A photograph of a suspension bridge with wooden planks and metal cables, stretching across a river in a dense, green forest. The bridge is the central focus, leading the eye from the foreground into the distance. The surrounding environment is filled with various types of trees and foliage, creating a sense of a wild, natural setting.

Following Jesus IN A HOSTILE WORLD

THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER

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HOPE IN A WORLD THAT IS NOT OUR HOME



1 PETER 1:1-6

First Peter is considered a Wilderness Epistle. It pictures believers journeying from the time of salvation to their inheritance in heaven or from the Cross to Glory.

In this letter, Peter is writing to encourage his brethren, (*that is, Hebrew-Christians who were scattered through-out Asia Minor*) to keep on trusting the Lord even in the midst of suffering.

1 Peter 5:12 states this purpose when he says,

“I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”

In other words, he is not so much writing about the grace that saves (as Paul did in Romans 5:1-2), which gave them and all true believers a perfect standing before the throne of God. Instead he is writing about the grace that God ministers to us day by day. It enables us to endure the trials of life and stand against all the wiles of the enemy.

Peter reminds us that we are not exempt from difficulties, even suffering. They are part of life. He explains how God's enabling grace is sufficient amidst the storms of life.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

- 1. To whom is Peter writing (1 Peter 1:1) and what is their plight? - Acts 8:1-1 Peter 1:6; 3:4, 16; 4:12, 19; 5:9.**
- 2. How does Peter encourage these 1st Century Christians in their faith? - 1 Peter 1:2a. Does this also apply to Gentile believers?**
- 3. "Precious" was a favorite term used by Peter to describe different aspects of the faith. How was each use an encouragement to his readers? - 1 Peter 1:7; 2:4, 7; 2 Peter 1:1, 4.**
- 4. Peter uses two other phrases to remind his audience of their divine calling. What thoughts should these sayings stir in the minds of us and his readers? 1 Peter 1:2; Leviticus 14:1-7; Exodus 29:20-21; Exodus 24:1-8**

- 5. What does Peter repeatedly tell his audience to look ahead to? How does this help us when going through various trials? - 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 13; 2:12; 4:7, 13; 5:1, 5**
- 6. Peter uses several other phrases to remind his readers of their standing before God. What are they and how do they encourage us to stand firm in God's grace when going through trials? - 1 Peter 1:3a; John 1:12-13; James 1:18; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3b, 4, 5; Philippians 4:13; John 15:5.**

INSIGHT:

Peter closes his letter by restating his purpose:

“... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand” 1 Peter 5:12b.

- 7. How does this lesson encourage you to stand firm in the grace of God?**



"BUT WILL WITH THE
TEMPTATION ALSO
MAKE A WAY TO
ESCAPE . . ."

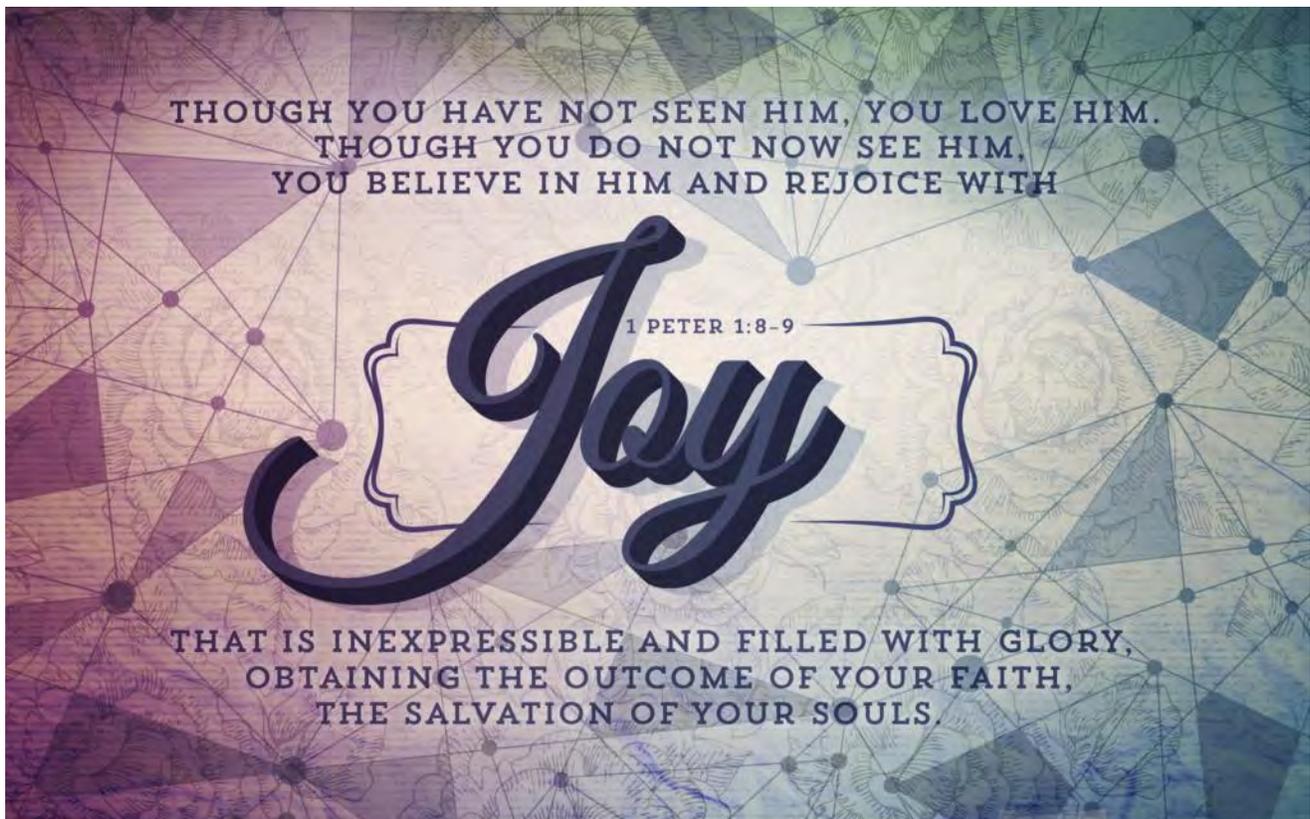


"BLESSED IS THE
MAN THAT ENDURETH
TEMPTATION."



"MY GRACE IS
SUFFICIENT FOR THEE:
FOR MY STRENGTH IS
MADE PERFECT IN
WEAKNESS."

SALVATION'S JOY



1 Peter 1:6-9

Peter's goal is to have believers understand the joy that should be theirs in light of the eternal life they have been given. This is not just a New Testament phenomenon. The Old Testament has many examples of ones joy over their salvation.

Psalm 43:3-4 – “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. ⁴ **Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.**”

Even Peter wrote,

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³ **But rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, **ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.** ¹⁴ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, **happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:** on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” - 1 Peter 4:12-15.

Salvation’s joy is not some brief shallow circumstantial emotion, but rather it is something permanent and profound. Mere happiness comes from positive external events, but salvation’s joy results from the deep-rooted confidence that one possesses eternal life from the living God through the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

No one enjoys being around miserable people. Unfortunately, way too many professing Christians display misery, anger, and bitterness over the circumstances that overtake them, rather than the joy they should have as children of God.

