

The Books of 1 & 2

PETER



BIBLE STUDY COURSE BY
RICHARD "RUSTY" RUTHERFORD

1 Peter and 2 Peter

Peter's Course on Discipleship of Jesus

As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers Simon called Peter and Andrew. They were throwing a net into the sea because they were fishermen. Jesus said to them: Come, follow me. I will teach you how to catch people instead of fish. They immediately left their nets and followed him. **Matthew 4:18-20**

A course in discipleship based on Peter's First and Second Letters

Written and taught by
Richard "Rusty" David Rutherford

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Editor's Preface



This study originated from a wonderful sermon I heard delivered on First Peter. I was struck by the preacher's solid exegesis of the Scripture, so I re-read both letters. Then I listened to Bob Utley's sermons on 1 & 2 Peter. Then I listened to Alistair Begg's sermons on 1 & 2 Peter. I first wrote separate commentaries on both of these books. But then I saw how Peter, just before he was killed, was attempting to describe genuine discipleship of Jesus in these two short letters.

Discipleship has been my focus in Bible study since I taught my first course in 1994 at Saint John the Divine Episcopal Church in Houston. Discipleship courses are rare in most churches. Why is this? Perhaps because it requires people to do more than simply attend church and listen. Discipleship means listening to the Holy Spirit in your life to learn from and about Jesus, and then applying the teachings of Jesus to your life. It means studying the Scriptures and also telling other people about your faith so they also can become disciples.

Many believe that the first Gospel written, the Gospel According to Mark, was based on Peter's earlier preaching, most probably in Rome. Luke also presents examples of Peter's preaching in the first portion of his Acts of the Apostles. I have attempted to locate some of these parallels in this study, and have inserted appropriate parallel Bible verses from other books of the Bible.

Jesus commands his disciples follow him, learn from him, live holy lives, and then teach others all he has taught you. One day we will join Jesus in the New Jerusalem. This is Peter's confident hope he also wants us to look forward to.

Shalom in Jesus,

Rusty Rutherford

Notes on this Bible Translation and My Editorial Insertions

The translation used in this study is the *GOD'S WORD* translation. © 1995 by God's word to the Nations Mission Society (GWT). The GWT translation is an attempt to make the English text of the Bible developed in the 1500's more readable to modern Americans. It is not a paraphrase, but it has retranslated the oldest manuscripts into modern American English at about newspaper level using "closest natural equivalence". The Bible is meant by God to be understood. Therefore, using modern language is essential.

I have used this translation in my teaching since 1996 and have found it very accurate. I love the King James Version and so when there are variances in the GWT, I may insert within the Bible text the original transliterated Hebrew or Greek word in **10-point bold-face italics type** followed by an English word to help better understand the meaning of the passage. English words added to aid in understanding are also in 10-point type but are not in bold. Lastly, if the original Hebrew or Greek word appears in the Bible 10 times or less, I may also indicate how often it appears (e.g., 10x or 2x, etc.).

Here's an example from John 11:33 and the raising of Lazarus involving three Greek words:

³³When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who were crying with her were deeply moved *embrimaomai*-groaned 5x *pneuma*-spirit and troubled *tarasso*-agitated.

This has shown me that the GWT translation is remarkable for finding the right meanings to phrases that are often difficult to translate.

Notes on Font Usage

All text is in the Big Caslon font. Scripture text is in regular 14-point. If I have inserted parallel Scripture quotations, they are also in regular 14-point, but are slightly further indented (.08) than the main Scripture text and are enclosed by brackets []. All Scripture citations are in **12-point bold face**. All my comments and questions to think about are all in regular 12-point.

Introduction

Disciples Must Follow Jesus

Matthew 16:13-28; 17:1-9

John 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27

PREVIEW

Peter is proud to be a disciple of Jesus. He probably was about 25 years old when he first met Jesus. Both Peter and his brother Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin. But when Jesus came to the Jordan River where John the Baptist was baptizing, John pointed Andrew to Jesus when he said: *This is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.* **John 1:29.** Then Andrew went and got his brother Peter.

Peter recalls his discipleship commitment and that of Andrew was made when they left their fishing nets in Galilee and left with Jesus described in **Mark 1:18.** Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem in 30 AD. Since then, Peter has been on the road for Jesus, preaching, teaching, and healing. His two letters were written when he was in Rome in his 60's. Before he was killed by the Emperor Nero, he managed to get these two letters out to Jewish and Greek Christians in the northern Roman provinces in Mesopotamia.

Peter's life with Jesus had its ups and downs. Peter loved Jesus but often his foot got ahead of his mouth. He was impulsive and many times got things wrong. But he had a passionate love of Jesus and Jesus had a passionate love for Peter. Following are some important interactions of Peter with Jesus.

Peter Declares His Belief about Jesus

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples: Who do people say the Son of Man is? ¹⁴They answered: Some say you are John the Baptizer, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He asked them: But who do you say I am? ¹⁶Simon Peter answered: You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷Jesus replied: Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed. No human revealed this to you but my Father in heaven revealed it to you. ¹⁸You

are Peter and I can guarantee that on this rock I will build my church. And the gates of Hell will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you imprison, God will imprison. And whatever you set free, God will set free.

²⁰ Then he strictly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. **Matthew 16:13-20**

Peter Rebukes Jesus and Jesus Rebukes Peter

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to inform his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem. There he would have to suffer a lot because of the leaders, the chief priests, and the experts in Moses' Teachings. He would be killed but on the third day he would be brought back to life.

²² Peter took him aside and objected to this. He said: Heaven forbid Lord. This must never happen to you. ²³ But Jesus turned and said to Peter: Get out of my way Satan. You are tempting me to sin. You aren't thinking the way God thinks but the way humans think. **Matthew 16:21-23**

Poor Peter. First he is up. Then he is down. How hard for Peter to accept that Jesus would be killed. This makes no sense. Jesus is God's Messiah – the one the Hebrew prophets looked forward to since the days of Isaiah 700 years before. How is it possible that God would allow his Messiah to be killed?

Jesus Explains What It Means to Follow Jesus

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples: Those who want to come with me must say no to the things they want, pick up their crosses, and follow me. ²⁵ Those who want to save their lives will lose them. But those who lose their lives for me will find them. ²⁶ What good will it do for people to win the whole world and lose their lives? Or what will a person give in exchange for life?

²⁷ The Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory. Then he will pay back each person based on what that person has done. ²⁸ I

can guarantee this truth: Some people who are standing here will not die until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. **Matthew 16:24-28**

Again, Jesus says he will die, but he will come again. He not only says he will die, but most probably his disciples will also die – at least they must be prepared to do so. Jesus demands a full commitment from his disciples. They are learners and they must learn to commit themselves fully to God and the building of his kingdom in the same way that Jesus is doing. God is training them to be just like Jesus – fully committed by trusting in God the Father to send his Spirit to guide their lives. As Jesus prayed, they must pray. As Jesus was compassionate, they must be compassionate. As Jesus was humble, they must be humble.

Moses and Elijah Appear with Jesus

¹After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. ²Jesus' appearance changed in front of them. His face became as bright as the sun and his clothes as white as light. ³Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them and were talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus: Lord, it's good that we're here. If you want, I'll put up three tents here — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

⁵He was still speaking when a bright cloud overshadowed them. Then a voice came out of the cloud and said: This is my Son whom I love and with whom I am pleased. Listen to him. ⁶The disciples were terrified when they heard this and fell face down on the ground. ⁷But Jesus touched them and said: Get up, and don't be afraid. ⁸As they raised their heads they saw no one but Jesus.

⁹On their way down the mountain, Jesus ordered them: Don't tell anyone what you have seen. Wait until the Son of Man has been brought back to life. **Matthew 17:1-9**

What a wonderful experience Peter was given. To see Jesus in all his glory speaking with these famous prophets. God was working in Jesus and pulled the curtain back from the spiritual

realm just a little to give a view to these disciples who would soon face persecution in Jerusalem.

