

Introducing First Peter

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Date: 25 September 2022

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 40. This is in the Scottish Psalter, page 259, Psalm 40, on the tune is Earshire.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. We'll sing down to the end of the double, verse 5, to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty clay.

[1 : 13] And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify.

Many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies.

O Lord my God, so many are.

[2 : 33] O Lord my God, so many are. The wonders Thou hast done.

Thy gracious thoughts to us were far above.

All thoughts are gone. And no one can reckon them to thee if them declare.

And speak of them I would. They more than can be numbered are.

Amen. I will bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we do thank you that as we sing your praise, it reminds us of all the many blessings and privileges that are ours.

[3 : 59] Even as the psalmist says there that they are so many, that they are so difficult even to number. there are many beyond our comprehension beyond all that we can imagine at times the different ways and through the different means that you bless us we thank you for your word above all for it is a word that gives us life and tells us of the hope that there is in Christ Jesus we thank you for your day a blessing to us in the week where we can be so many busy with so many other different things but we thank you that there is this day where we can come aside and come and worship you and we thank you that even as we come in here today it is that great desire that you put in our hearts to meet with your people but above all to meet with you as our Lord and as our God and so we pray your blessing on all that we do that in the service here and also in the creche and the tweenies and the Sunday school that you will be with us in all things that you will help us to learn more of you and to have a great hunger for you to long for you to be Lord and God of all our lives and to rule over us Lord as our King and as one who knows all people so well knowing every circumstance knowing every trial and difficulty knowing every reason for rejoicing that we all have you know the great variety in our lives you know us each by name and we thank you Lord for your great care and compassion towards us and so we ask Lord that you will bless us and be with us throughout this day and each and every day that we would know that Jesus is a great friend who stays close to us so Lord guide us in all we do and pardon us for all we do are wrong as well the many faults we have and the many mistakes we make we thank you that there is great forgiveness with you and so we ask all things in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for his sake and glory

Amen it's good to see many young ones here again today and just want to say a few words to you before you go out to the creche on the Sunday school and the tweenies what's the biggest or maybe the stupidest thing you've ever done has any of you made any mistakes no that's great see if you were to ask me if I have made any mistakes or done any stupid things it's not a question of have I but almost how many mistakes and stupid things I've done because I'm constantly doing silly things stupid things and afterwards you think to yourself why on earth did I do that maybe it's something you've said or maybe it's something you've done and you just feel so stupid afterwards and whoa come on why did I do that and then if it stays with you sometimes you can start to think how am I going to make things right how am I going to do things differently what can I do to change myself or to make things right sometimes it means going to somebody and apologizing for doing something sometimes it means trying to mend the mistakes that you've made maybe you've broken something you've done something you shouldn't you've stolen something something like that and you've got to try and make up for it in different ways but the reality is every one of us does stupid things every one of us makes mistakes and today we're going to be starting a study in a book of the Bible called 1 Peter and if you know anything about Peter or if you learn anything about Peter you learn that he was someone who made mistakes mistakes just like every one of us even though he was a disciple of Jesus someone who was very close to Jesus he still made mistakes and so often he regretted these mistakes but the great thing that he knew was that there was someone to make right the mistakes that he had made he didn't have to make up for it himself he looked to Jesus who was able to right all his wrongs and that's what we are reminded of as we go through the book of Peter there are times when we will make mistakes but there is someone who will make up for all of our mistakes so how can you fix mistakes well got a little tool here now you won't all be able to see it it's a tiny little tool now after the service is finished when I go back through to the hall maybe if you're still in the Sunday school or creche ask me to see this tool and I'll show you what it is it's a little tool that helps me fix some of the mistakes I made because it's got lots of little gadgets on it and I love

I always take this when I'm fishing because when I'm fishing things often go wrong line gets in a tangle something breaks and this little tool comes in so handy it's got a pair of pliers it's got a little screwdriver it's got a knife all in this tiny little tool that fits neatly in your pocket so it's easy to carry around you can fix so many mistakes with this thing so ask me when I go through to the hall to see this and I'll show you more about it but what it reminds us of is that we have someone we can take with us anywhere too just like I can take that tool with me anywhere and it helps me fix mistakes we have someone who we can take with us always and that is Jesus and no matter what mistake we've got done or what fault we've got Jesus is able to fix it for us and as we put our trust in him as Peter put his trust in him he knew that he was with him always and there to help him through every mistake that he made so we can take Jesus with us everywhere every day of our lives and he is the one who is able to mend all our faults and all our mistakes all the stupid things that we do day by day he is able to fix them so may we come and put our trust in him we're going to share the Lord's prayer together now we'll say the Lord's prayer our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever

