

Soundings in 1st Peter

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you for the welcome, Alexandra, and let's pray. Gracious Father, we turn now to your holy word.

We need the wisdom of your Spirit to understand what's before us and to see the glory of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord, who is the focus of Scripture, but whom we cannot see at all without the Spirit's help.

So, show us his glory, we pray, and stir our hearts, which your Spirit also does, and send us out clear-headed, warm-hearted, strong, and purposeful to advance your kingdom and to glorify your name.

We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. Ideally, I suppose, last week or before, I would have warned you that the best way to prepare for this Learners' Exchange session is to bring your own Bible.

But I never thought to do that, and so I give you the outline of 1 Peter on this study sheet and ask you to make do with it, and I will try to be as clear and orderly as I can be in setting before you the lovely things that are here in this book.

[1 : 5 3] You'll see that the study sheet is headed, The Traveler's Guide, A Bird's Eye View of 1 Peter.

Those titles are complementary to the title that I gave to the three talks in Learners' Exchange, which is Soundings in 1 Peter.

Well, I think all these ways of referring to the letter are good. Both these ways, really. Two pictures here. If one takes Soundings from Shipboard, well, it's not the same as making a map of the bottom of the sea, but it does tell you where you are.

And the soundings that the sailors take give them their sense of direction as they move forward over the waters near the land.

Well, I have thought of what I'm hoping to offer you as so many Soundings in this very rich letter, which, well, alas, we shan't be able to explore fully.

[3 : 2 5] Three sessions won't do it. But I'm giving you an overview. And then I use this phrase, The Traveler's Guide, as a label, shall I say, for what you have on the study sheet.

I don't expect you would know it, but at the beginning of the 20th century, The Traveler's Guide was a very popular devotional manual that circulated widely amongst Bible Christians in England.

It was a collection of prayers, meditations, short stories, some illustrations, and it was intended to be used as a daily devotional, a sort of spiritual pick-me-up for the day's travel.

And I hope that my three sessions, giving you the bird's-eye view, that I shall try to give you of 1 Peter, will have a similar effect as a kind of pick-you-up, pick-me-up.

That is, that after each one, you'll have fresh energy from the Lord, and energy which I hope will last, because you'll be able to look back into 1 Peter, pick-up on things that we've already said, and follow on to further things, which are here in the text.

[5 : 09] It isn't actually a very demanding letter in terms of understanding the logic and the flow of the argument.

The question is whether we're going to ingest the things that we read and learn. 1 Peter, like all the New Testament letters, as a matter of fact, can usefully be thought of as furniture for the mind and heating for the heart.

All of us, I suppose, have furnished rooms in our time and made them warm and welcoming. And the church letters of the New Testament are meant to do the same, and please God, 1 Peter will do this for us in these next few weeks.

So I have yet another heading, this time a heading for what we're going to look at this morning, the first third of the letter.

And you see it there on the study sheet, first study labelled Christians at Home in God's Family. And it seemed to me that that was a good heading for the lines of thought that are given us in the first section of the letter, chapter 1, verse 1, down to chapter 2, verse 10.

[6 : 54] And having said that, I would like to read it, read it aloud, read it fairly slowly, read it fairly emphatically, and so introduce the things that I have to say by making sure that the letter itself is focused there before your minds.

So, I read, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aetian, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ, and for sprinkling with his blood, may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

a rather grand beginning, but then it's a circular letter to many churches, and under those circumstances, a rather grand beginning is quite appropriate.

blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

In this, you rejoice, though now, for a little while, as was necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it's tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 36] Tested genuineness is a paraphrased translation of a single Greek word, but it's a paraphrased translation that gets it exactly right.

Tested genuineness, tested the tested genuineness of faith, will only become reality as your faith is tested.

And here, Peter says, your faith is being tested by tough times so that it may be proven, good, strong, glowing like gold when reviewed by God from his throne.

The letter continues, Though you've not seen him, that's the Lord Jesus Christ, you love him.