In the coming days, the view they were seeing would flash into their minds to remind them that God himself was working in Jesus to accomplish God's plan for his life. Jesus in his human form was doing extraordinary things through the Spirit's power as he prayed continually. What an encouragement this should be to Peter and his disciple friends.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial of Him

³⁶ Simon Peter asked him: Lord where are you going? Jesus answered him: You can't follow me now to the place where I'm going. However, you will follow me later.

³⁷ Peter said to Jesus: Lord why can't I follow you now? I'll give my life for you. ³⁸ Jesus replied: Will you give your life for me? I can guarantee this truth: No rooster will crow until you say three times that you don't know me. **John 13:36-38**

Peter Denies Knowing Jesus

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. The other disciple was well-known to the High Priest. So that disciple went with Jesus into the High Priest's courtyard. ¹⁶ Peter, however, was standing outside the gate. The other disciple talked to the woman who was the gatekeeper and brought Peter into the courtyard.

¹⁷ The gatekeeper asked Peter: Aren't you one of this man's disciples too? Peter answered: No I'm not. ¹⁸ The servants and the guards were standing around a fire they had built and were warming themselves because it was cold. Peter was standing there too, and warming himself with the others. **John 18:15-18**

Peter Denies Jesus Again

²⁵ Simon Peter continued to stand and warm himself by the fire. Some men asked him: Aren't you too one of his disciples? Peter denied it by saying: No, I'm not.

²⁶One of the High Priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked him: Didn't I see you with Jesus in the garden?

²⁷Peter again denied it and just then a rooster crowed. **John 18:25-27**

This is a sad incident in Peter's life that he never forgot. During the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples in an Upper Room, Peter pledged never to desert Jesus, even if others did. But Jesus saw in advance what would happen later that same night. In the High Priest's courtyard, Peter would deny even knowing Jesus. How could Peter do this? He would probably recall this all his life with regret. He wasn't as strong as he thought he was.

Yet 50 days later during the Pentecost Festival when Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on Peter and many other disciples of Jesus, Peter was filled with the Spirit to preach one of the best sermons he had ever preached in his entire life. Peter called all his listeners to repent, believe in Jesus, and be baptized. Three thousand Jewish men in Jerusalem did just that and shortly thereafter, another 2,000 became believers and were baptized. **Acts 2:41; 4:4**

Peter ended up leaving the administration of the Jerusalem church to James, Jesus' half-brother while he went to evangelize. He went to Caesarea Maritime on the Mediterranean seacoast, where he brought a dead woman back to life and then brought Gentiles into the church, Roman soldiers. **Acts 10:1-48**. Then he returned to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council. **Acts 15:1-11**. He then went to Antioch, 300 miles north of Jerusalem, where some of the men who heard his sermon at Pentecost had begun to form house churches. **Acts 11:19-21; Galatians 2:11-14**

Paul mentions Peter and his wife in Corinth. **1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5**. Peter also went to Rome where a scribe followed him and wrote down his preaching in According to Mark. That's all we know. He may have preached in the Roman provinces in Mesopotamia mentioned in his first letter. Church tradition cites him being killed in Rome by Emperor Nero by being crucified upside down.

Introduction to 1 Peter

Peter wrote his first letter from Rome in Italy to the Christians in the Roman provinces in Mesopotamia. Many of these people were attending churches begun earlier by the apostle Paul around 48 AD.

The time of the letter was sometime after 60 AD. It appears that both Peter and Paul were in Rome awaiting the judgment of the Roman emperor who reigned from 54 – 68 AD. The night of July 18-19 AD 64 a great fire in Rome began and lasted a week. Most of the people blamed Nero for starting the fire, but Nero blamed the Christians persecuting them severely. Most believe both apostles were killed during this reign of terror.

The letter begins with a summary of the Gospel, emphasizing that the death of Jesus and his resurrection was God's plan from before he created creation. God the Father wanted to reconcile wicked human beings to himself so he cut a covenant with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to redeem humans from their sin. This is called the Covenant of Redemption.

This plan was revealed to God's prophets from the earliest days of God's chosen people when God executed a Covenant with the patriarch Abraham that *his descendants would bless all the families of the earth*. **Genesis 12:1-3**. Throughout the Bible, God reveals portions of this Plan of Redemption especially in detail to Isaiah in his fourth song of the Servant of YHWH. **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Unfortunately, the prophets themselves did not know when the events they prophesied would occur, but they trusted God and wrote them down. Looking backward, we can see how most of the pieces of this puzzle fit together.

On the night of the day of his resurrection, Jesus opened up the Scriptures to his disciples and explained how these prophecies fit into the entire picture of salvation.

These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you. I told you everything written about me in Moses' Teachings, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true. Then he opened up their minds to understand the Scriptures. He said to them: Scripture says that the Messiah would suffer and that he would come back to life on the third day. Scripture also says by the authority of Jesus people would be told to turn to God and change the way they think and act so that their sins will be forgiven. This would be told to people from all nations,

beginning in the city of Jerusalem. You are witnesses to these things.
Luke 24:44-48

In his first letter, Peter refers to many of Jesus' words and commands he uttered during his three and one-half year ministry. His words are not elegant, nor his sentences very long, but his thoughts are clear and to the point. Peter especially focuses on the practical aspects of the discipleship of Jesus, especially the work of sanctification a disciple follows as they are led by the Holy Spirit to lead a holy life.

Peter encourages the believers to keep the faith no matter what, because the pagan world will persecute Christians as they live different kind of lives from those of the surrounding civilizations. In the same way Christ suffered for being righteous and not conforming to the social culture in which he lived, Christians must walk similarly in his footsteps. **1 Peter 2:21**. And, they must never forget their hope and confidence that Jesus is coming again in glory with the holy angels.

Session One

What a Believer Has Been Given by God

1 Peter 1:1-12

PREVIEW

Beginning with citation of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Peter reminds us that God calls us to live holy lives consistent with the words of Jesus, the teachings of the apostles, and the Scriptures in the Hebrew Bible. He mentions that Christians will suffer for a little while but will look forward to that great day when Jesus returns again in his *parousia*. Until then, our faith and love of Jesus, accompanied by the Holy Spirit working in our life, enables us to grow in grace.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Greetings from Peter

¹ From Peter, an apostle *apostolos* of Jesus *Iesus* Christ *Christos*.

To God's chosen people who are temporary residents in the world *parepidemos*—strangers and are scattered *diaspora* throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Peter is writing to Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, who have left Galilee and Judea because of the increasing conflict with the Romans. The time is around 63 AD. In 66 AD, open conflict will begin in earnest and in 70 AD the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans. Thousands of Jews will be killed and over 100,000 Jews will be sent into slavery. In the Roman provinces, Christians are harassed and persecuted, because they refuse to worship the pagan gods of the cities who protect the city from earthquakes and plagues. By not worshipping these gods, Christians are not considered good citizens. Ironically, they are seen as atheists.

² God *theos* the Father *pater* knew you long ago *prognosis*—foreknowledge and chose you *eklektos*—elect to live holy lives with the Spirit's help *hagiasmos*—sanctification so that you are obedient *hypakoe* to Jesus Christ and are sprinkled *rhantismos* with his blood *haima*.

Peter acknowledges that God chose these people to be Christians, to live different lives from the pagans so as to make the one genuine God **YHWH** known, including the salvation God made available in his Son Jesus the Messiah when Jesus died on the cross.

May good will *charis*-grace and peace *eirene* fill your lives *plethyno*-multiplied.

Peter imitates Jesus' usual greeting of: *Peace be with you* **John 20:21, 26**, but also adds *grace* – the gift of Jesus that continually comes to believers by their close, personal, intimate relationship with the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith in Christ Brings You Joy

³ Praise *eulogetos*-blessed the God *theos* and Father *pater* of our Lord *kyrios* Jesus *Iesous* Christ *Christos*! God has given us a new birth *anagennao*-begotten because of his great *polys*-abundant mercy *eleos*. We have been born into a new life that has a confidence *elpis*-hope which is alive *zao*-lively because Jesus Christ has come back to life *anastasis*-resurrection *nekros*-dead.