Amen well we again sing to God's praise this time in Psalm 77 let's sing Psalm's version we're singing at verse 6 Psalm 77 at verse 6 to the tune Glencairn throughout the watches of the night my songs I call to mind I ponder deeply while my heart an answer tried to find we'll sing from verse 6 down to the verse 14 to God's praise throughout the watches of the night my songs I call to mind I ponder deeply while my heart an answer tried to find forever will the Lord reject and never show his grace as he withdrawn steadfast love and turn from me his face for all time has his promise failed his God no longer kind has he in his great wrath dismissed compassion from his mind then to my heart there care this thought on this

I will rely rely the years of the right and of hope of him is most high I will recall the Lord's great deeds your words of long ago I'll meditate on all your acts your mighty days I'll show O God most holy are your ways what God comforts within you are the God of miracles who's power the

[14 : 27] God of miracles who's power the ancients do well can we turn together now and read in God's word in the New Testament the first letter of Peter 1st Peter reading in chapter 1 and we're going to read the whole of this chapter chapter 1st Peter chapter 1 Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia and Bithynia according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for the sprinkling for sprinkling for sprinkling with his his blood may grace and peace be multiplied to you 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 that is imperishable undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you who by God's power and are being guarded through faith though you have not seen him you love him though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls concerning the salvation the salvation the prophets who prophesied about the great 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 him 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 preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven things into which angels longed to look 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 as obedient children as obedient children as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance but as he who was caught who has who called you is holy you also be holy in all your conduct since it is 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 through the 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 has 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 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 have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God for all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass 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 amen amen and may God bless his word to us well again call upon God in prayer let's bow our heads in the word of prayer as we continue to worship you as our Lord and as our God this day as we have read in your word we thank you for your word and how it stands and how it stands and remains forever a word that is good news a word that is preached a word that is proclaimed even here today and proclaimed throughout the world today and every day there is this word of hope that goes out to so many and yet as the Bible reminds us in the parable of the sower and the seed we recognize too how there are other things that distract us or snatch this word away from us we pray today Lord that you will prepare our hearts to receive your word that it will be the good ground that the parable speaks of that we would receive it with great joy and that it would bear much fruit in us and even in many around us and throughout the world that there will be great rejoicing over sinners being saved that there will be great rejoicing over your church being built up that there will be great rejoicing that throughout this world that you have made and the people that you have formed that there will be people who will be responding in faith and receiving your word with gladness so we thank you that that power and that salvation is not of ourselves it belongs to you and we pray that we will be able to rejoice in that that we can call upon you as our God and Father in heaven the one who is able to do so much more than we even ask or imagine and so we pray that our confidence and our hope that will be placed in you today and always that no matter the discouragements we see around us no matter the trials that we go through that we would see that we are more precious to you than even gold that is tied in the fire we thank you that we are of great value to you that we are precious in your sight so precious Lord that you gave your own son who came to give his life to give it as a ransom for many that through his shed blood we can know the forgiveness of our sins that all our faults all our mistakes can be wiped away and cleansed anew as we come in through repentance and faith to you we thank you Lord that you teach us that you instruct us and that you guide us we pray that we will know Lord you're leading your guiding day by day that we will know Lord what it is to have prayers answered according to your own will and you know as we sang before that we'll be able to wait with patience upon you so often we may become frustrated with our prayers when we see them not answered in the way that we want them to be