Though you don't now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that's inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

[10 : 53] concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven things which angels long to look into.

so you, the recipients of the letter, we Christians shall I say, we are very privileged persons.

The glories that were predicted have become reality for us to live by. What a privilege! What a thrill!

Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[12 : 20] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it's written, you shall be holy for I am holy.

And if you call on him as father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear, that means reverence and awe, by the way, not panic, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

So, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

since you've been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. For, and now a quote, all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass.

[14 : 16] The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

So, put away all malice and deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation, if indeed you've tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Where it stands in scripture, and here's another quote, behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who don't believe, quote again, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

[15 : 52] They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Compressed, isn't it? Rich, and then some. This is the way that the church letters of the New Testament are all written.

The compression is an economic fact, we think, because papyrus, on which the letters were written, was fairly expensive, and so was hiring an amanuensis who would put what you had to say down on paper, as a modern secretary would do.

modern secretary. I was a modern secretary. I was a secretary. I was a secretary. I was a young man. In those days, the boss could say to the secretary, letter to so-and-so, take it.

[17 : 31] I won't tell him this, that, and the other. Write the letter for me and I'll sign it. That actually is how some of the New Testament letters were written, and I think this is one of them.

Because Peter says in chapter five, or rather the letter says, in chapter five and verse twelve, it's Peter talking, by Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God, stand firm in it.

That's Peter telling us that Silvanus, who is the Silas of the Acts story, the Silas who was in prison, you remember, with Paul, Silas was the amanuensis.

Silas wrote the letter on papyrus to go to all the churches to whom it was directed. So, by Silvanus, says Peter, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring so.

Silvanus may very well have been the courier who took the letter round the various churches. That, too, was part of the pattern which is reflected in the correspondence of the New Testament.

[19 : 03] because, of course, there was no post office in those days. If you wrote letters and wanted to make sure they were delivered, you had to arrange for that delivery yourself.

And there are one or two instances in the New Testament, pretty clearly, of, what shall I call it, courierism, is the word that comes to mind.

There isn't, of course, any such word. I've coined it for the occasion, but you see what I mean by it. Well, this is the pattern. And Silas, hearing from Peter what he wants to say, because Peter is a fisherman, become apostle, but he's never had a literary education, and so the chances are that he explained to Silvanus fairly fully what he wanted to say, and looked to Silvanus then to compress it into a letter where everything is clear, but you have to listen to every phrase because every phrase is taking things forward.

I tried to read it in a way that would bring that out. that was part of the Emanuens' job. And actually, all the letters of the New Testament, when you look at them, you realize this is very compressed stuff, not a word wasted.

Well, I've told you why, and in our study of the New Testament epistles, we need to remember that. and the letter has, in Greek, I can tell you, has a very easy, smooth style, even though it's very compressed, and some of the sentences are long, longer than English sentences can comfortably be.

[21 : 11] And, well, this is Silvanus, Silas, doing his stuff for Peter, and so Peter signs the letter at the end, and it is 100% Peter's letter, because Peter approves of it.

Thank you, Silvanus, you've got everything right, just the way it should be. And the expectation, let's be clear on this also, before we dive into the text, the expectation is that when the courier, whoever he is, gets to the local church and hands over the copy of the letter, well, the church will gather, and the letter will be read by the pastor, chief pastor, as directed to the whole congregation, written for reading aloud.

We need to remember that, because of course, we spend most of the time that we do spend with the letters in personal study, and we're not reading aloud, and we are not reading in company.

one way of saying it is that the letters of the New Testament are much more like sermons, and intended to be, shall I say, declaimed, or read with a loud voice, like sermons.

Then we always are aware, but if one remembers that they are sermons on paper, and reads them as documents written to be read to the church, well, I think you'll find, as I have found, that a great deal of weight, weight in what's said, comes across, and I might have missed that, well, much of that weight, if I had only read them the way that we do, silently, and, well, I presume you read the same way that I do, when we think we're coming to words that don't count in the substance of the letter, we sort of flip over them, we don't think about them, the ands, and the buts, and the because's, and the neverminds, and the howevers, and so forth.