Think of the many circumstances we experience in life: financial difficulties, unruly children, loss of jobs, accidents, illness, death of loved ones, false accusations, ridicule, injustices, etc. In every event we should find the peace of God and rejoice in His comfort and strength.

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Our passage will examine five areas that bring joy, even amidst the most severe trials.

What kind of testimony will we have if we walk around being miserable, self-absorbed and hopeless? What would we be saying about our faith?

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. 1 Peter 1:6a opens with the phrase, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice . . .” It is an intense expression meaning, “to be supremely and abundantly happy.” What are we to greatly rejoice in when facing severe trials? - 1 Peter 1:1-5; Matthew 5:11-13; Ephesians 1:13-14; Hebrews 10:32-36

2. What can we learned from the following terms?

“ . . . though now for a season” - v. 6a; (2 Cor. 4”17)

“ . . . if needs be” - v. 6b (if necessary);

“ye are in heaviness” -. v6c;

“through manifold temptations:” - v. 6d (Exodus 16:4; Deut. 8:2)

PAIN IS A GIFT. ONE THAT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO BE GRATEFUL FOR, BUT IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DIDN'T HAVE PAIN SCREAMING AT US THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG.

3. Trials come when they serve a purpose in our lives. List some of the biblical reasons for trials? - 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 1 Cor. 11:30; 2 Cor. 1:3-7; Rom. 5:3

AN AFRICAN PROVERB SAYS, “SMOOTH SEAS DO NOT MAKE SKILLFUL SAILORS.”

4. How do trials bring praise to God and also elicit His praise towards us? - 1 Peter 1:7b; Matthew 23:47; 25:21-23, 34

5. In what way does our positive response to trials affect our relationship with Christ? - 1 Peter 1:8-9

INSIGHTS:

6. In your experience, what is the greatest struggle you have when facing trials? How does Peter's letter help you?

7. What helpful insights can you offer others facing trials?

OUR GREAT SALVATION

1 Peter 1:9-12

When under pressure, it is easy to lose sight of our great salvation. When trials overwhelm us, our eyes often focused on our pain, suffering, loss, hardships, illnesses and disappointments. It is easy to turn our eyes away from the Lord.

Last week's lesson began with a reminder of the many privileges Christians have in Christ, i.e., they are now elect, sanctified by the Spirit, cleansed through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, blessed with the grace and peace of God, recipients of the new birth, heirs in Christ, and kept by the power of God through faith (*see 1 Peter 1:2-5*).

This week's lesson encourages the believer to view their heritage in Christ from another perspective . . . from an eternal point of view.

When someone receives Christ, it is impossible at that moment to clearly know how every detail of their great salvation will unfold. They should know they have everlasting life, but how that sanctification plays out in their everyday life is yet to be seen. They may know about God's precious promises, but they must trust the Lord in real time as these promises unfold on earth, and later in heaven.



So, to help his readers patiently wait on the Lord, Peter explains four ways their great salvation is viewed by others. He explains how it was, and is seen through the eyes of the Old Testament prophets, the eternal work of the Holy Spirit, and the perspective of the Apostles and God's holy angels.

Let me illustrate this by retelling a true story of two men:

It was a summer day, towards the end of the nineteenth century when an English city boy was on a visit to rural Scotland. That afternoon the boy went swimming in a small countryside lake.

After swimming for quite a distance from the shore he was struck with a severe cramp and could not swim any further. He was in terrific pain and cried out at the top of his lungs for help.

A farm boy working in a nearby field heard the city boy's screams and ran as fast as he could to the lake. There he threw off his shirt, dove in the water, swam to the city boy and brought him safely to shore.

Here, a rescue took place. Lives were changed, but it is not yet known how this event will affect their life, and others around them.

Several years later the two boys met again. The city boy was still filled with gratitude for his rescue from death. He was thrilled to see the farm boy again and asked him what career he had decided to pursue.

The farm boy had chosen a career in medicine. Since the city boy's parents were quite wealthy and were greatly indebted to the farm boy who saved their son's life, they promised to pay for his medical education. They followed through on their promise and the young man went on to have a brilliant career in scientific investigation.

In 1928 that farm boy, then a physician and bacteriologist discovered the famous wonder drug, penicillin. In 1945, he shared the Nobel prize with two other scientists for the discovery and development of that antibiotic. The Scottish farm boy's name was Alexander Fleming. He died in 1955.

The rescued city boy also gained renown. During WWII he contracted a life-threatening case of pneumonia. He recovered at a hospital after receiving penicillin, which meant that indirectly the one-time farm boy saved his life twice.

The city boy's name was Winston Churchill, the famous wartime prime minister and world statesmen. Interestingly, like Fleming, Churchill also won the Nobel Prize in 1953 in

literature for his incisive writing on the history of the Second World War.

It is wonderful to recount the unfolding impact of a rescued soul. As children it was impossible to see the long time effects of that summer day rescue. But when we step back in time we can see the wonderful results that took place.

So it is, and much greater on the eternal scale. At the time of our salvation it is impossible to clearly see how all the amazing promises given us in Jesus Christ will unfold. We have to patiently wait on the Lord to see how they will be applied.

The Apostle Paul wrote"

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" - 1 Cor. 2:9.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" - 1 Cor. 13:12.

Today's lesson removes us from our momentary troubles and refocuses our attention on our great salvation through the eyes of another.

Study Questions:

- 1. What perspective did the Old Testament prophets have regarding our great salvation?
- 1 Peter 1:10-11a**

Discuss the three phrases:

“the prophets have inquired and searched diligently”

“the grace that should come to us”

“the time of the Spirit of Christ . . . did signify”

- 2. List some of the revelations given the OT prophets regarding the Messiah and our salvation.** Psalm 22:12-17; Is. 53:3-5; Isaiah 53:10-11; Ps 16:10; 2,6,9; Isaiah 61:1-2; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Isaiah 28:16; Joel 2:32; Isaiah 65:1-2
- 3. According to 1 Peter 1:10, to whom did the prophets write? Why is this important?** (also see Matthew 13:17).
- 4. What was the work of the Holy Spirit? What did He reveal?** 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 11:13; 11:39-40
- 5. What perspective did the apostles have towards our great salvation?** 1 Peter 1:12b
- 6. What perspective did the angel’s have toward our great salvation?** - 1 Peter 1:12c; Luke 15:7; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10; Revelation 5:8-12; 2:5

INSIGHTS:

- 7. Explain how we can apply these truths to our lives.**

PLACE OF REST

Respond with Hope, Holiness and Honor

I Peter 1:13-17

We seem to be living in the day of equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile choices and in a culture that is daily becoming more decadent and increasingly lacking in great political statesmen.

Which leads to the question, "Is there any hope?"

Our passage addresses this problem. Peter is telling his 1st Century audience where they will find rest in their increasingly decadent, and hostile environment.

The early church faced numerous trials. Many were ostracized from their community, experiencing joblessness, ridicule, and abuse. Some even suffered beatings, imprisonment and death. Furthermore, they had little choice regarding their governmental leaders. They had to take what they got. More often than not the authorities were pagan, corrupt, and unfriendly to their new found faith.

Their circumstances brought upon them numerous trials. Many grew weary. Some wondered whether they made the right choice in becoming Christians. Others were so weary they wondered how much longer



they would be able to hold on before they gave into the pressures of the world.