we'd be praying for ourselves or praying for others or praying for many situations we see around us in this world and in our own land we know the many difficulties and trials that people are going through little health those who are growing old and weary in this world those who are suffering in many different ways those who are experiencing times of tragedy and loss and grief those who we see in different parts of the world those who are experiencing war famine natural disasters we know that our trials are many that we pray Lord that you will give us the strength to go on the strength to look to Jesus and to put our hope and our trust in him and so we ask that your word will be blessed to us that it will help us even today and as we go on in this week to encourage ourselves together to discuss and to talk about the wonders of the good news and the blessings that are ours in Christ may you help us to fix our eyes on him we pray for our communities we pray for all around us we pray for our schools and our young people we ask your protection over them Lord that you will instruct them in your ways in their young years we pray Lord for your spirit to move among us we pray for a day of revival in our midst we pray to see Lord your hand upon us for good as a people and as a nation may you turn us back to yourself that we will be able to rejoice in you that we would see your goodness to us Lord that as we are commanded in your word to return to you and we have that great promise that you will return to us may we see churches flourishing may we see your word bearing much fruit may we see a people flocking to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and be blessed by those who hunger and thirst for righteousness we pray for our leaders and all who rule over us and we pray for them to have wisdom to have guidance to have a concern not just for themselves but for all our people for all our lands throughout the world that we would see a day of great turning a day of great peace a day of great blessing something that seems so far from our eyes at this time but yet we look to you as the one who is able so Lord may you guard us today and always may you keep us in the hollow of your hands may you uphold us and strengthen us in every situation we are and may we know your blessing upon us we ask it all with the forgiveness of our sins the many faults that we have we thank you that you are able to cleanse and so we come before you humbly bowing our necks bowing our heads and pleading with you to have mercy upon us and to do us good for all we ask we ask in the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour for his sake and glory

Amen We're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 138 in the Scottish Psalter page 431 of the Psalm book Psalm 138 We sing from verse 1 to verse 5 in the tune of Winchester Thee will I praise with all my heart I will sing praise to Thee before the gods and worship will toward Thy sanctuary We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise Amen Amen Amen Amen We will I praise with all my heart I will sing praise to Thee before the gods and worship will toward Thy sanctuary

I will praise Thy name for Thy truth and kindness of Thy love for Thou Thy word has magnified all Thy great name above Thy didst me answer in the day when I to Thee did cry and Thy my fainting soul with strength did strengthen inwardly all kings upon the earth shall give praise

[28 : 02] O Lord when as they from Thy mouth shall hear thy true and faithful word yea in the righteous ways of God with gladness they shall sing for great the glory of the Lord who doth forever reign so we're going to begin a study in this letter of Peter first Peter today and in going through it I would encourage you to take your own time to read through this letter to see what it has to say to you personally

I would encourage you to talk about it with others around you as well because it does raise many issues that we face today many issues of our heart many issues about faith many issues about the things that go on around us in the world so it's worth pondering and spending time in your own study reading it through and seeing what it has to say but there may be many questions that it raises in your heart as well many answers that you're searching for and you maybe don't understand exactly what it's saying so it's good for us to talk about it with one another and especially if you have any particular questions you'd like to ask of me there may be questions that and the things I raise or the things that we're looking at that you might have well please do ask if you have any questions that we may arise through our study in this letter we're going to begin today with just an introduction to the letter setting the scene if you like and our focus is going to be on the first couple of verses of this the opening verses of this letter verse 1 and 2 we can just read that again 1 Peter chapter 1 at verse 1

Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia 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 from the outset of this letter there is something we have to remember that this is a very personal letter a handwritten letter that Peter spent time through God's spirit preparing to send to a people who as we see have been scattered around many different parts he has taken his time to prepare this letter to make sure it gets sent to them and that there is so much in it that he is praying over that will encourage and build them up letters are indeed very personal things especially when they are handwritten there is always something behind them there is almost always something that will make you consider it more deeply when someone has taken the time to write some words to you in many different kinds of situations

I am sure you have all experienced receiving cards and letters maybe in times of difficulty times of grief times of sorrow but also in times of great joy maybe a birth or a wedding it may be a sadness in the family and people have taken time to write kind words to you and they mean so much I still have kept many letters I used to receive when I was working away at sea people taking their time to let me know what was happening in their lives or back home and just taking that time to send some news to me and they meant so much and still do even when I go back and read them again we also have letters in our family that were written many years ago we have letters that my great uncle wrote to my grandfather during the second world war my great uncle was lost during that war and therefore these letters have so much more meaning behind them the stories that he was telling the things that he was saying they're very moving to read these kinds of letters and you imagine to yourself the people who Peter was writing to and as we're going to see the situation that they were in the experiences and the trials that they were going through and to receive this letter written by

Peter with these wonderful words to them how precious this letter was to them that they were remembered in their trials not just by Peter but more so by God this was big news to them this was precious to them and to ourselves today it should be precious too that this is a word of God to us a word that still speaks into our circumstances today letters from the past can often be put on display when they have a great meaning behind them and some of them can have great value and I'm not sure if you knew but once there was a letter that was sold at auction that reached fetched a price of nearly four million pounds it was a letter that was sold back in 2013 and it had been written by a man called

