

Greetings from Peter

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[0 : 00] Okay, so let's open up to 1 Peter 1. I got the two verses, two verses, I got the greeting, all right? And we're going to start this, should be a great adventure.

And by the way, I apologize that some of you didn't get handouts. If you want one, I'll get you one. I made 15 or 16 of them, and it's amazing. We needed more. All right, let's look at 1 Peter 1, verses 1 and 2.

And I'm going to read from the New English. It says, From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those temporarily residing abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by being set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood.

May grace and peace be yours in full measure. Now, we already know, we've been told, and it's written by Peter. There are people who say it hadn't been written by Peter, but there's no real serious argument to say that it wasn't written by Peter.

It's been accepted being written by Peter from the very get-go, the earliest recorded writings about the different letters and whatnot. Peter's always been accepted as the source of this particular letter.

[1 : 21] And he's writing to Christians, just like the video said, that for the most part are Gentile Christians in a part of Turkey that Paul didn't go to. If you remember, Paul wanted to go to Bithynia.

He wanted to go into those regions, and he was forbidden or expressly told by the Spirit no, and was sent across over into Greece in that area.

So he went up in there and he taught, or he probably did anyway, and he is now addressing them in this letter as those temporarily residing abroad.

In other words, as exiles. That can be translated as those living as resident foreigners or to the exiles. Now, I want you to get this point, that we are exactly the same thing.

We are resident foreigners living in a foreign land. Now, if you accept that and understand that we are exiles, because where is our homeland?

[2 : 26] Well, or New Earth, or whatever you want to call it, Restored Earth. Elsewhere, the kingdom of God. He's our king. We don't have a loyalty, per se, to any king on this earth.

Now, we have a responsibility to be good citizens wherever we happen to reside. As exiles. But this is not where, this is not my home.

This is not our home. And that's what Paul, I mean, what Peter is telling these Christians, you are in a land, you may have been born there. You may have lived your entire life there.

Your families may have a long history, but you don't live there forever. This is not your home. This is a place that you are temporarily an exile in.

He also reminds them that they are chosen by God. And I told Matt this morning, I said, you could easily, there's two things you could easily get into in these two verses. And one is predestination.

[3 : 29] And I'm not going to do that. And the other one is the Trinity, which I'll mention a bit. But he says you are chosen by God. That means that God knew you and knew of you and knew what you were going to do long before you ever did it.

In fact, how far back does it go? Before the foundations of the earth. Now, if you want to say before the foundations of the earth he predestined you to become a Christian, go for it.

You and Calvin can have a great time together. But it doesn't, I don't think it means that. I think it means that before God knows everything. And so before he even founded the earth, he knew those that were going to be his.

Just because he had knowledge of everything. He gave you, you still had to do what? You had to work out your faith. You had to choose him. Sava did that this morning.

He says, I choose Jesus. What did you do? I chose Jesus. And God knew that was going to happen. And what he predestined you for is to become fully in the image of Christ.

[4 : 40] Christ. That's what we're predestined to, is to be like Christ. And knowing that, he set us apart by the Spirit. Do you notice that?

He set us apart by the Spirit for what? Now this is where we sometimes, Christians get, oh, I've been saved. And they sit down and they occupy a pew for the rest of their life.

That's not what Peter's saying. He says, he didn't choose you so you could sit in church and be a good person for an hour. He says, you were set apart by the Spirit for obedience and salvation.

The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation. That's what he's alluding to there. Obedience to what? To the teachings of Christ.

To the way of life Christ showed us, lived for us. To be obedient to God. To serve. And to be faithful. And as Stephen Olin did this morning, what happens when we don't follow through on that?

[5 : 46] We have the sprinkling of the blood of Christ to cleanse us as we repent. We've been chosen to be conformed to the image of Christ, who is the new Adam. Or the second Adam, depending on how you want to, where you want to go, because he's called both.

to bring God's primal intentions for creation to fulfillment. To perfect that which God started with creation. Which is to bring glory to his name throughout all of creation.

Did you know that that's your job? That's what witnessing is all about. We're to bring glory to God. That means make his name known and tell of the good things he's done. That's what our purpose is.

And if you go about telling people the good news that God is, is, and that he has a plan, and that he is great and mighty and magnificent, like we sang this morning, there are those that are going to go, wow, I didn't know that.

I need to know this God that you're talking about. I need to know this Savior, this Lord, this King you're talking about. Because there is the purpose of life.

[6 : 58] I'm reading, I hate this. Jonathan, my wonderful son, gave me a book for my birthday, I think. And it sat on my coffee table for months.

And I felt guilty because he would come and see it sitting there and not moved. And a couple, a month ago or so, he says, are you reading that book? And I said, oh yeah, I've started it.

Well, I've read two or three pages and I'm going, I don't want to read this book. But what he's, what he's talking about is, is this, the idea of ancient philosophers, he's comparing, ancient philosophers' idea how to live a good life.

And he talks about modern positive psychology's idea, how you live a good life. And then he's going to talk about Paul and what Paul says about living a good life. Which one do you think has some validity?

The last one. And if we look at this, we find out that Peter's saying, you live the good life in Christ because you know God and you know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

[7 : 58] But, does that a good life mean everything is going to go hunky-dory, wonderful, upee-jee, let's have joy every day, every minute? No. It means that sometimes you're going to suffer. sometimes you're going to miss out on things that you think you would like to have.

Sometimes you're just going to have to deal with persecution or opposition or troubles and suffering and difficulties. But what makes it a good life?