[23 : 58] But when it's material being read aloud to a group of people, well, every word counts, and that's the story here.

Okay, 1 Peter, then, is a circular letter, we call it that because copies go to many churches, when he says that he's writing to those in elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, that's really the whole of Asia Minor, and then a bit more, you realize this has to be a circular letter with many copies, one copy to be delivered at each of the churches in these Roman provinces.

Okay, well, that's then the kind of document that it is, and it was written in a way that would make reading aloud straightforward, weighty, but go fairly slowly and the sense will come across.

I did the best I could five minutes back. I hope that the sense did come across in general terms as I read. That, I imagine, anyway, is the sort of slow, measured reading which the pastor of each church would give to his copy of the document.

And if you ask, why is this letter being sent to so many churches? Well, remember, it was agreed at a fairly early stage in the Christian mission that Peter should be in charge of evangelizing and discipling Jews, and Paul should be in charge of evangelizing and discipling Gentiles.

[26 : 05] You got that in 1 Peter chapter 2. 2. And this is Peter writing to where he knows that Jewish Christians are living.

He calls them exiles of the dispersion in these five Roman provinces. Well, what he has in mind is knowledge that the gospel has been preached in these places and churches have been formed.

Now, he writes as an apostle of Jesus Christ to these churches and addresses their members as elect exiles of the dispersion.

Dispersion, I expect you know, is the technical term that was used then, as it's used still, for the Jews scattered hither and yon through the Roman Empire.

Exiles means that they're not living in Jerusalem and they haven't got a hometown of their own. They live in these various Roman provinces in Asia Minor, but they're the elect exiles.

[27 : 22] I hope, brothers and sisters, that you are not among those for whom the thought of election is so frightening that you never allow it to enter your mind at all.

There are Christians like that, but the way that the truth of election is presented in the New Testament is that it's there for the assurance of believers to alert them to the fact that God planned their salvation back in eternity, that their faith now is his gift according to that eternal plan.

His plan is to bring them to share his glory, glory of Christ, and that plan he will continue to execute until they're there.

So the truth of election brings thoughts of security, thoughts of great grace, thoughts of a God of love and power, and it should be a tremendous encouragement to the heart.

I hope it is for you, as certainly I will confess it is for me. And Peter now writes to the elect exiles of the dispersion, the converted Jews in all this part of the world, and he fills in an effect, or at least refers in sufficient detail to bring the thought to mind, he refers to the doctrine of election in his own way, in verse 2 of the letter, it says, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, the elect exiles of the dispersion, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, that's the eternal plan, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.

[29 : 44] That's, as you can see, a bird's-eye view of the doctrine of salvation, and Peter writes to converted Jews who know themselves already to be in the reality of that salvation, and Peter wants them to feel warmth of heart, heating, shall I say, for the soul, right at the beginning of the letter, as a kind of personal frame for receiving everything that the letter is going to remind them of, because really that's what the letter is doing, it's reminding them of very basic Christian truths, which Peter surely assumes that they know at least an outline, but he hopes that by going over them, he'll refresh their hearts, he'll renew the focus of these truths in their minds, and so get them thrilled by the gospel all over again.

So, away he goes. I suspect that he had recently been reading a copy of Paul to the Ephesians and Paul to the Romans, because there are so many apparent echoes of both those letters in what he writes.

Or perhaps it was Silas who had been reading them, and Silas chose the echoes as the way of expressing the thoughts that Peter wants him to get across.

Anyway, like Ephesians chapter 1, Peter's chapter 1 begins with praise. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his great mercy, etc.

Well, this is what we're facing as we study this passage, and Peter's thought, echoed perhaps by Silas, borrowed perhaps from Paul, who knows, is that doctrinal study should begin with praise for the grace of God of which you know already, and to which the teaching that the apostolic letter contains is now to be added.

[32 : 28] So, if you look at the study sheet now, you will see that right under the heading, Christians at Home in God's Family, is a series of themes to note.