The truths depicted in this letter are universal. Regardless the severity of the trials we face; the same principles, when applied, will strengthen the weary soul.

Where does one find rest? In whom or what do we place our trust?"

So in the first part of Peter's letter he features four tools God gave them to overcome their trials. Three were covered in previous lessons. However, we will briefly review them before examining in greater detail Peter's fourth exhortation.

Review Questions

1. Peter said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice" or "in this" ye greatly rejoice (1 Peter 1:6a). What seven truths did Peter point out to these trial weary saints? - 1 Peter 1:2-6.
2. What truths did Peter remind his weary brethren of, in 1 Peter 1:6b-9?
3. What four features further display God's astonishing gift of grace? - 1 Peter 1:10-12

Study Questions

It is one thing to KNOW something about an item. It is entirely another thing to trust in what we know. Peter now gives his readers three different imperative commands. Three important actions God's children must take in order to endure fiery trials. These are not suggestions. These are not appeals. These are commands . . . divine commands that we must individually put into action so that we will be able to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

4. What imperative commands are found in 1 Peter 1:13-17?
5. As soldiers ready for combat, we are told to set out onto the battlefield of life with the hope we have in Christ. How does "girding up the loins of our minds" - (v. 13a) and "being sober" (13b) help us fulfill the command, *You must* "set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."?
6. What is the hope described in 1 Peter 1:13c?
7. How are we to respond to God's amazing grace that is bestowed upon us - 1 Peter 1:14-16?
8. The final imperative command is found in 1 Peter 1:17 - *You must* "PASS the time of your sojourning here in fear." What does this mean? How do we do this?

New Birth

How Does God Regenerate Us?

1 PETER 1:18-25

One of the unsettling things about the new birth, which Jesus says we all must experience in order to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), is **that we don't control it.**

We can't make it happen apart from a divine work of God. We can't make it happen any more than dead men decide to give themselves life.



The reason we need to be born again is that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. That's why we need new birth, and that's why we can't make it happen apart from the divine work of God.

We are blind to spiritual things in our natural state. Our minds are so darkened and we are **so rebellious at the root of our fallen human nature that apart from God's illuminating work we cannot see our need for a Savior.**

Scripture says, "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." – Romans 3:23

All humanity is guilty of this. There is real evil in us. We were all spiritually hardened and dead.

Scripture confirms this when it says,

"There is none righteous, no, not one:
¹¹ There is none that understandeth,
 there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²
 They are all gone out of the way, they
 are together become unprofitable;

there is none that doeth good, no, not one." – Romans 1:10-12

Furthermore, our conscience bears witness to these facts, while our thoughts either accuse us of our sinful condition or our mind attempts to excuse us from our rebellious state. However, we are powerless to do anything about it.

Therefore, something outside of us has to happen in order for us to be rescued from this miserable state.

This is why Jesus said we must be born again (John 3:3). The Holy Spirit has to work a miracle in our hearts and give us spiritual life.

We were dead and we need to be made alive. We need ears that can hear the truth about ourselves. We need eyes that can see Christ. We need a mind and a heart that is able to perceive that His way is the only way of salvation.

We need hearts that are soft and receptive to the word of God. In short, we need a new life that is divinely given. We need to be born again.

SO HOW DOES GOD REGENERATE US?

The answer is given in at least three ways in our passage. First, 1 Peter 1:3 says that God caused us to be born again by Christ's resurrection from the dead

"hath begotten us again unto a lively hope **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**"

Second, 1 Peter 1:23 says God caused us to be born again

"by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

And third, in 1 Peter 1:18 it says that God redeemed, or ransomed us from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things,** . . . received by tradition from your fathers . . . But with the precious blood of Christ. - 1 Peter 1:18, 19

So we can see that Peter is writing to remind us of the eternal nature of our new life we now possess in Christ. This lesson will examine these points.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **What three items does Peter identify as incorruptible (1 Peter 1:4, 18-19, 23)?**
2. **Discuss our imperishable inheritance. What does this mean? How does this expand our understanding of the new life we received from Christ?**
3. **Discuss the imperishable value of Christ's blood - 1 Peter 1:18-19.**
4. **What is the imperishable seed? - 1 Peter 1:23, 25.**

5. **How can the above information help us when we are suffering?**

6. **What does it mean when it says, "God ransomed us by the blood of Christ?" 1 Peter 1:18-19**

7. **What does it mean when it says we are regenerated . . . born again . . . "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?" - 1 Peter 1: 3-4.**

8. **What does it mean when it says we are born again, not of incorruptible seed, but of incorruption, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever?" - 1 Peter 1:23. What is the necessity of the call mentioned in 1 Peter 1:15 "But as he which hath called you . . .?"**

9. **How should we respond to this lesson?**

DESIRING GOD

As new born babes, desire the pure milk of the Word



It had to be amazing for the 1st Century believers to hear firsthand testimonies of Jesus' life, ministry, death, burial and resurrection. Imagine what it would have been like to hear Peter, or James- the brother of Jesus, or the Apostle John give their eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life.

Think about it. Many of those Peter wrote to in this letter may have had that experience. They heard from eyewitnesses the amazing

news of Jesus being raised from the dead. Some may have even been in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost and were saved when Peter preached. As a result, they experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit which led them to repent of their sins and were transformed by the power of Christ. Then, not long afterwards, they found themselves exiled because of their faith.

Yes, they gained new life in Christ; they watched the Jerusalem church explode into existence. Their Christian walk was exciting until persecution fell upon the church, scattering many to the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Nothing could have prepared them for this. Their intense trials forced them to leave their homeland. Husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, cousins and friends all left under harsh circumstances. Jobs were lost. They faced serious financial issues. The daunting task of arranging transportation, finding new jobs and housing, along with the sorrow of leaving familiarity and family was overwhelming.

They were like their forefathers who fled the harsh treatment in Egypt for the Promised Land. Their fathers witnessed the 10 plagues followed by the dividing of the Red Sea. They witnessed firsthand the spectacular deliverance of God . . . Then came the unexpected hardships of their wilderness wanderings.

It only took three days for their forefathers to forget what God had done. Now Peter is writing to this new generation of believers, exiled in their wilderness of trials. It is amazing what a little bit of hardship reveals.

We face the same struggle. Gloriously saved! Wonderfully changed! Fantastic fellowship! . . . Then the trials of life come.

I can remember the excitement I experienced when I placed my trust in Christ. The fellowship, the songs, the growth, and the astonishing things I learn from the Word of God were wonderful. . . . Then my company transferred me to another state.

My moving van was broken into. Most of my belongings were stolen. I was alone, in a new job, living in a new city, with no friends, and no church home.

Trials come in many forms, but trials they are. The believers Peter wrote to were facing all sorts of hardships which caused many to struggle with their faith.

So Peter wrote to these suffering exiles to explain what they will need to do to remain faithful to the end. This passage suggests five perspectives that, if followed, will lead us to a stronger, more consistent desire for the Word of God.

Study Questions:

- 1. The 1 Peter 2:1 passage begins with a “wherefore” (therefore). What is Peter referring to?**
- 2. The last item in chapter one refers to the imperishable value of God’s Word. How can this help us stay on course?**

THE RIGHT FOUNDATION

Jesus, the Rock of our Salvation

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious . . . Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

1 Corinthians 10:4

“And did all (Israel) drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”



1 Peter 2:4-10

Whether you are building a house or building your life you need a solid foundation upon which to build. The Scriptures are filled with illustrations to support this point.