[34 : 12] Francis Crick back in the year 1953 he had written to his son Michael and Francis Crick had been one of the ones involved in the discovery of the structure and the function of DNA it was a momentous time a momentous discovery in the history of mankind and he'd written this letter seven pages that he said contained the secret of life and Francis Crick described this discovery as something beautiful and this letter fetched four million pounds well before us today we have access to a letter of far more worth access to a letter that's priceless even and does indeed contain the real secret to life not DNA but what life is through the Lord

Jesus Christ and what he has done for us the abundance of life that is found in him and so as we go through this letter we want to see just how precious this is it is the word of God to us and today as we set the scene for this letter I want us to think of three things noting how personal this letter is first of all we're going to think of the one who wrote the pastor Peter then we're going to think of the people that he's writing to and then thirdly we're just going to touch on the purpose of it and all of these things will expand on more as we go through this letter the first thing we want to see is the pastor behind the letter Peter look at the opening verses in this letter Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ now to understand how remarkable these words are we have to remember what Peter himself has come through

Peter it says here an apostle of Jesus Christ here Peter is older in his years now the impulsive Peter the Peter who made so many mistakes in the past he has learned through all his experiences he has learned through many trials himself and here he is writing later on in his life to encourage people that no matter what circumstances they are in no matter what mistakes they have made that there is still hope to be found in Christ Jesus he has been through the highs and lows in life but here he is able to speak of the wonder of a saviour who is Jesus Christ and the wonder that he is able to be a servant of his saviour Peter is an ordinary man who has known amazing grace in his life from an extraordinary

God and that is indeed what everyone who comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ experiences and that's the hope that every one of us has that no matter even how far we may be away from God no matter how much we may have forgotten of him no matter how much we may feel we're undeserving of any of his mercy that he is able to help us in our time of need there is so much we could see of Peter's past that just helps us to understand what he is writing here and the reasons that he is writing what he says but there are three things I want to highlight about Peter as we go into this letter three things from his past that highlight to us how we know more of him and more of his experiences and how that helps us to understand our own situation the first thing we know about Peter is that he was far from perfect he had many faults he made many mistakes he was rash and impulsive so often he was saying things he would then regret soon after and who of us doesn't do that we all make mistakes for example

Peter when Jesus had just told them the disciples that he was going to suffer and die Peter it says in Matthew 16 verse 22 he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him saying far be it from you Lord this shall never happen to you but he turned that's Jesus turned and said to Peter get behind me Satan you are a hindrance to me for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but the things of man he was impulsive he said the wrong things and Jesus rebuked him and again we've been there we've been there we've said the wrong things Peter also perhaps as hard as time was when the Lord was crucified and when he heard the cock crow and he knew he had denied the Lord how difficult an experience that was for him and you read of it in all the Gospels it's interesting that Matthew

[39 : 55] Mark Luke and John all record this incident not everything is always recorded in the four Gospels but this is and in Luke's account of it in chapter 22 verse 60 it says immediately while he was still speaking that was Peter still speaking the rooster crowed and the Lord turned and looked at Peter and Peter remembered the saying of the Lord how he had said to him before the rooster crows you will deny me three times he denied the Lord three times and imagine how he felt in that moment look at what it says the Lord turned and looked at Peter the feeling of disappointment the feeling of letting the Lord down isn't an experience we all go through at times and just think of Peter in that situation this is a

Peter who is writing with such a pastor's heart to a people who have been scattered and who are suffering but perhaps the third thing we note about Peter that helps us to understand what he's why he is writing with such passion is this that he knew the restoration of Christ after the resurrection you have the wonder of and beauty of Jesus restoring Peter and you read about it in John 21 verse 17 and the verses around it when Jesus asks Peter three times do you love me and the third time he asks him it says this in John 21 verse 17 Jesus said to him the third time Simon that's Peter son of John do you love me Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time do you love me and he said to him

Lord you know everything you know that I love you Jesus said to him feed my sheep Jesus restored him despite all his mistakes despite all the ways he let the Lord down Jesus restored him and where do we find Peter now in his old age he is feeding the sheep he is feeding the lambs he is as it says here Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ a servant of Jesus Christ and that's the wonder of God's grace someone once said the way up comes by going down restoration comes after trials and Peter could certainly testify to this and in our own lives how many experiences we have to go through and how many experiences perhaps is the