Hope, faith, love. Well, yes, in his first long paragraphs, he lays all that before us, does he not?

Joy, reverence, growth in grace, yes, that too is a concern of his. And then, privilege, bestowed, purity, required, proclamation called for.

All of that too is here in this first section of the letter, which, I called it the first paragraph, I should have said the first section, because this study covers the ground as far as chapter 2, verse 10.

And that I see as the first section of the letter. And when I give it the heading, Christians at home in God's family, well, Peter does talk about Christians, you heard, remember, as persons born again, and you are born into a family.

[34 : 00] And he talks about Christians as calling on God, the God who chose them as their father, and the father is the head of the family.

In other words, Peter has got the family theme in his mind, and he wants it to be in his reader's mind. So, the heading, I think, is justified, Christians at home in God's family.

and I should add here, perhaps, that right at the end of the reading in chapter 2, on from verse 5 and following, Peter uses the image of the house, the family lives in a house, yes, the family in a sense is the house in the series of pictures that make up the imagery of the letter.

The house is the temple of God, where God himself lives, and where he's served, served by the same people who have become living stones in that spiritual house, the temple, a holy priesthood there to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that is, to worship and serve and offer God the best that we can offer in these lives that he's given us, and that's what you're called to do, says Peter in, well, I was going to say in this picturesque imagery, the pictures are being piled on top of each other, it's a compressed letter, and here is an example of the compression, you as living stones are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, picture changes, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God through

Jesus Christ, well, the picture is moving on again, but this is what you are, a chosen, there's more of this in verse 9 of chapter 2 actually, we read it, you're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, to proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, picture after picture, and all the, every picture tells a story, every picture carries a message, showing us some further aspect of God's grace, giving, and God's calling to those to whom he gives the grace of salvation, God's calling on them to serve, and piling up the picture, pictures, is, shall I say, part of the

[37 : 20] Silvanus style, in which he has Peter talking, and the pictures are all of them wonderful realities to meditate on.

When you meet an image in scripture, think about it, meditate on it, rejoice in it, because whereas our culture highlights the development of logical thought and minimizes the development of the imagination, if you talk to school teachers, of course, they'll, at least junior school teachers, they'll deny it, but this is actually how it works, and when you get on to higher education, it's very obvious that that's how it works, whereas then, we develop the mind in a lopsided way like that, what you have in the Bible, what you have in the New Testament letters, is an equal combination of theological logic, and theological pictures, and if we're to get the full benefit of

New Testament study in particular, well, we should give as much attention to the pictures and letting them fertilize our imagination as we give to the logic, letting it shape our thought.

And this is this first letter of Peter, it seems to me a very perfect demonstration that that is so, equal stress on theological logic and spiritual imagination.

Okay, so what we're called on to imagine at this time is Christians at home in God's family, and it's all sorts of aspects of that that are being talked about here.

[39 : 35] Because time presses, I can't go through this in the way that I'd love to. It's so compressed, there are so many thoughts to be teased out and expanded, that, well, I just have to leave it and say, I at most can drop one or two hints, maybe you can take those hints and run with them in some of your own Bible study in the future.

But anyway, let me jump now to the question, why is Peter writing the letter at all?

And let me give you a three-point answer to that question by knowing what he hopes the letter will do to the churches to which it's sent.

We shall learn what God hopes, intends, that the letter should do for you and me as recipients of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in the 21st century.

Why did Peter write the letter? Peter, first of all, he wants his readers to keep living by hope, looking forward eagerly to the glory that awaits them beyond this world.

[41 : 05] In the New Testament, living by hope is a really big thing. And what it means to live by hope is that you look ahead, you look beyond this world and spend much time brooding on the fact that in the world to come, everything of every type will be better and more glorious than its counterpart is in this world.

However good the worldly, the this world reality that we know actually is. There's a great deal of that sort of thinking in the New Testament and I will tell you friends in case you've never realized it, thinking of that sort puts a spring in your step and energy in your heart heart.