⁴ We have been born into a new life which has an inheritance *kleronomia* that can't be destroyed or corrupted *aphthartos*-incorruptible *amiantos*-undefiled and can't fade away *amarantos*. That inheritance is kept *tereo*-reserved in heaven *ouranos* for you, ⁵ since you are guarded *phroureo*-kept by God's power *dynamis* through faith *pistis* for a salvation *soteria* that is ready *hetoimos* to be revealed *apokalypso* at the end *eschatos* of time *kairos*.

The inheritance promised to Christians is salvation of living together eternally with God and Jesus in the New Jerusalem where there will be no crying, no pain, and no temptations to sin by the Devil. Instead, there will be everlasting joy and happiness participating in the glory of God.

⁶ You are extremely happy *agalliao*-rejoice about these things even though you have to suffer *typeo*-heaviness different kinds *poikilos*-manifold of trouble *peirasmos*-temptations for a little while *oligos*-season now. ⁷ The purpose of these troubles is to test *dokimion*-trial your faith *pistis* as fire tests how genuine gold is. Your faith is more precious than gold, and by passing the test, it gives praise *epainos*, glory *doxa*, and honor *time* to God. This will happen when Jesus Christ appears *apokalypsis* again.

⁸ Although you have never seen *eido* Christ, you love *agapao* him. You don't see *horao* him now *arti*, but you believe *pisteuo* in him. You are extremely happy *agalliao*-rejoice with joy *chara* and praise *doxazo*-glory that can hardly be expressed in words ⁹ as you obtain *komizo*-receive the salvation *soteria* that is the goal *aneklaetos*-unspeakable *telos*-end of your faith *pistis*.

Peter praises God for choosing these people by justifying them and transforming them into new creations and sanctifying them by giving them his Holy Spirit. As a result, Christians live newly transformed lives in holiness following God's creational principles. This gives glory to God. Because Christians live different lives from the pagans, they are persecuted. Yet, this is only temporary until Jesus returns again to earth from heaven to take his place as the judge of the world and to take his believers with him into the New Jerusalem.

This great Christian hope is the encouragement Christian believers need as they temporarily suffer while spreading the Good News of God's salvation throughout the pagan world. Christians are so grateful for what Jesus has done by his crucified death and for what Jesus will do when he takes them to the New Jerusalem to live with his Father and himself forever.

God Reveals His Plans for All Humanity Through His Prophets

¹⁰ The prophets *prophetes* carefully researched *ekzeteo* and investigated *exeraunao* this salvation *soteria*. Long ago they spoke about *propheteuo*-prophesied God's kindness *charis* that would come *eis* to you. ¹¹ So they tried to find out *eraunao*-searching what time *kairos* or situation *poios*-manner the Spirit *pneuma* of Christ kept referring to *deleo*-signify whenever he predicted *promartyromai*-testified beforehand Christ's sufferings *pathema* and the glory *doxa* that would follow *meta tauta*.

The best example of this is the fourth song of Isaiah the prophet who spoke 700 years previous to the time of Jesus of God's servant who would be oppressed and afflicted and cut off from the land of the living. However, he would see the travail of his soul, would see his seed, and acquit many by bearing their iniquities. He is now in heaven interceding for the transgressors. This remarkable prophecy in **Isaiah 52:13-53:12** is unique in the Bible in revealing the details of Jesus' earthly ministry in 26-30 AD.

¹² God revealed *apokalypso* to the prophets that the things they had spoken were not for their own benefit but for *diakoneo*-ministry yours *hemin*-us. What the prophets had spoken, the Holy Spirit, who was sent *apostello* from heaven *ouranos*, has now made known *anaggello*-reported to you by those who spread the Good

News *euaggelizo*-Gospel among you. These are things that even the angels *aggelos* want *epithymeo*-desire to look *parakypso* into *eis*.

Through his long relationship with the people called Israel, God revealed his plan of salvation for all the people of the earth. Even before Abraham, the great patriarch, God enabled Jacob to prophecy about the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah. **Genesis 49:10**

Later, through Jeremiah, God said:

Behold the days come, says **YHWH**, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in safety. And this is his name whereby he shall be called: The Lord Our Righteousness **YHWH Tsidqenuw**. **Jeremiah 23:5-6**
KJV

Because of this, early Christians during their worship services on the Lord's day not only read the words of Jesus in the memoirs of the apostles, the Gospels, but also the words of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible. Apostles like Peter now interpreted these words of the prophets and explained how God revealed how he would accomplish his plan of salvation many years in advance.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter tells us we have been *called* by God to believe in Jesus. This event is called *justification*, when God in his sovereignty gives us the Holy Spirit with the ability to believe in Jesus. At this time, we are regenerated or born again. **John 3:3,5**. We are transformed into a new creature **2 Corinthians 5:17** and now able to do things we couldn't formerly do. This new holy life is called a journey of *sanctification*, where God forms us more and more into the likeness of Jesus. **Romans 8:29**

As Jesus' disciples, we participate with God following the leading of the Holy Spirit. God gives us ordinary means of grace, such as prayer, the word of God preached and read, and subsequent meditation, and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

Peter places great emphasis on disciples using Scripture in both Old and New Testaments as a primary method of growing in grace. He especially points to the Hebrew prophets who were given inspiration by the Holy Spirit of things that would happen in God's plan of salvation in the future.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What does it mean to be obedient to Jesus Christ?
2. Peter says *we have been born into a new life that has an inheritance*. What is this inheritance?
3. Define what salvation is.
4. Peter says we encounter sufferings to test our faith. What does he mean?
5. Since we can't see Christ, how do we know he exists?
6. How does Peter refer to himself in these verses?
7. How do disciples give glory to God?
8. What is the Good News or Gospel?
9. Explain the Covenant of Redemption.
10. How does justification and sanctification occur to Christians?

Session Two

What a Christian Believes

1 Peter 1:13-21

PREVIEW

Peter wants Christians to place their hope in what God's grace will bring them when Jesus comes again. This is a major theme throughout his letters. Thinking of this hope, we Christ followers live holy lives as we follow Christ in obedience for we now know what God wants us to be through Jesus' words.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

¹³Therefore your minds must be clear and ready for action *anazonnymi*—gird up *osphys*—loins *hymon*—your *dinoia*—mind. Place your confidence completely *nepho*—sober *elpizo*—hope *teleios*—end in what God's kindness *charis* will bring *phero* you when Jesus Christ appears again *apokalypsis*

Peter says that Christians must put their entire faith and hope and confidence in what is to come when Jesus appears once again. Early Christians believed that Jesus was coming soon, even in their lifetimes, as John the prophet wrote. Jesus said: *Behold I come quickly.* Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

Live Holy Lives as God Has Commanded

¹⁴Because you are children who obey *hypakoe* God, don't live the kind of lives you once lived *proteros*—former *epithymia*—lusts. Once you lived to satisfy your desires, because you didn't know any better *agnoia*—ignorance. ¹⁵But because the God *theos* who called *kaleo* you is holy *hagios*, you must be holy *hagios* in every aspect *anastrophe* of your life.

¹⁶Scripture *grapho*—it is written says:

Be holy, because I am holy. *Leviticus 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:26*

¹⁷So if you call *epikaleo*-call on God your Father, live your time as temporary residents *paroikia*-sojourning on earth in fear *phobos*. He is the God who judges *krino* all people by what they have done *ergon*-work, and he doesn't play favorites *aprosopolempotos*-no respecter of persons.

Peter repeats what Jesus called his disciples to do on earth, concisely expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. **Matthew 5:1-7:29**. Jesus was calling his disciples to an even higher standard of righteous living than the Hebrew prophets did before him. And Peter remembers the teaching from the psalm:

[The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all that do his commandments. His praise endures forever. **Psalm 111:10**]

Christians only live short lives on earth, perhaps 70 or 80 years.