That we have a purpose that is eternal, founded in our God, set forth from the very beginning to bring His fame and His glory to all of creation.

You do that and you're going to find out that life is satisfying and full and rich. You ignore that and you're going to find out life is meaningless. What did Solomon say? Life is a vapor, meaningless, vain.

Why? Because if you seek after only the things that you satisfy, you physically, emotionally, you're going to be always left empty, disappointed. You seek the things that can't be taken away from you, that can't perish, that never pass away and that's the purposes of God and you're going to find a rich, wonderfully, satisfying life no matter what, how long or short it may be.

[9 : 25] And Peter's going to talk about that. In fact, he's going to talk about a loyal love. Now, oftentimes, we don't translate that that way.

The New English does. It says, loyal love and you go, loyal love? What is a loyal love? Well, think about it. What is a loyal love? How many of you have been married more than a year?

See, I'm excluding them back there. Think about that. Why are you still married? It's because you have a love that shows what? Loyalty to your partner.

You are going to be there for them no matter what. That's a loyal love. Think about the love that God has for us.

He loves us so intently that what? Is he ever going to leave us or forsake us? No. He is going to be loyal to us no matter what.

[10 : 29] 18 years. I never accepted the Lord, but I did run for Him for a number of years. Did He love you anyway? He was loyal, in love, with you all that time.

And one day, you woke up and said, I've got somebody that loves me in a way that I have never been loved before. And you started loving Him back. What does He call you to? To love Him forever and ever with, how did Jesus say it?

With all of your, and all of your, and all of your, that's loyal love. Paul says, that hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things.

That's loyal love. Now, we need to understand and accept this too, that we're not just set apart, not just saved, but set apart from all the others in the world to obediently follow God in Christ.

He did not save you for your sake alone. Do you understand that? Too often, we take salvation and narrow it down to me. I'm saved because God saved me.

[11 : 41] Well, God saved you for a reason that's bigger than you. And that's one of the reasons He puts us in groups, because He says, you can't do it, but y'all can do a lot more.

He's a southerner, I guess. God did not save you for your sake. You need to understand this clearly.

Indeed, He did save you in Christ so that you might have eternal life through the cross and resurrection of Christ. But He saved you, called you in a relationship with Him for His purposes, which is to restore, fulfill, and perfect that which He started in the beginning when He created the world.

And you know what He wanted to do? He wanted to have a place where He could dwell with man and man could dwell with Him. You know, the biggest, I think you can get the clearest picture of what God's purpose for us is in the new earth if you go back to Genesis and you read what happened in the cool of the garden.

Walked with Him in the cool of the garden. Can you imagine? I can't imagine God said, John, it's your turn. I've waited for eternity for this. Yes, my chance.

[12 : 53] Where are we going to walk? Lord said, I don't care. Where do you want to go? I said, I don't really care. Just go. He wants to dwell with us. He wants us to dwell with Him.

Even now, that's the whole purpose. That's what fellowship is all about. When we get together, there's more of Christ present than when we're alone. You know that? Wherever two or three are gathered, what?

He's there. He didn't say wherever you are. He said, I'll never leave you and forsake you so we know He's there. But He says, wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I'm there in your midst. In Revelation 1, chapter 3, what does He say?

He knocks on the door. Why? That we might open the door and do what? What we Christians love to do most. What? Eat together. together. He wants fellowship with us.

He wants to spend time with us. He wants us to spend time with Him. And in doing so, we spread His glory to every part of creation. Salvation is not us-centered, it's God-centered.

[13 : 57] And we need to understand, ultimately, His purposes need to be fulfilled, not ours. Now, there's another thing in this letter that we could spend forever talking about, and that's the Trinity.

If you don't look in there, it says that there are all parts of the Trinity are present. Now, He doesn't give us a formal treatise on the Trinity there, but He does say what?

God the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ. Now, this was probably written about 68 or so A.D.

Peter was killed, martyred under Nero, and so it was about that time. The idea that Jesus was God was already very firmly established.

John's letter, the Gospel, was written about this time, and it says very clearly that Jesus was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was with God, and goes on. You've got Hebrews was written probably about the same time, and it very clearly makes a case that Jesus is the Son of God, God Himself.

[15 : 11] It isn't until a couple hundred years later we finally get a formal statement from the church leaders on what the Trinity is, how it works. We still argue about it to this day, but it's there.

All three parts of the Godhead are involved in our salvation and in our life as Christians. they all have a part that brings us into relationship with Him.

Now, Peter's going to tell us much more in this letter. It's like James, remember, in the first part of the chapter 1, he named a whole bunch of themes that he just sort of talked about briefly, and then he spent the rest of the book going back to it.

Peter's going to do the same thing. He's going to tell us the basic ideas in the first part of the letter, and then he's going to amplify those as the letter goes on. But he finally prays this, and I pray the same thing for you, that we may find God's grace and peace in full measure, sufficient for any occasion or situation, complete and completely satisfying our needs, to cover every difficulty, that we may remain obedient, obedient and faithful, faithfully in love with our God to whom we belong.

Let's pray. Lord, I just thank you for the great adventure we got ahead of us as a church as we go through this letter written by Peter. I just pray that you'll open the eyes of our hearts to understand what you're telling us there, and that we will find a new reason, a new purpose, a new understanding of what you called us to glorify you amongst all the peoples of this earth.

[17 : 01] Lead us, Lord, we pray. Watch over us, keep us, don't let us stray into things that are not true, but show us your truth through this letter, that we might glorify and magnify you amongst the peoples, and find ourselves more and more conformed to the image of Christ himself.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.