And joy becomes, how do I say it, joy becomes your frame of spirit. Whatever else they say about you as a believer, they have to say he or she.

It's full of joy, aren't they? God grant that it will be so for you and me more and more. Well, Peter wants to generate that attitude, generate joy, in other words, in the hearts of his readers.

And he does say in chapter 1, verse 8, though you do not now see Christ, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

[43 : 03] That English word inexpressible is the strongest that we translators of the English Standard Version could find, but it's not as strong as the Greek word, which is very strong and very vivid in articulating the thought that this is more wonderful than we can put into words.

Joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. There's a phrase to meditate on and it's good and healthy every now and then to ask ourselves do I suppose that the people who meet me in everyday life and to whom I chat, talk more or less seriously about any number of different things, do they spot the fact that I am rejoicing with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory?

I think that when people listened to Jesus and talked to Jesus they definitely got an impression which perhaps they weren't able to put into words that something of God has come across in what he has said and I would like to think that in my life and in your life one of the things that comes across in our ordinary life, converse with friends, relatives, people at work and so on, something of the joy, the inexpressible and actually the Greek says glorified joy that Peter is referring to here comes across.

Again, it may not be an impression that people can put into words, that's not what I'm hoping for and not what I pray for, but an impression that makes an impact and stays with them and later, please God, they will realize that this was something of God, that this Christian person exuded, I use that word, yes I think I can, and it made an impact and I wish I had a joy like that, like theirs.

well, first reason why Peter writes the letter is that he wants to keep them looking forward in joy and hope and anticipating glorious things at the end of the road and beyond the end of this road.

[46 : 11] And secondly, he wants them to keep pursuing holiness, and he says that explicitly in verse 16, it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy and he knows, as you and I also know from experience, that under everyday pressures, it is very easy to forget that practicing holiness, holiness, the life of worshipful dedication to our God is the principal thing, or shall I say, perhaps I better say, a principal thing that we're called to, and if we're not even seeking to glorify God by holiness of life, well, it isn't very likely that we shall succeed in doing it, but Peter wants to keep these folk zealous for holiness, practicing holiness as a daily task, daily responsibility, and then thirdly, oh, well, no, wait a minute, let me amplify that, with the practice of holiness, or rather, within the practice of holiness,

Peter wants his readers to be very clear that love is priority number one, love to God, and specifically love to neighbor, and he comes back to that a number of times in the letter, chapter 1, verse 22, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, chapter 3, verse 8, chapter 3, verse 8, and finally all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, and so on, and that's not the only reference to the priority of love that he makes, but that gives you the stress.

Practice holiness and remember that love, in all its forms, is at the heart of holiness. And then, third reason why he writes the letter, and this perhaps is the most urgent one, as he writes, he wants to keep them standing steady under pressure, because he knows that pressure is upon them, and is going to get worse.

He wrote the letter in the middle 60s, when Nero was the Roman emperor, and he's in Rome himself, and he's aware that Nero is behaving towards Christians the way that the Nazis behave towards the Jews.

Christians, and he wants to exhort his readers to stand fast in face of pressure that has grown strong and is going to increase.

[49 : 48] And if people think you are weird as you stand firm to your faith, and if they treat you harshly because you're a Christian, and if the government comes down heavy on you because you're a Christian, and even if your life is put in jeopardy, stand steady for Christ, despite the pressure.

these are the big lessons that he wants to get across to them that make him feel that writing this letter to them at this time is a priority.

Well, in broader terms, of course, one could simply say, well, Peter writes this pastoral letter for the reason that other New Testament writers produce pastoral letters.

They simply want to keep Christians going. Of course he wants to keep Christians going. My three thoughts specify the specifics of the keeping going, which are clearly big in his mind as he writes, and ought to be big in our minds every time we read or reread 1 Peter and reflect on what's there.

And for the rest, well, 1 Peter is a sort of route map, traveler's guide for life.

[51 : 33] Yes, it is. Most, if not all, the problems of life are covered in principle, just as most of the basics of faith are covered in principle in this letter.