[Indeed, all our days slip away because of your fury. We live out our years like one long sigh. Each of us lives 70 years - or even 80 if we are in good health. But the best of them bring trouble and misery. Indeed, they are soon gone and we fly away. Who fully understands the power of your anger? A person fears you more when he better understands your fury. Teach us to number our days so that we may grow in wisdom. **Psalm 90:9-12**]

Before following Jesus to the New Jerusalem, all people who have ever lived on earth will appear before Jesus as the Judge in the Great White Throne Judgment. **Revelation 20:11-15**

Jesus Serves as Our Example for He Never Sinned

¹⁸Realize *eido*-know that you weren't set free *lytroo*-redeemed from the worthless life *mataios*-vain *anastrophe*-conversation handed down to you from your ancestors *patroparadotes*-tradition by a payment of silver or gold which can be destroyed *phthartos*-corruptible. ¹⁹Rather, the payment that freed you was the precious *timos* blood *haima* of Christ, the lamb *amnos* with no defects *amomos*-blemish or imperfections *aspilos*-without spot.

Peter reminds Christians they are set free from sin against God by Jesus' sacrifice of himself on the cross. Jesus could do this because he was the Passover lamb that could have no defects. He may be recalling John the Baptist calling Jesus: *The lamb of God that takes away the sin*

of the world. **John 1:29.** Paul said: *For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* **1 Corinthians 5:7**

The blood of the Passover lamb was spread over the doors of the homes of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt so that God's death angel would not kill their firstborn sons. The death angel killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, so that the Pharaoh would release the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt to travel to the land of Canaan God promised to the descendants of the patriarch Abraham. **Exodus 12:1-30**

²⁰ He is the lamb who was known long ago *proginosko*-foreordained before the world existed *katabole*-foundation *kosmos*-world, but for your good he became publicly known *phaneroo*-manifest in the last *eschatos* period of time *chronos*. ²¹ Through him you believe *pisteuo* in God who brought Christ back to life *egeiro* and gave *didomi* him glory *doxa*. So your faith *pistis* and confidence *elpsis*-hope are in God.

Before the creation of the world, the three members of the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit cut or made a Covenant of Redemption. Peter refers to this in **Acts 2:23**.

In this solemn agreement, God the Father agreed to send God the Son to earth to serve as a sacrifice for the sins of wicked humankind and make it possible for those who believed in God the Son to be reconciled to God the Father who is holy. Jesus died on the cross, but he was raised to life on the third day and resurrected to God in heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of God interceding for us.

Peter is quite severe in describing the history of the Jewish people with their God. He calls it a worthless life. Jewish history began with Abraham around 2,000 BC, it continued through Moses 1,200 BC, then to Joshua, and then to King David 1010-970 BC. But then it deteriorated so much that God finally allowed the Assyrians to destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel 722 BC and the Babylonians to destroy the Southern Kingdom of Judah 586 BC.

Only after 70 years of captivity in Babylon <605-535 BC> did God allow his chosen people to return to the land he promised to Abraham's descendants. Yet after that, there were no heroes – only the hope of the Messiah who would come. And Peter says that Messiah did come in Jesus of Nazareth – the lamb of God who shed his blood for the redemption of all of God's people.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter emphasizes that Christians must live holy lives different from those living around them. Christians are only temporary residents on earth.

[We however are citizens in heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Savior. **Philippians 3:20**]

Christ has given his life as a payment that freed us from our sinful lives. He paid a terrible price with his blood, similar to the innocent lamb that was killed at the first Jewish Passover so that God's death angel would Passover the homes of the Israelites whose doorposts had been painted with the lamb's blood. Our confidence is in our belief that God will keep his promise to save us from separation from him.

Peter emphasizes that Christians must live holy lives. This is the only way Christians can attract others to a belief in Jesus. The word *living* used in Greek is *good conversation*. Christians must live differently from the pagan peoples living around them. God called the chosen people to be different. He likewise calls Christians to be different:

When Israel first came out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, God gave them the reason they were at God's mountain:

[Then Moses went up the mountain to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain: This is what you must say to the descendants of Jacob. Tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to my mountain.

If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my Covenant, then out of all the nations of the world you will be my special possession *cegullah*-treasure, even though the whole world is mine. You will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation. These are the words you must speak to the Israelites. **Exodus 19:3-6**]

God's people were to be *a peculiar people* – different from all the nations of the world.

[You are people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the people who live on earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his own special possession *cegullah 'am*-particular people. **Deuteronomy 14:3**]

[Today you have declared that the Lord is your God and that you will follow his directions, obey his laws, commands, and rules and listen to him. Today the Lord has declared that you are his people, his own special possession *cegullah*, as he told you. But you must be sure to obey

his commands. Then he will place you above all the other nations he has made. He will give you praise, fame, and honor and you will be a people holy to the Lord your God as he has promised.] **Deuteronomy 26:17-19**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why is it so important to keep in mind that Christ will return again?
2. Why should we live holy lives?
3. Peter says: *If you call God your Father, you must live on earth in fear.* Why?
4. Why couldn't the Passover lamb have any defects? How does this concept relate to Jesus?
5. How do you *get your minds clear and ready for action?*
6. Why does it take God's action in order for you to know Jesus?

Session Three

The Relationship of a Disciple to Jesus

1 Peter 1:22-2:10

PREVIEW

Peter begins this session describing the transforming power God gives us through the new birth. We are substantially changed. Then Peter goes on to say that we have become part of the body of Christ, a living stone in Jesus, who is the cornerstone of new temple. Moreover, not only Jews are in this body. Gentiles because of God's mercy are now included in the chosen people of God.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Jesus Commands Us to Love One Other

²² Love *agapao* each other *allelon* with a warm *ektenos*-fervent love that comes from the *katharos*-pure heart *kardia*. After all, you have purified *hagnizo* yourselves by obeying *hypakoe* the truth *aletheia dia*-through *pneuma*-Spirit. As a result you have a sincere *anypokritos* love for each other *philadelphia*-brotherly love.

Peter remembered at the Last Supper Jesus had said:

[A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one to another.] **John 13:34-35**

²³ You have been born again *anagennao*, not from a seed *spora* that can be destroyed *phthartos*-corruptible, but through God's everlasting *zao*-lives *meno*-abides *eis aion*-forever word *logos* that can't be destroyed *aphthartos*-incorruptable. That's why Scripture says,

²⁴ All people are like grass,
and all their beauty is like a flower of the field.

The grass dries up and the flower drops off,

²⁵ but the word of the Lord lasts forever.

The actual quotation is from Isaiah:

[The voice said: Cry. And he said: What shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all the goodliness therefore is as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it. Surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever.] **Isaiah 40:6-8 KJV**

²⁵This word *rhema* is the Good News *euangelizo*—Gospel that was told to you.

Isaiah is reminding us that while God is faithful and keeps his promises, most people are fickle and do not keep their promises. Moses summed up his story of the 40-year history of the people of God in the wilderness wanderings before his death in Deuteronomy by teaching them a song about a faithful, trustworthy God and a people who promised to obey God but then didn't.

[I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Give our God the greatness he deserves. He is a rock. What he does is perfect. All his ways are fair. He is a faithful God, who does no wrong. He is honorable and reliable. He recognizes that his people are corrupt. To their shame they are no longer his children. They are devious and scheming.] **Deuteronomy 32:3-5**

Live as God's Chosen People in Your Journey of Sanctification

²¹ So get rid of *apotithemi*—lay aside every kind of evil *kakia*, every kind of deception *dolos*, hypocrisy *hypokrisis*, jealousy *phthonos*, and every kind of slander *katalalia*.

² Desire *epipotheo* God's pure *adolos* word as newborn *artigennetos* babies *brephos* desire milk *gala*. Then you will grow *auxano* in your salvation. ³Certainly you have tasted *geuomai* that the Lord *kyrios* is good *chrestos*—gracious.

[Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the person who takes refuge in him.] **Psalm 34:8**

Peter is saying that in following Christ, as his disciple, a person casts off all the behaviors prohibited by God's creational principles in his *towrah* or law and instead clings to those commands the Lord has given. God, who has created creation, knows the best way for humans to live in his creation.