In Matthew 7 we find the parable of two builders where Jesus said,

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;



and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

We also find in the book of Psalms the prophetic words of Asaph. He wondered why wicked men seemed to prosper without any rebuke. However, when he sought the Lord on this matter, he was shown they built their life on a slippery slope with terrifying consequences.

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. ³ For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. ¹⁸ Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. ¹⁹ How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.”

They may for a time appear to prosper, but since they built their lives on a wrong foundation they will one day face a terrifying end.

Peter is writing about the necessity of having the right foundation. He is assuring his readers that they (unlike their persecutors) built their lives on the right foundation — Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The wicked may appear to be prosperous, but their worldly gain is temporary . . . an illusion. When faced with eternity, what appears today as prosperity, will in a moment change forever.

1. Identifying Key Terms:

- a. List the six times Peter uses the terms “Rock” or “stone” in this passage (1 Peter 2:4-10).

- 1) 1 Peter 2:4 - “a _____”
- 2) 1 Peter 2:5 - “Ye also, as _____”
- 3) 1 Peter 2:6 - “a _____”
- 4) 1 Peter 2:7 - “the _____ that the builders disallow.”
- 5) 1 Peter 2:8a - “_____ of stumbling”
- 6) 1 Peter 2:8b - “a _____ of offense”

- b. How does Peter use the following terms, “**chosen/elect**” and “**precious.**” Note, he uses these terms three times (1 Peter 2:4-10).

- 1) 1 Peter 2:4 - “Living Stone . . . is _____ of God, and _____”
- 2) 1 Peter 2:6 - “chief corner stone, _____², _____²”
- 3) 1 Peter 2:7 - “Unto you therefore which believe he is _____³”
- 4) 1 Peter 2:9 - “Ye are a _____³ generation”

2. Discuss how the Lord came to be known as the “Rock” or “Stone” in the Old Testament era. See Exodus 17:5-6; Numbers 20:8-11 cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4; Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 18, 2 Samuel 22:2, 32-37, 47 and Isaiah 8:14.

Also note how the Lord uses this same terminology when speaking to Peter in Matthew 16:15-16, 18.

3. How do the above verses help us understand 1 Peter 2?

4. How do the following references encourage Peter’s audience?

- a. “disallowed indeed of men” (1 Peter 2:6).
- b. “but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, ⁸ And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Peter 2:7-8).

5. How does Peter describe God’s view of those who have placed their trust in Him? (1 Peter 2:7a, 9-10).

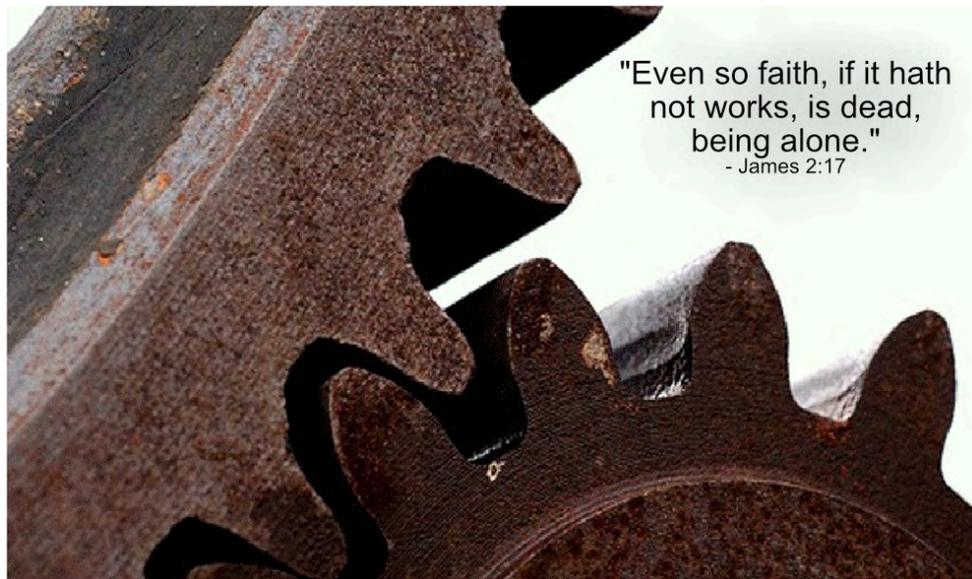
6. What does 1 Peter 2:5 tell us to do? What are the seven spiritual sacrifices that a believer can offer unto God? Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15, 16a, 16b; Rom. 15:15-16; 1 Peter 4:8, 7

The following are the seven spiritual sacrifices we should be offering to God by Jesus Christ.

- 1) Our _____
- 2. Our _____
- 3. Our _____ – Hebrews 13:16a
- 4. Our _____ – Hebrews 13:16b
- 5. Our _____ – Romans 15:15-16
- 6. Our _____ – 1 Peter 4:8
- 7. Our _____ – 1 Peter 4:7

Godly Department

“For even hereunto were ye called”



"Even so faith, if it hath
not works, is dead,
being alone."
- James 2:17

Matthew 5:16

“Let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven”

If you have not notice, the world has a different standard by which they judge us.

For example, the Jewish community judges us by past acts of persecution brought against them by those naming Christ as their Savior. There were, and still are, terrible atrocities being carried out against the Jewish people by so-called “church leaders” and government officials. Even today the mainline Lutheran Church along with the Main Stream Protestant church have teamed up with the so-called “Palestinian Christians” and Arab Muslims against Israel. They have called for sanctions against Israel and provide support for questionable more violent action.

The Jewish nation does not distinguish between the various groups naming Christ as we do. We understand there are many groups within Christianity that may not be saved, or who wrongly interpret the Bible to legitimize their depraved works. Unfortunately, we get lumped together with these degenerate workers of evil because they are claiming the name of our Lord while they do their wicked deeds.

The world sees Christianity in a tainted light. They highlight our inconsistencies. They are eager to point out someone who names Christ who habitually lies, acts without love or acts immorally. Nor, does it help when the leaders within the church fall to child molestation, murder, adultery, theft or are stirrers of strife.

The world quickly sees the inconsistencies within our ranks, especially when we cannot even keep the standards we preach.

Historically the world tends to distort true biblical standards. They try to lump all Christians with the abortion protestor who burns down clinics or murders doctors. It does not matter if the person was claiming Christ or not. The world just assumes it must have been another nut-case Christian.

They tend to lump all Christians as homophobic, narrow minded and uneducated. We are seen by many as flat-earthers who hold to unsupported ancient myths straight out of primeval times or the middle ages.

WORKSHEET

These thoughts were no different in Peter's day.

1. The Roman world characterized Christians as rebellious and harmful to the government.
2. Many actually believed Christians practiced cannibalism. This false accusation came through a misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper.
3. Romans commonly thought Christians were engaging in incest because they would not marry outside of the faith.
4. The government commonly considered Christians engaging in subversive activities because the church often gathered in closed meetings in private homes.

5. Furthermore, many in the Roman world felt the church hindered social progress by holding to repressive rules on morality.
6. They saw the church as preaching atheism. This charge was based on Christians refusing to offer a pinch of incense in Roman emperor worship.
7. Finally, they saw the church as a serious threat to the economy because many opposed slavery. This was seen as an attack against the whole fabric of the Roman infrastructure.