Lord using even just now to help us to realize to help us to see our need of him and to see the wonder of his grace his restoring gracious love for us the Lord uses so many different ways to remind us that we need him there was a man called Oswald Smith back in the year 1920 his great ambition was to be a missionary for the Lord to be sent into the fields of mission throughout the world that was his burning desire it had been his prayer for a long time and on this day in 1920 he was standing before the board of a mission organization they were interviewing him and asking him questions and finding out more about him as to the reasons why he would be suitable to be a missionary he went through that experience he went through that day of answering and trying to show himself as worthy to be a missionary for the

Lord but the Lord had other plans and the mission board didn't accept him and he said to the Lord afterwards Lord you know I want to be a missionary for you will you not open a door of service to me that door had closed but the Lord laid on his heart something different he took him in a different direction he took him on a detour and what he ended up doing was Oswald Smith he prayed to God and God gave him another idea another way of serving him instead of being a missionary he came to form a church that would become a church that would send out missionaries and the church that he formed in Canada sent out more missionaries than any other during that period God had other plans for him and our plans they don't always work out just like

[45 : 16] Peter's plans Peter's ideas they didn't always work out the way he wanted to but God had a greater purpose and God used him to his glory in serving him Peter is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ a servant who loved the Lord now the question for us as we come to this is do you love the Lord and do you have that openness to be used by God to serve God in whatever way that he may have planned for you to give your whole heart to him we will not be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ but we can all be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ we all have our faults we all have our mistakes in the past we all have things we've done that we may regret but we can all know that amazing love of

God that restores us in a right relationship with him Jesus asks us always do you love me just like he'll ask Peter and if we love him we are to do as he commands and we may not write letters like this that will be recounted throughout churches all over the world but we can have our own ministry our own service to God here's Peter encouraging a people we can all be like that to be encouragers so let's learn about Peter and all his faults and see that God can use each of us the second thing we see here then is the people that Peter is writing to and you note here Peter's ministry Peter's vision of ministry is towards the people and there's a powerful lesson in that to ourselves that our ministry and our vision for our church should always be for a people to serve

God with a heart for people people within these walls but also people out with these walls people who have been scattered far and wide people have been gone away from God in different directions but to have a vision to gather people to hear the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ what do we see of the people that Peter is writing to here three things we see just briefly about them first of all we see that they are a scattered people here he speaks to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia Bithynia they've been scattered all over the place and again it takes us to Peter's past again as well Jesus said to him back in the gospel of Matthew chapter 26 verse 31 he said Jesus said to them to the disciples you will all fall away because of me this night the night of his crucifixion for it is written

I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered there was a great dispersion of people a great scattering of people after the crucifixion people were scattered far and wide as a reminder to ourselves that to this day there are people scattered throughout our land scattered throughout the world and a people who need to still hear of the wonder of God's grace by ourselves we have no desire for God we're on the run from God so often we run in all kinds of different directions but the wonder of it is God knows where to find us and God still speaks to us and here as Peter is writing he is writing to a people who are scattered and a people who are to know that God knows and that's what he's saying to us today as well we have been scattered we have been flung to all corners of the world and yet

God knows where we are and God knows what we need the second thing we see about the people as we see going through this letter is that they were a persecuted people the reason that they were scattered was because a great persecution arose after the crucifixion of Jesus they were forced to leave their homeland and found themselves scattered because of their belief because of their faith in the Lord Jesus and continually they were subjected to persecutions and sufferings things that you and I cannot imagine and yet things that to this day that people suffer in this world people are persecuted for their faith in many places throughout this world unimaginable suffering but we will all suffer in different ways for our faith we will all have battles that we have to fight we will all have valleys that we have to go through we will all have dark nights we have to endure but in the midst of it all as

[50 : 55] Peter is writing here we are not to lose our perspective he is writing to our people to encourage them to look to Jesus and to trust in him and to know that he is with us through it all that he will never leave us that he will never forsake us and the third thing that we see of the people reminds us of just how precious we are to God he's writing to our people who are a chosen people a people chosen by God and something we're going to look at more as we go through this letter but it says here to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion through according to the foreknowledge of God the Father they are a people chosen by God they are a people known by God so in the midst of all their trials they are still able to rejoice they are still able to rejoice because he's reminding them that you are