⁴You are coming *proserchomai* to Christ, the living *zao* stone *lithos* who was rejected *apodokimazo* by humans *anthropos* but was chosen *eklektos* as precious *entimos* by God *theos*. ⁵You come to him as living *zao* stones *lithos*, a spiritual *pneumatikos* house *oikos* that is being built *oikodomeo* into a holy *hagios* priesthood *hierateuma*. So offer *anaphero* spiritual *pneumatikos* sacrifices *thysia* that God accepts *euprosedektos* through *dia* Jesus Christ.

Jesus alluded to himself as the new temple when he said to the chief priests:

Tear down this temple and I'll rebuild it in three days. **John 2:19**

Jesus told the Samaritan woman:

Believe me. A time is coming when you Samaritans won't be worshipping the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. **John 4:21**

Jesus told his disciples as they looked at the Jerusalem temple:

You see all these buildings, don't you? Amen, amen: Not one of these stones will be left on top of another. Each one will be torn down. **Mark 13:2; Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:6**

Instead of a temple in a fixed place on God's holy mountain called Zion, the genuine temple would be Jesus Christ and his believers who would worship God forevermore.

⁶That is why Scripture *graphe* says:

I am laying *tithemi* a chosen *eklektos* and precious *entimos* cornerstone *akrogoniasos* in *Zion Sion*, and the person who believes *pisteuo* in him will never be ashamed *kataischyno*. **Isaiah 28:16**

⁷This honor *time*-preciousness belongs to those who believe *pisteuo*. But to those who don't believe *apeitheo*-disobedient to faith:

[The stone *lithos* that the builders *oikodomeo* rejected *apodokimazo* has become the cornerstone *kephale*-head *gonia*-corner, **Psalm 118:22**. ⁸a stone *lithos* that people trip over *proskomma*, a large rock *petra* that people find offensive *skandalon* .] **Isaiah 8:14**

The people tripped *proskopto*—stumble over the word *logos* because they refused to believe it *apeitheo*—disobedient. Therefore, this is how they ended up *tithemi*—appointed.

Even though God revealed the way people should live in his creation and his plan of salvation over thousands of years through the prophets, most people including his own chosen people refused to believe it or live by his *Towrah*.

⁹ However, you are chosen *eklektos* people *genos*—generation, a royal *na* priesthood *hierateuma*, a holy *hagios* nation *ethnos*, people *laos* who belong to God *eis periopieis*—peculiar.

[Then Moses went up the mountain to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain. This is what you must say to the descendants of Jacob. Tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to my mountain.

If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my Covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my special possession *cegullah*—treasure, even though the whole world is mine. You will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation. These are the words you must speak to the Israelites. **Exodus 19:3-6**]

You were chosen to tell *exaggello*—show forth about the excellent qualities *arêtes*—praises of God who called *kateo*—you out *ek* of darkness *skotos* into *eis* his marvelous *thaumastos* light *phos*. ¹⁰ Once *pote*—time past you were not *ou* God's people *laos*, but now *nyn* you are *laos*. Once *pote* you were not *ou* shown mercy *eleeo*, but now *nyn* you have been shown mercy *eleeo*.

[I will plant my people in the land. Those who are not loved I will call my loved ones. Those who are not my people I will call my people. Then they will say: You are our God.] **Hosea 2:23**

Peter recounts the history of salvation. About 2000 BC, God called Abraham to follow him and promised that his descendants would bless all the peoples of the earth. **Genesis 12:3**. So Abraham's descendants became God's chosen people. God delivered them from slavery in Egypt and brought them to his Promised Land of Canaan together with *a mixed multitude*.

Exodus 12:38. Gentiles were not included in the term *chosen people*, although Gentiles living among the Jews were expected to conform to God's laws. Some did, but most did not. And throughout history, Jews resented Gentiles and called them *dogs*, refusing to deal with them, except in extreme emergencies.

But then Jesus came and said that whosoever believed in him would have everlasting life. **John 3:16.** This included Gentiles. Anyone who believed in Jesus was now a member of God's chosen people. What a radical idea this was to an orthodox Jew.

Yet in Jesus' day, the principals of Judaism appealed to many Gentiles. They were called God-fearers <*you that fear God*> **Acts 13:16, 26**, who attended the synagogues on the Sabbath, but were not circumcised.

YHWH Promised to Make Jews *a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation*

Peter cites God's words to Moses immediately when they arrived at Mount Sinai, having traveled two months from slavery in Egypt. If the Israelites would obey God's commandments, he would make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to teach the world about the one genuine living God. This would fulfill Isaiah's prophecy:

[In the last days the mountain of the Lord's House will be established as the highest of the mountains and raised above the hills. All the nations will stream to it. Then many people will come and say: Let's go to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may live by them. The teachings will go out from Zion. The Lord's word from Jerusalem.] **Isaiah 2:2-3**

God established the nation of Israel on a small strip of land 50 miles wide and 120 miles long on an isthmus between the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian desert. Nations traveling between Asia and Africa would have to pass through it. They would then see the Israelites being blessed by God, because they were living holy lives. Wanting this blessing for themselves, the nations would stream up to Jerusalem to learn about **YHWH**.

But Israel never lived holy lives, instead worshiping idols like all the nations. So the nations never learned about the one genuine God. Israel failed in their mission for God.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In just 25 verses, Peter has given us a summary of the entire Gospel. This is the essence of the faith of early Christians without a great deal of detail developed later in church history.

Before the creation was created, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit executed a Covenant of Redemption. At an appropriate time, God the Father would send God the Son to earth in human form. God the Son would sacrifice his life in a perfect way to pay the penalty for the sin of wicked humans by allowing himself to be crucified on a cross by the pagans who were ruling God's people.

God would demonstrate his approval of God the Son's action by raising him back to life on the third day and enabling him to ascend to heaven where he sits today at the right hand of God the Father in glory interceding for wicked humans.

One day, on resurrection day, all humans would be raised to life again and appear before Jesus the judge. Those whose names were written in the lamb's Book of Life would be escorted to the New Jerusalem to live with God and the lamb forever. Others whose names were not written in the lamb's Book of Life would be separated from God forever.

This is the Good News of the Gospel.

Peter also describes the Christian journey. God *calls* to people offering them his gift of the knowledge of himself and belief in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is called *justification* and enables people to believe in Jesus. Paul explains this gift:

God is rich in mercy because of his great love for us. We were *spiritually* dead because of our failures *sins* but he made us alive together with Christ. It is God's kindness *grace* that saved you. God has brought us back to life together with Christ and has given us a position in heaven with him. He did this through Christ Jesus out of his generosity to us in order to show his extremely rich kindness in the world to come.

God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it. God has made us what we are. He has created us in Christ Jesus to live good works that he has prepared for us to do. **Ephesians 2:4-10**

At this time of *justification*, God gives a person the Holy Spirit to live in their life or abide with them, which transforms their life, making them a new creature.

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God

has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:17-18**

The person then begins a journey of *sanctification* through the remainder of their physical life. During this journey, the Holy Spirit guides the person by prayer each day. The person grows in holiness more and more. Paul describes God's plan:

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God – those whom he has called according to his plan. This is true because he already knew his people and had already appointed them to have the same form as the image of his Son. Therefore, the Son is the firstborn among many children. **Romans 8:28-29**

So Peter continues in this section to speak of the holy life Christians must lead. He will continue to explain this holy life in the remaining four chapters going into more detail.

Our new life in Christ is to follow the model of our Lord Jesus Christ. No matter the suffering we encounter as the pagan world criticizes the different way we live, we keep our hope and confidence in our belief that one day when Jesus returns, he will lead us to the New Jerusalem to live with him forever.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Peter in this session focuses on what Jesus teaches:

I'm giving you a new commandment. Love each other in the same way that I have loved you. Everyone will know that you are my disciples because of your love for one another. **John 13:34-35**

Why is this teaching so important to the disciple relationship? HINT: What did Jesus say were the most important commandments? See **Mark 12:28-34**.