These problems and more were part of the reason why the early believers in Peter's day were experiencing persecution.

1. Therefore, how does Peter tell these persecuted believers to live in 1 Peter 2:11?

(Scandalous conduct provides fuel for the critics' and skeptics' while godly conduct does the most to silence our opponents.)

a. Why does Peter call them strangers and pilgrims?

b. What does Peter mean by saying we are to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" - 1 Peter 2:11b.

"FLESHLY LUSTS ARE NOT LIMITED TO SEXUAL IMMORALITY, BUT RATHER ENCOMPASS THE EVILS OF HUMANITY'S SINFUL NATURE." (MACARTHUR, 1 PETER, PG. 138.)

2. According to 1 Peter 2:12, what should our outward conduct look like?

3. According to 1 Peter 2:13-17, what should our conduct be towards civil authority? Proverbs 24:21-22; Jeremiah 29:5-7

4. Regarding Civil Obedience: Why must we obey all civil authority? To whom are we to submit? What is the purpose behind this command? What should our attitude be? - 1 Peter 2:13-17; Romans 13:3-4

- a. Why must we obey all civil authority? – 1 Peter 2:13b**

- b. To whom are we to submit? – 1 Peter 2:13c-14**

- c. What is the purpose behind this command? – 1 Peter 2:15**

- d. What Should Our Attitude Be? – 1 Peter 2:16**

- e. What is the extent of our submission? - 1 Peter 2:17**

5. Regarding the workplace: How does God expect us to conduct ourselves in the workplace? - 1 Peter 2:18-21a.

- a. What is the motive behind obedience in the workplace? – 1 Peter 2:19-20**

- b. Oh, there is one last reason – 1 Peter 2:21a**

6. Does this mean we are never to open our mouths in protest?

Does this mean we should never refuse to do a job even if it is immoral? (see 1 Peter 3:14-17).

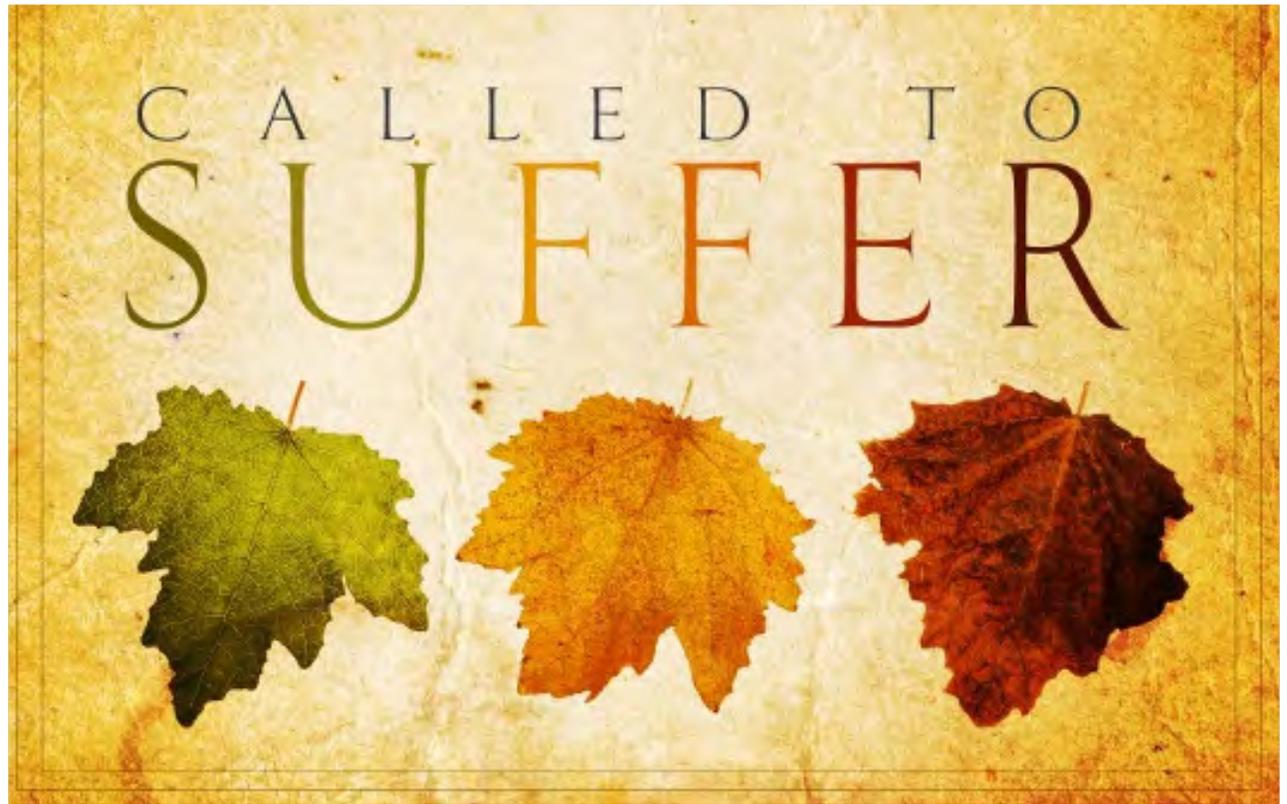
Is there ever a time we should protest our government, or take up arms against our government?

ONE ROMAN NOBLEMAN WROTE:

“The only thing distinguishing a slave from a beast or a cart was that the slave could talk.”

OBEDIENCE

MAY LEAD TO SUFFERING



It is not popular to tell Christians they have been called to suffer for their faith and may even have to endure persecution. Nevertheless, we are to obey the LORD, no matter the cost. When hostility occurs in the workplace, or in any other realm of life, we are called to graciously stand firm.

This message runs countercultural in our entitlement society. Furthermore, it is diametrically opposed to the growing popularity of the health, wealth and prosperity gospel, and the convenient Christianity often practiced in the church.

However difficult as it is to hear, and even harder to practice, we are called to obey. Even if we suffer because of it. It is biblical.

Peter wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

“This is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called . . .”

1 PETER 2:21A

“For even hereunto were ye called” – 1 Peter 2:21

Even Jesus said,

“Blessed are they which are **persecuted** for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and **persecute** you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so **persecuted** they the prophets which were before you” - Matthew 5:10.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his **cross**, and follow me’” - Matthew 16:24.



Our context surrounds the 1st Century Christians who were persecuted for their faith. As a result, many were scattered into other countries. Unfortunately, their dispersion did not end their suffering. In some instances, it only intensified. It was like moving from the frying pan into the fire.

So, after reminding his audience of their privilege position in Christ (1 Peter 1:1-2:12), and their duty to obey the civil authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17) and those over them in the work place, even if their superiors were harsh and abusive (1 Peter 2:18-20a). He now explains the foundation for this obedience.

“... because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us and example, that ye should follow his steps” – 1 Peter 2:21b.

Study Questions

1. In what ways are we to follow in Christ’s suffering?

“... because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us and example, that ye should follow his steps” – 1 Peter 2:21b

2. What aspects of Jesus suffering are described by Peter - 1 Peter 2:22-23?

SUBMISSION:

WHEN IT IS DONE RIGHT



When it seems the world cannot get any more upside down than it already is, we wake up the next day to hear about another law that is passed, or another event occurring which takes us to a whole new level of absurdity. Our culture is being shaken and turned on its heels, from wars and rumors of wars, increased terrorism, economic instability, corporate and government corruption, to the disintegration of the institute of marriage and the home.