But there were two specific features of the teaching that I want to underline at this moment. Very basic and central to the route map.

Basic and fundamental to the route map is what I better say. Central is a location word, which you hear me use it and you might think that I'm talking about what's on the map.

No, not that. Fundamentals in drawing the map. Here they are. Feature number one, Christ-centeredness.

Peter is a Trinitarian. You've got all three persons of the Trinity mentioned in the greeting. Apostle of Jesus Christ, foreknowledge of God, Holy Spirit, all comprehended in the grace and the peace.

[52 : 56] And you've heard me say, I guess, and you've heard other people in this church say, that the truth of the Trinity is, in one sense, really fundamental to everything that's distinctively Christian.

Because Christianity is first and foremost the declaration of what the team, the divine team of Father, Son, and Spirit has done for our salvation.

And with that, the declaration of how, with the help of the divine team, we advance the glory of the divine team, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

And I'm a bit bothered sometimes in some Christian circles, where all the talk is about Jesus, and we don't hear about the Father, and we don't hear about the Spirit, or well, we don't, anyway, get a balanced stress on the three mess of the one, and the team quality of God.

I call it team quality in all the acts of God, right from the beginning, and on, well, for all eternity. Father, Son, and Spirit are acting together.

[54 : 25] It's a team job every time. and I find it helpful to remember that all the plans of God, all the works of God, they are team affairs.

And I think that when we begin our prayers in the morning, the evening, or whenever, the best way to open is to call on the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and remind yourself that you are praying to all three.

Of course, one can only name one of the three at any one time. Ordinarily, one prays to the Father, because Jesus told us to do that.

When you pray, say, Father, take it on from there. But it's proper to pray to the Savior as well.

He did say in John's Gospel, you remember, in the Farewell Discourse, if you ask anything in my name, I'll back the request and the Father will give it to you.

[55 : 38] Praying in his name is invoking him as the one on whose behalf you're praying. And praying to the Holy Spirit also is appropriate because he too is God.

One prays to whichever person is most directly concerned with the particular thing that you're praying about. And you would pray to the Holy Spirit if you're asking for conversions and if you're asking for effectiveness in a talk that you yourself are going to give and matters of that kind, well, the Spirit is most directly involved at those points, so to pray to the Spirit is perfectly fitting.

Our charismatic friends may overdo it, but in doing it, they're not doing anything wrong, they're doing something right. And they're doing better, in fact, than the people who always pray to the Father and never pray to the Son and never pray to the Holy Spirit.

And having said that, I must draw to a close. I have one more thing to say, but I can say it in a single sentence. The Trinitarian Christ-centeredness of everything is apparent through 1 Peter and is to be appreciated as a key quality of 1 Peter.

And so is the Bible buttressing of the various emphases that Peter is making. He quotes Scripture, Old Testament Scripture.

[57 : 32] Yes, but Old Testament Scripture, which is the Word of God. He quotes that and uses it to back up and confirm what he's saying. Now, time is gone and you haven't got your Bibles in front of you, so I'm not going to be specific about the text that he quotes.

I'm simply going to say there, there, and if you look at 1 Peter chapter 1 and the first ten verses of chapter 2, when you get home, you'll find them there.

And you've got to remember that Christianity is, when you get right down to it, the fulfillment of everything that the Old Testament started and the Old Testament is foundational to the, shall I say, the buildings of Christian theology.

Foundational. So, we should follow the apostolic lead and make sure that we too look for the links between the Old Testament and the New and rejoice whenever we are reminded in the New Testament that New Testament reality is a fulfillment of Old Testament hopes and prophecies.

But having said that, well, I think that was two sentences, not one. And I must close, not because that's everything that I've got to, that I could say, but our time is gone.

[59 : 14] And so, I say to you, when you get home, friends, do your own study of 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 1, down to 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 10, and look for the wealth, the wealth of God's grace that's spelled out here, and look for the work that we who are Christ's are being called on to do.

Rejoice, take heart, and travel, travel along the path of discipleship with the Triune Lord.

And God bless us all.