2. When Peter quotes Isaiah in verses 24-25, what point is he making?

3. Peter emphasizes the Holy Scriptures to grow in salvation. How do the Scriptures help us grow?

4. How do we sense that *the Lord is good* by reading the Scriptures?
5. How does Peter use the figures of living stones and house to describe Christian faith *koinonia*?
6. Not only Gentiles but Jews are transformed when they believe in Jesus for they both come out of darkness into light. How does Jesus use the metaphor of light to describe his ministry?
7. God first showed mercy to Abraham's descendants. Now, through Jesus, he shows mercy to everyone. Why didn't God show mercy to everyone from the beginning?
8. Develop a metaphor to describe the disciple's relationship to Jesus. Hint: See **John 15:1-8**.

Session Four

Living in an Alien World as a Christian

1 Peter 2:11-3:12

PREVIEW

Peter encourages believers not to forget that unbelievers do not realize Christians have been transformed by the Holy Spirit and therefore live holy lives. Believers live under the authority of God in a peaceful and safe manner. In the same way, they obey secular authority and honor and love other believers, as Jesus did in his earthly ministry. Wives and husbands must also honor each other and live in harmony, compassion, and humility blessing everyone.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Peter Encourages Christians Not to Make the Same Mistakes the Israelites Made

¹¹ Dear friends *agapetos*, since you are foreigners *peroikos*-strangers and temporary residents in the world *parepidemos*-pilgrims, I'm encouraging *parakaleo* you to keep away from *aperchomai*-abstain the desires of your corrupt nature *sarkikos*-fleshly *epithymia*-lusts. These desires constantly attack *strateuol*-war *kata*-against you.

¹² Live decent *kalos* lives *anastrophe*-conversation among unbelievers *ethnos*-nations. Then, although they ridicule *katalaleo*-speak against you as if you were doing wrong *kakopoios*-evildoers while they are watching you do good *kalos* things *ergon*-works, they will praise *doxazo*-glorify God *theos* on the day *hemera* he comes to help you *episkope*-visitation.

Even though God has justified Christians and transformed them by giving them the Holy Spirit, the Devil still attacks them, tempting them to sin against God by doing things that are prohibited by his creational principles. When tempted, Christians must pray to God and ask him to have the Holy Spirit not allow them to succumb to these temptations. Christians must learn to tolerate criticism from pagans because of their God-like behavior.

Respect the Authority God Has Given to Human Governments

¹³ Place yourselves under the authority of *hypotasso*—submit *pas*—all human *anthropos* governments *ktisis*—ordinances to please *dia*—for the Lord *kyrios*. Obey the emperor *basileus*—King. He holds the highest position of authority *hyperecho*—supreme. ¹⁴ Also obey governors *hegemon*. They are people the emperor has sent *pempo* to punish *ekdikesis* those who do wrong *kakopoios*—evildoers and to praise *epainos* those who do right *agathopoios*.

Peter, being in Rome, is conscious of the power and authority of the Roman Empire. It is certainly not the worst government that existed in the ancient world for there was a rule of law for most social classes and relative peace and safety in traveling and trade. Peter agrees with Paul that God has appointed secular authorities.

Every person should obey the government in power. No government would exist if it hadn't been established by God. The governments which exist have been put in place by God. Therefore whoever resists the government opposes what God has established. Those who resist will bring punishment on themselves. People who do what is right don't have to be afraid of the government. But people who do what is wrong should be afraid of it. Would you like to live without being afraid of the government? Do what is right and it will praise you.

Romans 13:1

¹⁵ God *theos* wants you *thelma*—will to silence *phimoo* the ignorance *agnosia* of foolish *aphron* people *anthropos* by doing what is right *agathopoieo*. ¹⁶ Live as free *eleutheros* people, but don't hide behind *me*—not *echo*—use your freedom *eleutheros* when you do evil *epikalymma*—covering ix *kakia*—wickedness. Instead, use your freedom to serve *doulos*—servants God *theos*.

¹⁷ Honor *timao* everyone *pas*—all. Love *agapao* your brothers and sisters *adalphotes*—brotherhood in the faith. Fear *phobeo* God *theos*. Honor *timao* the emperor *basileus*.

From the very beginning, Jesus taught that Christians are to be lawful. Jesus never disobeyed secular authorities but was submissive to them. It was the religious authorities he contested with. Doing what is right means obeying God's moral creational principles in the *Towrah*, especially those Jesus mentioned in his Sermon on the Mount. **Matthew 5:1-7:28**

Directions to Servants

¹⁸ Servants *oiketes*-household servants place yourselves under the authority of *hypotasso*-subject your masters *despotes* and show them complete respect *pas*-all *phobos*-fear . Obey not only those masters who are good *agathos* and kind *epieikes*-gentle, but also those who are unfair *skolios*.

¹⁹ God is pleased *charis* if a person is aware of him *syneidesis*-conscience *theos*-God while enduring *hypophero* the pains *lype* of unjust *adikos* suffering *pascho*. ²⁰ What credit *kleos* do you deserve if you endure *hypomeno*-patiently beating *kolaphizo* for doing something wrong *hamartano*? But if you endure suffering *pascho hypomeno*-patiently for doing something good *agathopoieo*, God is pleased *charis* with you.

Wealthy people living in cities usually had many household servants. Often these servants were mistreated because they were in a lower position and had no appeal. Many of these servants became Christians because of the hope of the Gospel – that all Christians were to be treated alike in the eyes of God no matter what their social status. Peter encourages all Christians to be peaceful knowing that God loves them, especially when they reflect his goodness.

²¹ God called *kaleo* you to endure suffering because Christ suffered *pascho* for you. He left *hypolimpano* you an example *hypogrammos* so that you could follow *epakoloutho* in his *autos* footsteps *ichnos*.

²² Christ never *ou*-no committed *poieo*-did any sin *hamartia*. He never *oude* spoke deceitfully *dolos*-guile *soma*-mouth. ²³ Christ never *ou* verbally abused *antiloidoreo* those who verbally abused *loidoreo* him. When he suffered *pascho*, he didn't *ou* make any threats *apeileo* but left everything *paradidomi*-handed over to the one who judges *krino* fairly *dikaios*.

Jesus serves as our example of how to live and especially how to deal with those who treat us unfairly. Jesus taught complete non-violence and he lived it. He lived consistent with God's commandments and never rebelled or sinned against God. Jesus left the punishment of evildoers to God.

²⁴ Christ carried *anaphero* our *hemon* sins *hamartia* in his *autos* body *soma* on the cross *xylon*-tree so that freed from our sins *zao*-we *apoginomai*-being dead *hamartia*-sins, we could live a life *zao* that has God's approval *dikaiosyne*-righteousness.

Peter again stresses that Jesus died as a substitutional atonement for our sins consistent with the Covenant of Redemption executed by the Holy Trinity before the creation of the world. He was our substitute, giving his life so that we could live lives pleasing to God.

His wounds *molops*-stripes have healed *iaomai* you. ²⁵You were like lost *planao*-going astray sheep *probaton*. Now *nyn* you have come back *epistrepho*-returned to the shepherd *poimen* and bishop *episkopos*-overseer ^{7x} of your *hymon* lives *psyche*-souls.

Peter like Paul never forgets how lost humans were living sinful lives before Jesus came with his promise of eternal life. He remembers the transformation of our lives when God gave us his gift of the Holy Spirit beginning at Pentecost. We do in fact with God's justification become new creations and progress in our lives of sanctification to become more and more like Jesus. **Romans 8:29**

^{3:1} Wives *gyne*, in a similar way, place yourselves under your husbands' *aner* authority *hypotasso*-subjection. Some husbands *aner* may not obey *apeitheo* God's word *logos*. Their wives *gyne* could win *kerdaino* these men for Christ by the way they live *anastrophe*-conversation without *aneu* saying anything *logos*. ²Their husbands would see *epopteuo* how pure *hagnos* and reverent *phobos*-*fear* their lives *anastrophe* are.

Peter says that in the same way that men have submitted their lives to Jesus' authority, wives must similarly submit to their husband's authority. Although some husbands may not submit to Christ's authority, the submission of their wives to them could lead the husbands to submit to Christ as the husbands see their wives living holy lives consistent with God's creational principles of life.