And then we turn to the pages of Scripture to seek sanity and peace, only to find that what we read is now considered radical, controversial and countercultural. The very words of Scripture are inflammatory. Often it flies in the face of contemporary practice. It is offensive to the world and

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands . . .

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life”

1 Peter 3:1, 7

even shunned by some Christians.

When I perform a wedding ceremony I often say,

“Marriage is a holy institute. It is ordained and sanctified by God. In our day, the fundamental elements of this institute are being challenged. The very idea of marriage is sometimes called old fashion, unnecessary, and too narrow. Even the biblical nature of marriage is being redefined and reshaped into something God never intended or sanctioned. With these changes, God’s design and order for society is being undone. That’s why it is important for us to understand some key elements that make up a biblical marriage.”

I know that in most crowds, there are those who hold to biblical concept on marriage – that is, one man for one woman in a pure and faithful relationship. This may even include the biblical model of the divinely assigned roles for a man and a woman.

However, in growing numbers, there are others in the crowd who have in varying degrees set aside biblical values. Which leads me to our text this morning. It once was a passage that was widely regarded as common teaching on the subject of marriage; whereas today it is considered offensive.

IT HAS TO DO WITH SUBMISSION.

“Likewise, ye wives be in **subjection** to your own husbands . . .” -1 Peter 3:1;

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. 1 Peter 3:7 and

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren . . .” 1 Peter 3:8.

1. In 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 3:1 the terms “submit”, “subject” and “subjection” are from the same Greek term ὑποτάσσω (*hoop-ot-as'-so*), meaning, “to submit to,” or “to rank under.” Examine each use and discuss what this type of submission should look like in real practice.

2. Discuss the cultural differences between the roles of men and women in the first Century and now. Since our cultures are two millenniums apart, is 1 Peter 3:1-7 still relevant or was it just a cultural directive for Peter’s day? If you think it is still relevant, then explain in what ways it is still applicable.

In the first-century Greco-Roman culture

In our day

How is this passage relevant in both cultures?

3. According to 1 Peter 3:1-6, what are the key responsibilities of the wife? - Proverb 11:22; Isaiah 3:16-24; Genesis 12:11f & 20:2f

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

4. According to 1 Peter 3:7, what is the responsibility of the Christian husband?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

5. Why do so many people in our day find the idea of submission in marriage difficult?

6. For married couples or those single:

If you are married:

- a. Take a few moments and write down what you can do in your marriage that might further reflect our passage. If comfortable, relate your thoughts to your group.

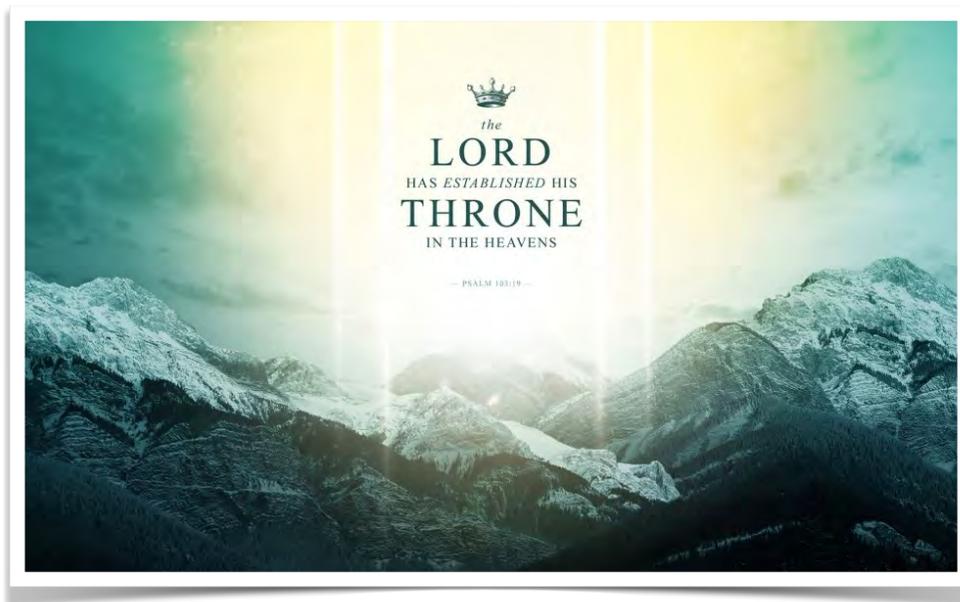
If you are single:

- b. Take a few moments and write down what areas you might find difficult to do. What steps can you take now that would prepare you to biblically submit to one another?

- c. What should you look for in a “dating” / “courting” relationship that would indicate your perspective mate would qualify as a godly candidate?

God Is On The Throne

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” - 1 Pt. 3:8-22



Peter is writing to a troubled people. They fled their homeland to escape religious persecution. They scattered to the northern regions of the Roman empire, today known as Syria, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

By fleeing they hoped to find freedom from oppression, prosperity and some element of peace, yet it did not always end up that way. Peter notes their ongoing suffering in 1 Peter 1:6 where he wrote,

that “now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

Of course their ongoing plight cause disappointment, and discouragement. In some cases, these Christians were stretched to the point of despair and hopelessness.

Now we do not have to be refugees to become discouraged. Nor do we have to be pressed to the point of despair and hopelessness to find ourselves in difficult trials. There are innumerable sets of circumstances that can bring us to our knees, i.e. the loss of a loved one, an ongoing illness, cruelty and pressures at work, the deterioration of a relationship, a wayward child, and the list goes on.

What Peter does in this passage is remind his audience of the genuine hope they have in Christ. This hope should impact our relationship with our government (2:11-17), our employers (2:18-25), and our marriages (3:1-7).

So, in this final section of Chapter 3, he reminds his audience that God is still on the throne. When ones faith firmly takes hold of this truth it will have a profound impact on how one goes through the trials of life.

Peter quotes from Psalm 34:15 & 16 when writing 1 Peter 3:12

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

In the lesson we will examine three aspects of this passage as it relates to our passage. 1) **God sees** – “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous;” 2) **God hears** – “and his ears are open unto their prayers” and 3) **God is just** – “but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

1. It appears that Peter was meditating on Psalm 34 when he wrote to these suffering Christians. Compare Psalm 34:11-22 with 1 Peter 3:8-15 and list their similarities.

What does this tell us about Peter?

