

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 25TH - 26TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

GREETINGS (1 PETER 1:1-2)

"PETER, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST"

- A fisherman who followed John the Baptist until his brother Andrew told him about Jesus.
- His name was changed from Simon to Peter by Jesus because his character was like a rock.
- A natural leader and spokesman for the 12.
- Could be impulsive and selfish.
- Traveled to preach the gospel and was crucified upside down by Nero around 68 A.D.

THE AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE OF THIS LETTER

This letter was written around 62-64 A.D. to mostly Gentile Christians in modern-day Turkey that were being heavily persecuted by Nero.

- Paul wanted to encourage them to stand firm in their faith because the **suffering in this life was to be expected as an "exile," but will be nothing compared to the reward of eternity.**

DISPERSED EXILES

Many Christians were exiled from Rome because of heavy persecution under Nero. This escalated in 64 A.D. when Nero set fire to Rome and blamed it on Christians.

- Persecution often starts as a slow burn that manifests via social ostracizing and grows into false accusations, name-calling, and eventually physical violence.

GOD SEES AND KNOWS EVERYTHING

Peter says the Christians were "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God."

- We are not capable of understanding everything about God on this side of eternity. One of those mysteries is the conversation between free will and predestination. We're chosen, but we're also responsible to choose Christ back.

"THROUGH THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF THE SPIRIT"

Even in the middle of pain, stress, and even persecution, the Spirit shapes and strengthens those who have a relationship with Jesus.

- **Sanctification is the process by which we become holy and set apart for God to use us. This is a life-long journey to not only know God more but to be made more in His image over time.**

"TO BE OBEDIENT..."

Though God chooses us, we are to choose Him back through obedience to His commands through the Word.

- Works do not save us, but **we show our salvation by obeying Jesus' commands. Because we've been "sprinkled with the blood of Jesus," we should want to live in a manner that honors Him.**

HOPE IN DARK TIMES (1 PETER 1:3-12)

IT IS ONLY BY HIS MERCY

Our salvation and "living hope" is only possible by the mercy and grace of God "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

- **Knowing that we're incapable of saving ourselves keeps us humble, dependent on God, liberates us from a life of trying to earn love, and gives us confidence in who we are because of our Creator.**

WE ALSO HAVE HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Our "living hope" that sustains us in this life also reminds us of an eternity in a perfect existence with Jesus. Peter calls our future "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading."

- We must remember that **no matter how difficult this life can be, it is temporary, and one day, we will inherit a perfect place free of death, pain, and evil.**

UNTIL THEN, WE'RE "GUARDED BY GOD'S POWER"

This doesn't mean that Christians won't suffer, but that **our hearts, minds, and souls will be safe if we walk in relationship with Jesus.**

- Even though we may suffer, if we walk in a true relationship with Christ, **we have joy and hope because we understand the things of this world are fleeting and hold no eternal value.**

SUFFERING ACTUALLY MAKES US BETTER

Suffering and trials can also be a good thing. Peter uses the analogy of purifying gold through fire **to remove the impurities and become mirror-like** to explain the process of sanctification we go through.

- **Suffering helps create empathy, wisdom, strength, appreciation, and identifies us more with our Savior.**

TO PEOPLE WHO HADN'T PHYSICALLY MET JESUS

Peter says, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him," as a compliment to the faith and perseverance of the 1st century Christians.

- The key to not only faith but also contentment and joy is to **have an open mind and willingness to know the truth.** If we approach spirituality in this way, we will find Jesus.

LIVING IN AN EXCITING TIME (V10-12)

These verses attempt to increase our appreciation of our salvation. Peter explains that the prophets of the OT didn't have nearly as clear a picture of salvation as we do today because of the Cross and the Word.

- Even the "angels long to catch a glimpse" of the kind of salvation and relationship we get to have with our Creator!

AGAINST THE GRAIN (1 PETER 1:13-25) POST SALVATION LIFESTYLE

After writing about the appreciation we should have for our salvation, Peter says, "Therefore, with your minds **ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace...of Jesus Christ.**"

- **In salvation we are given the Holy Spirit that enables us to live holy lives that honor God and bless others.**

WE ARE ALSO TO LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

We're to be "obedient children" not "conformed to the desires of [our] former ignorance."

- This is simple and logical; **if we claim to be followers of Jesus, we are to obey His commands and live differently than we did before we were saved and made aware of the truth of God's Word.** This is true Christianity.

"YOU ARE ALSO TO BE HOLY IN YOUR CONDUCT"

Obedience does not produce belief, but true belief always produces obedience. Conforming into the likeness of Jesus starts with a mindset but results in a change in how we live.

- **Salvation is accepting, loving, and wanting to grow closer to God. It is a change we start to see now and comes to completion when He returns.**

"TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES IN REVERENCE"

God takes character development seriously. Our post-salvation lives shouldn't only be Christlike in word and deed, but also in respect and reverence to God and others.

- Actions can be faked for a time, but character is eventually brought to light. **As people saved by grace, we're to show honor to God first and His creation second.**

THERE SHOULD BE SOME GENUINE FEAR

Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This means both respect and an understanding that God is the Creator capable of the most powerful things.

- **God is a perfect Father that loves, but also disciplines because He doesn't tolerate evil.** Reverence surrounds Christians' desire to obey and please the Father.

HOLD THIS UP TO OUR CULTURE

Holiness is the opposite of conformity. We live in a culture that finds submission weak, values rebellion and self over obedience, and is irreverent to the idea of God and to any people that don't think like them.

- **We're not to live like this because we've been "redeemed from [this] empty way of life" that consistently fails.**

TRUE CHRISTIANS LIVE OUT BIBLICAL FAITH

James 2:18 says, "I will show you my faith by my works." This means we're saved by the work of Jesus at the cross, but because of our gracious salvation, we're to demonstrate our faith through biblical good deeds.

- **Christianity should be unique and obvious. Unfortunately, too many have conformed to a twisted view of "faith."**

HOLY LIVING IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH JESUS

V20-25 reminds us that **we're invited to be born again, saved, changed, and empowered to live holy by Jesus** Who was "raised from the dead" and "revealed" to us.

- **Through prayer, obedience to the Bible, and good community, we can love God, love people, and live in a way that honors both.**

"LIVING AS STRANGERS"

- We're called to live "peculiar" lives (ch.2). This doesn't mean we isolate ourselves, but that we insulate ourselves with God's Spirit so **we can live holy lives and set a good example for the world around us.**
- We must also remember **this world is temporary and how we live this life sets us up for our eternity!**

OUR FAITH SHOULD BE VISIBLE

- Though we're to communicate the gospel, our lifestyles should already be a witness.
- It is not enough to say we believe, we must also live out our faith. **How we live matters!**
- Simply going through religious motions isn't God-honoring either because He sees the heart. Biblical action should be a result of a changed heart.

ONLY POSSIBLE WITH JESUS

- If we're to endure life's suffering, confusion, materialism, and chaos, **we must lean into Jesus daily.**
- This starts with a **willingness to know the truth and a desire to change.** If we will **humbly search, we can be saved by God's grace and given the power to live holy through building a relationship with Jesus.**