The Genuine Beauty of Women Is a Meek and Quiet Spirit

³Wives must not *ou* let *esto* their beauty *kosmos*-adorning be something external *exothern*. Beauty doesn't come from hairstyles *emploke thrix*, gold jewelry *chrySION* *perithesis*, or clothes *endysis himation*. ⁴Rather, beauty is something internal *kryptos*-hidden *anthropos*-man *kardia*-heart that can't be destroyed *aphthartos*-corruptible. Beauty expresses itself in a gentle *prays*-meek ^{3x} and quiet *hesychios* attitude *pneuma*-spirit which God considers *enopion* precious *polyteles*.

⁵After all, this is how holy *hagios* women *gyne* who had confidence in *elpizo* God expressed their beauty *kosmeo* in the past *pote*. They placed themselves under their *idios* husbands' *aner* authority *hypotasso* ⁶as Sarah did. Sarah obeyed *hypakouo*

Abraham and spoke to him respectfully *kaleo*—calling *autos*—him *kyrios*—lord. You became Sarah’s daughters *teknon* by not letting anything *medeis*—with any *ptosis*—amazement make you afraid *phobeo* to do good *agathopoieo*.

This to me is one of the best statements of how a woman can make herself so beautiful and so appealing to a man. A quiet and gentle spirit in a woman works wonders with a man.

⁷Husbands *aner*, in a similar way *homoios*, live *synoikeo* with your wives *gyne* with *kata* understanding *gnosis*—knowledge since they are weaker *asthenes skeuos*—vessel than you are. Honor *time* your wives *gynaikaios* as those who share *sygkleronomous* God’s life-giving kindness *charis* so that nothing *me* will interfere *ekkopto* with your prayers *proseuche*.

Peter had a wife that he later took with him to Corinth. **1 Corinthians 9:5**. Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law. **Mark 1:29-31**. Peter believed that the family unit was very important to Christian life. Here, he gives a severe warning to husbands.

Dedicate Your Lives to Jesus

⁸Finally *telos*, everyone *pas*—all must live in harmony *homophron*—one mind, be sympathetic *sympathes*, love each other *philadelphos*, have compassion *eusplagchnos*, and be humble *tapeinophron*.

⁹Don’t pay people back *apodidomi* with evil *kakos* for the evil *kakos* they do to you or ridicule *loidoria* those who *anti* ridicule *loidoria* you. Instead *tounantion*, bless *eulogia* them, because *eido*—knowing you were called *kaleo* to inherit *kleronomeo* a blessing *eulogeo*.

¹⁰ People who want to live a full life and enjoy good days
must keep their tongues from saying evil things,
and their lips from speaking deceitful things.

¹¹ They must turn away from evil and do good.
They must seek peace and pursue it.

¹² The Lord’s eyes are on those who do what he approves.
His ears hear their prayer.
The Lord confronts those who do evil. **Psalm 34:12-16**

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In this chapter, Peter describes how to live as God's holy people. When God *justifies* us and sends his Holy Spirit into our lives, we become radically new creations. While we still are tempted to sin as we live our life of *sanctification*, the Holy Spirit leads us to resist these temptations. Yet, we still have a choice to obey or not. Peter encourages us to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit and not return to our previous pagan lives by giving in to sin.

Peter explains that once God had a particular chosen people – the Jews – but now God includes everyone who believes in Jesus as his chosen people, even the Gentiles long detested by the Jews. And especially the Gentiles Peter encourages to live the new lives Christ is giving them, even willingly suffering without retaliation when persecuted.

In the same way that Christ was abused by the Jewish religious authorities and the Roman secular government, Christians when abused must patiently suffer. Jesus is our example and we must follow in his footsteps.

Peter emphasizes that Christians must be law-abiding, obeying the secular governments. Moreover, Christians must love one another as Jesus commanded again and again. And he emphasizes the need for good marriages.

Finally, Peter encourages all Christians to be grateful for the freedom from sin and separation from God that Jesus bought to us through God's mercy.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How does living as a stranger in the secular world affect the things you do in everyday life?
2. Christians sin every day. How do you define sin? Remember the sin of omission. What is the difference between how a Christian treats their sinning and the way an unbeliever treats their sinning?
3. Why do unbelievers ridicule Christians?
4. The Roman emperor and Roman provincial governors killed Christians even though they did nothing wrong. Why should Christians honor them?
5. Why doesn't Peter condemn slavery? The Romans placed many Jews into slavery when they revolted against the government. In fact, the city of Rome could not have existed without slavery. How did God use the Roman society's restrictions placed on slaves to bring them to a belief in Jesus?
6. Peter tells us to follow in Christ's footsteps. List how we should do this.

7. Many women object to men being the spiritual leaders in the home. Give reasons why men acting as spiritual leaders in the home can bring stability and godliness to a Christian family.
8. Why is a gentle and quiet attitude in a woman so effective?
9. Why is God angry when a husband mistreats his wife?
10. Why does following God's creational principles lead to an abundant life full of peace?

Session Five

Suffering Is a Vital Part of Christian Faith

Amen, amen. When you were young, you would get ready to go where you wanted. But when you're old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone will get you ready to take you where you don't want to go. Jesus said this to show by what kind of death Peter would bring glory to God. John 21:18-19

1 Peter 3:13-4:19

PREVIEW

Peter asks Christians to remember how Jesus acted when he suffered. He wasn't afraid and he was totally non-violent. He didn't even get upset but spoke calmly but forcefully. As a Christian, we will suffer but as Christ forgave his oppressors, so should we. Remember *baptism is a request for a clear conscience* that we should maintain at all times. So we should maintain self-control at all times. By sharing Christ's sufferings, we will have full joy when he appears at his Second Coming. We must entrust ourselves to God and always do what is good.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

¹³ Who will harm *kakoo* you if you are devoted *mimees* to doing what is good *agathos*?

¹⁴ But even if you suffer *pascho* for doing what God approves *dikaiosyne*-righteousness sake, you are blessed *makarios*. Don't be afraid *phobeo* of those who want to harm *phobos* you. Don't get upset *tarasso*.

Peter tells believers not to be afraid, even when enemies want to harm them, because even if they die, they will immediately go to paradise to be with Jesus. Christians should not fear death. And, if they are given pain, God will comfort them.

¹⁵ But dedicate *hagaizo*-sanctify your lives *kardia*-hearts to Christ as Lord *kyrios*. Always *aei* be *pros* ready *hetoimos* to defend *apologia*-answer your confidence *elpsis*-hope in God when anyone *pas*-all asks *aiteo* you to explain *logos*-word it. However, make your defense with gentleness *praytes*-meekness and respect *phobos*.

Christians must always be ready to tell the Good News or Gospel about Jesus whenever they are asked. Yet they must do it with reverence and respect for the other person. When asked to give a witness, Jesus promises:

When they take you away to hand you over to the authorities, don't worry ahead of time about what you will say. Instead, say whatever is given to you to say when the time comes. Indeed, you are not the one who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit will. **Mark 13:11**

Before all these things happen, people will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to their synagogues and put you in their prisons. They will drag you in front of kings and governors because of my name. It will be your opportunity to testify to them. So make up your minds not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to oppose or prove wrong. **Luke 21:12-15**

¹⁶ Keep *echo* your conscience *syneidesis* clear *agathos*-good. Then those who treat *katalaleo*-speak evil the good *agathos* Christian *Christos* life *anastrophe*-conversation live with contempt *kakopoios*-evildoers will feel ashamed *kataischyno* that they have ridiculed *epereazo*-falsely accused you. ¹⁷ After all, if it is God's *theos* will *thelma*, it's better *kreitton* to suffer *pascho* for doing good *agathopoieo* than for doing wrong *kakopoieo*.

¹⁸ This is true because Christ *Christos* suffered *pascho* for our sins *hamartia* once *hapax*. He was an innocent *dikaios* person but he suffered for guilty *adikos* people so that he could bring *prosago* you *hemas* to God *theos*. His body *sarx* was put to death *thanatoo men*, but he was brought to life *zoopoieo*-quickened through his Spirit *pneuma*.

Peter again repeats that Christ died physically to reconcile wicked humans to a holy God. Although he physically died, God brought him back to life.