God's chosen people that no matter how much you suffer in this world you have greater to come and the word there that reminds us of this is that they are exiles they are exiles of the dispersion and what does that word mean it means those who are travelling through a strange land those who are travelling through a place that is not their permanent home and that's what Peter is reminding them of here he is reminding them that they're not home yet this world is not their home there's a song that says this world is not my home I'm just a passing through and that's the story of the Christian we are all exiles this is not our permanent home this is not the place we will remain forever one day our journey will end and then we will be home with the

Lord if we are putting our trust in him he brings us through many different directions and paths but he's bringing us on a journey a journey that he is with us and a journey that although we suffer and have many other different things it is still a journey of hope a journey where we are learning more of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and that's more of what we want to learn as we go through this letter a man in his old age once said this contrary to what might be expected I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially hard and painful but I look back on them with a particular satisfaction indeed he says I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my experience has been through affliction and not through happiness we learn so much more through affliction but the greatest thing we want to learn in our affliction is the hope that there is in Christ the hope that even though we are in this world it is not our home we are just passing through and passing through to a better place and so what he says to them here is

God knows according to the foreknowledge of God and yet he says you are a chosen people you are God's people and that's the people we want to belong to and to be part of part of God's elect God's chosen people and that's what this letter this good news shows us the way to be part of God's people that's the third and final thing we want to take from this the purpose for which Peter is writing when we receive a handwritten letter there's always a reason behind it when you open a card or a letter you see there that someone has taken time to encourage to give you a word of comfort and it's no different here with Peter there's purpose behind writing this letter and there are two main purposes we see as we go through it one is encouragement the people to be encouraged and the second is to be built up in the faith to be encouraged and to be built up in the faith it's wonderful to be remembered by friends and family it's wonderful to receive a word that just means that someone has taken the time to remember you in your time of need but how precious it is to receive a word from

God in our time of need to be remembered by God that God has a word for us and that's what we have in this letter God is speaking to us if a letter written by Francis Crick on the secret of life found in DNA can be worth four million then how much more is this letter worth a letter that shows his life in Christ it is priceless it reminds us of God's love towards us Jim Packer in his book the father loves you says this grace is God drawing sinners closer and closer to him how does God and grace prosecute this purpose not by shielding us from assault by the work the flesh and the devil nor by protecting us from burdensome and frustrating circumstance not by shielding us from troubles created by our own temperament and psychology but rather by exposing us to all these things so as to overwhelm us with a sense of our own inadequacy and to drive us to cling more closely to him this is the ultimate reason from our standpoint why God fills our lives with troubles and perplexities of one sort and another it is to ensure that we will all learn to hold fast to him that is why Peter writes this letter that we may learn how to hold fast to him in all of our experiences and so as we begin to go into this letter may we go into it remembering it is God's word to us today

[58 : 27] God's word from his hand a very personal word of encouragement and a building in faith and may he bless us as we go into his word day by day as we take from it the great encouragements that are ours the great challenges that are ours but above all the great mercy and grace that is ours through Christ as he says here at the end of verse 2 may grace and peace be multiplied to you well as we go into this letter may grace and peace be multiplied to us all to know a loving God who has a gracious word for us an ordinary people just like Peter was with all his mistakes but a new great restoration through the love of Christ may we know that powerful love more and more for ourselves let us pray our father in heaven we do thank you that your word speaks speaks so personally to us for as a word from your own hand it's a word written to each of us by name for you know us in all our different situations just as

Peter was known to you so precious so are we known to you we thank you Lord that you speak and ask us do we love you as we should we pray Lord that as we see your love for us that our love for you will grow and increase all the more teach us Lord to live by faith in the midst of everything that goes on in our lives to look to you and to hold fast to you we ask it all in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 138 once again in the Scottish Psalter page 432 Psalm 138 at verse 6 Though God be high yet he respects all those that lowly be whereas the proud and lofty ones afar off knoweth he the tune is Warwick and we'll sing these three verses to God's praise

O God be high yet he respects all those that lowly be whereas the proud and lofty ones afar off knoweth he though I in midst of trouble long I life from thee shall have yet my foe's wrath thou stretch thine hand thy right hand shall be saved surely that which concern me the

Lord will perfect make Lord still thy mercy last do not thine own hands are forsake after the benediction I'll go to the main door and close with the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forever more amen No nothing nor glory is a

God a speaker of