- a. Psalm 34:12
1 Peter 3:10a -
- b. Psalm 34:13
1 Peter 3:10b
- c. Psalm 34:14
1 Peter 3:11
- d. Psalm 34:15
1 Peter 3:12a
- e. Psalm 34:16
1 Peter 3:12b
- f. Psalm 34:18
1 Peter 3:15a

Also compare **1 Peter 3:13** with **Proverbs 16:7** and **1 Peter 3:14** with **Isaiah 8:12b**

2. What three things does God’s see or do in 1 Peter 3:12?

3. What does the phrase, “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous” imply? 1 Peter 3:12; John 10:27; 1 Peter 1:5

4. What does God see and know about His own? - Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15

5. How do the above references of God seeing the righteous tie in with 1 Peter 3:8-11?

Our purpose as the called of God is to bless or be a blessing

**THE LORD IS ON HIS THRONE AND HE SEES WHAT THE WICKED DO,
AS WELL AS HE SEES OUR CONDUCT**

- 6. What does 1 Peter 3:13-14 imply and how does it aid the already trial burdened saint? What does it mean when it says, “if you suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye . . .?” 1 Peter 5:10; Luke 1:42; 2:35; Matthew 5:10-12**
- 7. What should we do to prepare ourselves for trials? - 1 Peter 3:15 What does it mean to sanctify the Lord in our hearts? (Psalm 34:15)**
- 8. What is happening in 1 Peter 3:18-22? How would you interpret this difficult passage?**

**THE POINT IS - GOD SEES, GOD IS JUST, AND GOD WILL DEAL WITH THE
WICKED WHILE PROTECTING HIS OWN – 1 PETER 3:12**

SHUNNING SIN

That you may give the rest of your lives in the flesh to the purpose of God



Sin is deadly. What the world glamorizes as good is often toxic, but as deadly as sin is, men still run headlong after it. The Bible, in Proverbs 7:21-23, graphically describes the alluring call of sin:

“With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, . . . he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”

IF MEN REALLY UNDERSTOOD HOW DEADLY SIN IS, THEY WOULD AVOID IT LIKE THE PLAGUE

The book of James also reminds us “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Furthermore, before we came to Christ we “were dead in trespasses and sins” (*Ephesians 2:1*). Scripture makes it clear that, “sin is the transgression of the law” (*1 John 3:4*) “and He that committeth sin is of the devil” (*1 John 3:8*). By definition, “all unrighteousness is sin” (*1 John 5:17*) and “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (*Romans 3:23*).

Therefore, apart from Christ “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (*Isaiah 64:6*). The truth is, sins separates the unredeemed from God, and because of this “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness” (*Romans 1:18*).

Peter’s purpose is to remind these 1st Century Christians of the deadly effects of sin. We are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (*Ephesians 5:11*), . . . “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness” (*2 Corinthians 6:14*)? Even though Christians are delivered from the wrath of God, they can still break fellowship with God by continually sinning and thereby miss many of the blessings God has in store. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (*1 John 1:6*).

Our passage examines three effects of sin. Peter uses this sobering realization to encourage believers in their efforts to shun sin. If we do not see how deadly sin is, we will not avoid it.

1. Even though Jesus never sinned, he suffered the wages of sin for us. In other words, our sin resulted in Jesus’ death on the cross. Our sin is costly! Discuss how costly our sin nature and our personal sins were to Jesus . . . (and would have been to us), if we had not placed our faith in Him — 1 Peter 2:24, 4:1a; and 2 Corinthians 5:21.
2. Discuss how sin can keep the believer from becoming all he should be for Christ? - 1 Peter 4:1b; 1Corinthian 3:14; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:12
3. Discuss how sin opposes God’s holy will? - 1 Peter 4:2; James 4:1-4; James 5:1-6

Imminency

Of the Rapture: Jesus Christ coming for His church



Is Christ's Return Imminent?

John 11:17-27; 1
Thessalonians 4:15-17;
1 Thessalonians 5:1-9;
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3;
Titus 2:11-13;
Hebrews 10:24-25;
James 5:7-9; 1 Peter
4:7; 1 John 2:18;
Revelation 1:1

The New Testament is consistent in its anticipation that the return of Christ will occur at any moment. That pervading perspective of imminence prompts three questions. The first question pertains to whether the Tribulation will occur before Christ's coming for the church. The answer to that question is that it will not because the church is never asked to look forward to the tribulation, but they are asked to look forward to Christ's coming. The second question revolves around how the return of Christ could have been imminent in the early church. The answer here is that no one but the Father knows when the coming will occur, so that Christians including the early church must always be ready. The third question asks why Christ's imminent return is so important. This answer relates to the motivation it supplies for believers to purify their lives and thereby progress toward the goal of sanctification and Christlikeness. The threefold call of the imminence doctrine is to wake up and obey right now, to throw off the works of darkness, and to put on the garments of holy living.

Could Christ Come At Any Moment?

Christ could come at any moment. I believe that with all my heart—not because of what I read in the newspapers, but because of what I read in Scripture.

From the very earliest days of the church, the apostles and first-generation Christians nurtured an earnest expectation and fervent hope that Christ might suddenly return at any time to gather His church to heaven. James, writing what was probably the earliest of the New Testament

epistles, expressly told his readers that the Lord's return was imminent:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" - James 5:7-9.

Peter echoed that same expectation when he wrote,

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" - 1 Peter 4:7.

The writer of Hebrews cited the imminent return of Christ as a reason to remain faithful:

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching**." (Hebrews 10:24-25).

He wrote,

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (v. 37).

And the apostle John made the most confident pronouncement of all:

"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).



When John recorded his vision in the book of Revelation, he prefaced it by saying these things "must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

The New Testament writers often wrote of Christ's "appearing," and they never failed to convey the sense that this could happen imminently. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (1 John 2:28; cf. 3:2; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4).

All those texts suggest that in the early church expectation of Christ's imminent return ran high. A solid conviction that Christ could return at any time permeates the whole NT. When the apostle Paul described the Lord's coming for the church, he used personal pronouns that show he clearly was convinced he himself might be among those who would be caught up alive to meet the Lord:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep . . . Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17).

He obviously looked for Christ to return in his lifetime. He furthermore made it plain that a

watchful, hopeful expectancy about Christ's Second Coming is one of the godly attitudes divine grace teaches all believers:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that,

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” (Titus 2:11–13).

-
- 1. What does “imminent” mean? Examine the verses listed in the introduction of this lesson and discuss how their reference points us to Christ’s imminent return.** - James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:24–25, 37; 1 John 2:18; 1 John 2:28; cf. 3:2; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17; Titus 2:11–13.
 - 2. When the New Testament cites the phrase “Last Days,” to what time period does it refer?** - 1 John 2:18; Hebrews 1:1–2
 - 3. Examine the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 and compare it with Paul’s previous letter to the Thessalonians. To what time period does 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 speak? How does this link with what Paul previously wrote in - 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:2-4, 13; 4:13–17; 5:1-3?**
 - 4. How could Christ’s coming have been imminent in the early church?** - Matthew 24:42; James 5:9; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 3:11; 22:7

5. **Why is Christ's imminent return so important?** - Romans 13:8-14

- a. Why is it so important to believe that Christ could come at any moment?

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3).

“And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*” - Romans 13:11-14.

- b. **Wake up!** “Awake out of sleep,” he pleads (Romans 13:11)—and he underscores both the urgency of this command and the imminency of Christ's return, with four phrases: “now it is high time”; “now is our salvation is nearer” (Romans 13:11); “The night is far spent”; and “the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12).

- c. **Throw off!** The approaching of dawn means it is time for a change of garments:

“Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12).

- d. **Put on!** There's another aspect of being prepared for the Lord's appearing. We are not fully prepared for the dawn of the new day unless we have put on the appropriate attire: “put on the armour of light . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:12, 14).

