yourself making decisions about your time based on your own selfish ambitions?
- Have you tried approaching each day by asking yourself, “What will last for eternity?”

## Next Steps

Discover what it means to become a living hope by trying this approach:

- **Explore who Jesus is.** If you don’t know who Jesus is, begin exploring. Visit us on the weekends in person or online. You can also reach out to [churchoffice@mecklenburg.org](mailto:churchoffice@mecklenburg.org) for other resources on where to start.
- **Think about heaven.** Take a few minutes during your week to reflect on heaven. Refer to the Bible in the book of Revelation:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. (Rev. 21:1-5, 23-24, 26-27 NLT)*

- **Become a realist.** Place your hope and joy in the reality of heaven, not trials and material possessions and superficial things of this world.
- **Choose eternity.** Every day, ask yourself, “What will last for eternity?”

## Pray

God, thank you for Jesus and the promise of heaven that comes through belief in him. Your design and plan for those who have a living hope in you is beyond what we can imagine. We do not always think about it and reflect on how good it will be. Help us as we try to think about it often and live our lives in the hope that we will one day enjoy it. Give us wisdom as we make choices today that will reflect a living hope in that promise.