6. **Review some of the key texts that speak of the imminence of Christ's return, and notice specifically what kind of practical duties this doctrine places on us.** - James 5:8, 9; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Peter 3:11; 1 John 3:2-3

- a. **Steadfastness:** “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (James 5:8).
- b. **Kindness:** “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” (James 5:9).
- c. **Prayer:** “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Peter 4:7).
- d. **Faithfulness in assembling together and encouraging one another:** “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25).
- e. **Holy conduct and godliness:** “*Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).
- f. **Purity and Christlikeness:** “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2–3).

REJOICING

IN TIMES OF SUFFERING

The epistle of 1 Peter is mostly about suffering and how to live in a hostile culture. Now I am not one who looks forward to suffering. I would rather avoid it if it were possible. But I have come to realize that pain and pleasure are strangely joined and intertwined. The deepest and rarest and most satisfying joys of life often come after a period of pain and suffering.

An example of this is found in the life of Samuel Rutherford. He was a Scottish Presbyterian and theologian who wrote the political book *Lex, Rex, or The Law and the Prince* in 1644. Arguing from Scripture, Natural Law and Scottish law, he presented a comprehensive defense of the Scottish Presbyterian ideal in politics. The book defended the rule of law and the lawfulness of defensive wars (including pre-emptive wars) and

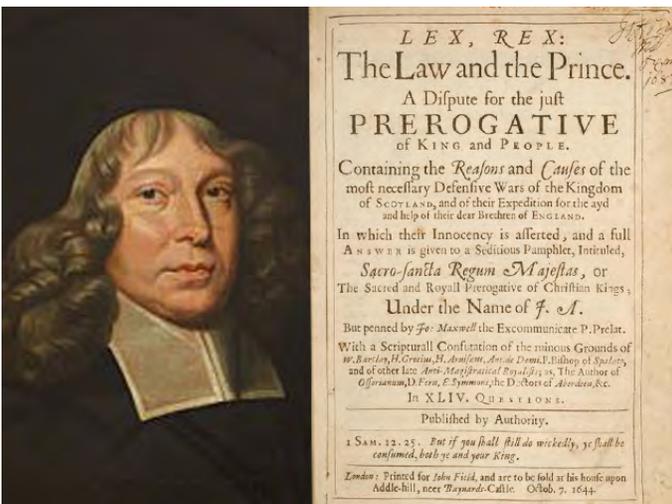
(which advocated distinct realms of church and state but opposed religious toleration). It greatly influenced the leaders of the American Revolution and the thought behind the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

The Scottish and English authorities immediately banished the book and charged Rutherford with high treason, however he died in prison before his charge could be tried. He regarded his confinement as the “cellars of affliction” and wrote, “The Great King keeps his wine there”—not in the courtyard where the sun shines. In other words, when you are in the darkest hours of suffering, God will provide all the necessary strength and comfort you will need.

The 19th Century English preacher Charles Spurgeon said, “They who dive in the sea of affliction bring up rare pearls.” Therefore, Christian’s who go through the deep sorrows of affliction have the King’s wine and the rare pearls.

1 Peter is the handbook for Christian persecution and martyrdom. It explains how one can rejoice in the midst of hardship and have peace. Today’s text, in fact, commands us to rejoice and gives at least six reasons why we should be and can be joyful, even when we are experiencing suffering. The command is found in 1 Peter 4:13

“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”



advocated limited government and constitutionalism in politics and the “Two Kingdoms” theory of Church-State relations

Keep on rejoicing. When you are thrown in the cellars of suffering, keep on rejoicing. When you dive in the sea of affliction, keep on rejoicing. In fact, keep on rejoicing not in spite of the affliction but even because of it.

This is not a little piece of advice about the power of positive thinking. This is utterly radical, abnormal, and a supernatural way to respond to suffering. It is not in our power. It is not for the sake of our honor. It is the way

spiritual aliens and exiles live on the earth for the glory of the great King. **“Count it all joy** when ye fall into divers temptations” – James 1:2 is foolish advice, except for one thing—God.

Peter gives six reasons why we can "keep on rejoicing" when suffering comes. Each point relates to how God sovereignly works in and through us.

1. What does 1 Peter 4:12, 19 imply regarding God and our suffering? Also, what do we learn about suffering when we compare 1 Peter 4:12 with 4:17-18.

OUR FIRST PRINCIPLE: GOD IS NOT _____ WHEN SUFFERING OCCURS; IT IS PART OF A _____.

2. What does Peter suggest suffering is for in 1 Peter 4:13a?

OUR SECOND PRINCIPLE: SUFFERING _____ OUR _____ WITH CHRIST.

3. What is another principle of suffering found in the latter part of 1 Peter 4:13b?

OUR THIRD PRINCIPLE: THERE IS _____ JOY _____ OF US IN _____



4. What principle of suffering does Peter reveal to us in 1 Peter 4:14?

**OUR FOURTH PRINCIPLE: THE SPIRIT OF _____ AND OF GOD WILL _____
_____ UPON US**

5. What is the fifth principle regarding suffering found in 1 Peter 4:16?

**OUR FIFTH PRINCIPLE: OUR SUFFERING FOR _____ WILL _____
_____ GOD**

6. What is the sixth principle regarding suffering found in 1 Peter 4:19?

**OUR SIXTH PRINCIPLE: GOD IS _____ TO THE _____ OF
OUR SOUL**

Committing To Christ

THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS - 1 PETER 4:19-5:11

Easy to Say, Hard to Do

In this lesson, Peter is telling a suffering, battle weary people to again commit their souls unto Christ in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Of course, that is easy to say but very hard to accomplish when in the midst of conflict. Difficulties can overwhelm us, and when they do, they can cause us to lose sight of our position in Christ and our purpose.

The same is true of soldiers. They can lose sight of their objective when in the middle of a military conflict. This is called the fog of war. When the bullets suddenly fly, and mortar rounds explode, it is not unusual for soldiers to become uncertain of their real strength and position, not only of their foes, but also of their friends. The stress of combat, brings moments of uncertainty and confusion.

In military terms, there are five factors generally used in overcoming the fog of war: technology, leadership, training, experience, and planning. Military leaders understand the serious dangers associated with the fog of war. If the soldiers are



not properly prepared, they can become so disoriented that they can lose their lives.

In like manner, Peter is writing to his spiritually battle worn brethren and calling upon them to be soldiers for Christ. In this passage, he reminds them of five elements God provided. When heeded, they will get them through life's trials. He begins by telling them to, "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator" – 1 Peter 4:19.

But how does this help? What does this mean? What does this look like? What action is Peter calling these saints to do?

This lesson will examine the five vital truths revealed in this passage. We will then discuss practical ways to apply them in our lives.

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you”

WORKSHEET

1. What is Peter asking his readers to do in 1 Peter 4:19?

WE MUST _____ THE _____ OF OUR SOULS TO CHRIST — 1 Peter 4:19.

2. To whom is Peter appealing in 1 Peter 5:1-4? What is his purpose?

THE _____ MUST _____ – 1 Peter 5:1-4.

3. What is Peter asking the young men and the rest of the assembly to do in 1 Peter 5:5?

THE CHURCH MUST _____

4. What five items are mentioned in 1 Peter 5:6-9a. Discuss what these terms mean and what they will look like when we practice them.

WE MUST _____ OUR _____

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

5. What are some of the works of Satan?

6. WE MUST HONOR AND WORSHIP CHRIST – 1 Peter 5:9b-11