¹⁹ In it he also went *poreuo* to proclaim his victory *kerysso*-preached to the spirits *pneuma* kept in prison *phylake*.

Up to the time of Jesus' death, the souls of all people who died went to Sheol - the place of the dead. This in Jewish belief was a netherworld where the souls were still alive but very weak unable to know anything happening in the physical world.

This changed when Jesus died. Jesus went to Sheol and preached the Gospel to all the people living there. Those who believed in Jesus accompanied Jesus to paradise. **Luke 23:43**. There they will wait with Jesus for resurrection day. At this time, the souls of all people, whether in Sheol or paradise will receive their resurrection bodies and stand before Jesus at the great white throne judgment. **Revelation 20:11-15**

Jesus will lead those whose names are in the lamb's Book of Life to the New Jerusalem and the new heaven and the new earth while those whose names are not in the Book of Life will be separated from God forever in outer darkness. **Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30**

²⁰They are like those who disobeyed *apeitheo* long ago *hapax*—once in the days of Noah when God *theos* waited *ekdechomai* patiently *makrothymia* while Noah built *kataskeuazo* the ship *kibotos*. In this ship a few *oligos* people—eight *okto* in all—were saved *diasozo* by water *hydor*.

²¹Baptism *baptisma*, which is like that *antitypoa* water, now saves *sozo* you. Baptism doesn't save by removing *apothēsis* dirt *rhypos* from the body *sarx*. Rather *alla*, baptism is a request *eperotema* to *eis* God *theos* for a clear *agathos* conscience *syneidesis*. It saves you through Jesus Christ, who came back from death to life *anastasis*—resurrection.

Peter describes baptism. He first preached baptism in the Bible on Pentecost 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead when Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on his disciples:

All the people of Israel should know beyond a doubt that God made Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were deeply upset. They asked Peter and the other apostles: What should we do?

Peter answered them: All of you must turn to God and change the way you think and act, and each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. **Acts 2:36-38**

Baptism isn't a physical washing away of sin, but a spiritual cleansing that removes the guilt from past sins and allows a person to be reconciled to God in peace as a reborn Christian.

²²Christ has gone *poreuo* to *eis* heaven *ouranos* where he holds the honored position — the one next to God *theos* the Father on the throne *dexios*—right hand.

Angels *aggelos*, rulers *exousia*, and powers *dynamis* have been placed under his authority *hypotasso*.

Peter wants Christians to know where Christ is now. He is sitting at the right hand of God the heavenly Father interceding for us.

Jesus lives forever so he serves as a priest forever. That is why he is always able to save those who come to God through him. He can do this because he always lives and intercedes for them. **Hebrews 7:24-25**

Christians Follow the Leading of the Spirit Not Sinning

⁴ Since Christ has suffered *pascho* physically *sarx*, take *hoplizo*-arm *hymeis*-yourself the same *autos* attitude *ennois*-mind, intent ^{2x} that he had. A person who has suffered *pascho* physically *sarx* no longer *pauo*-ceased sins *hamartia*. ² That way you won't be *meketi* guided *bioo* by sinful human *anthropos* desires *epithymia*-lusts as you live the rest *epiloipos* of your lives *chronos* on earth *sarx*. Instead *alla*-but, you will be guided by what God *theos* wants *thelma*-will you to do.

Peter says that a Christian should have the same intent that Jesus did and no longer choose to sin. He listens to the Holy Spirit and no longer listens to his human desires to please himself. Instead, he chooses to do what God wants him to do.

³ You spent enough time *chronos* in the past *parerchomai* doing what *katergazomai* unbelievers *ethnos* like to do *thelma*. You were promiscuous *poreuo*-walked *en*-in *aselgeia*-lasciviousness, had sinful desires *epithymia*, got drunk *oinophlygia*, went to wild parties *kosmos*-revelings *potos*-banquetings, and took part in the forbidden *athemitos*-abominable worship of false gods *eidololatria*-idolatry.

⁴ Unbelievers insult *blasphemeo* you now because they are surprised *xenizo* that you no longer join *syntrecho*-run them *eis* in the same excesses *anachysis* of wild living *asotia*. ⁵ They will give *apodidomi* an account *logos* to the one who is ready *hetoimos* to judge *krino* the living *zao* and the dead *nekros*.

Unbelievers see Christians doing good instead of evil and persecute them perhaps because they are jealous, but certainly because they are acting differently from them. Peter encourages Christians to remember that at the last day, Jesus will judge the living and the dead for what they have done on earth. **Revelation 20:11-15**

⁶After all the Good News *euaggelizo* was told to people like that although they are now dead *nekros*. It was told to them so *tauto*-cause that they could be judged *krino* like *kata* humans *anthropos* in their earthly lives *sarx* and live *zao* like *kata* God *theos* in their spiritual *pneuma* lives.

⁷The end *telos* of everything *pas*-all is near *eggizo*.

The one who is testifying to these things says: Yes, I'm coming soon!
Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:20

Therefore, practice self-control *sophroneo*-sober and keep your minds clear *nepho*-watch so that you can pray *proseuche*.

⁸Above *pro* all *pas*, love *agape* each other *eis*-among *heautou*-yourselves warmly *ektenes*, because love *agape* covers *kalypto* many *plethos* sins *hamartia*. ⁹Welcome each *eis* other *allelon* as guests *philoxenos*-hospitality without complaining *goggysmos*-grudging.

¹⁰Each of you *hekastos* as a good *kalos* manager *oikonomous*-steward must use the gift *charisma* that God has given *lambano* you *poikilos*-manifold *charis*-grace *theos*-God to serve *diakoneo* others.

¹¹Whoever speaks *laleo* must speak God's words *logion*-oracle. Whoever serves *diakoneo* must serve with the strength *ischys* God supplies *choregeo* ^{2X}so that in every way *pas*-all God *theos* receives glory *doxazo* through *dia* Jesus *Iesous* Christ *Christos*.

Glory *doxa* and power *kratos*-dominion belong to Jesus Christ forever *eis aios* and ever *aios*. Amen *amen*.

Peter encourages Christians in this interim time before Jesus returns to use each of the spiritual gifts that God has given them wisely to serve others as they walk together in their path of *sanctification*.

Share Christ's Sufferings

¹²Dear friends *agapetos*-beloved don't be surprised *xenizo* by the fiery troubles *pyrosis* that are coming in order to test *peirasmos* you. Don't feel as though something strange *xenos* is happening *symbaino* to you, ¹³but be happy *chairo*-rejoice as you share

koinoneo Christ's sufferings *pathema*. Then you will also be full of joy *agalliao*—exceeding joy when *en* he appears again *apokalypsis* in his glory *doxa*.

¹⁴ If you are insulted *oneidizo* because of the name *onoma* of Christ, you are blessed *makarios* because the Spirit *pneuma* of glory *doxa* — the Spirit of God *theos* — is resting *anapauo* on you.

¹⁵ If you suffer *pascho*, you shouldn't suffer for being a murderer *phoneus*, thief *kleptes*, criminal *kakopoios*, or troublemaker *allotriepiskopos* *ix*. ¹⁶ If you suffer for being a Christian *christianos* *3x*, don't feel ashamed *aischyno*, but praise *doxazo* God *theos* for being called that *tauto* name *meros*-behalf.

¹⁷ The time *kairos* has come for the judgment *krima* to begin *archomai* and it will begin with God's *theos* family *oikos*-house. If it starts *proton*-first *apo*-begin with us, what will be the end *telos* for those who refuse to obey *apeitheo* the Good News *euaggelion* of God *theos*. ¹⁸ If it's hard *molis*-scarcely for the person who has God's approval *dikaios*-righteous to be saved *sozo*, what *pou*-where will happen *phaino*-appear to the godless *asebes* sinner *hamartolos*?

¹⁹ Those who suffer *pascho* because that is *kata*-according to God's *theos* will *thelma* for them must entrust *paratithemi*-commit themselves *psyche* to a faithful *pistos* creator *ktistes* and continue to do what is good *agathopoiia*.

Christians will suffer mainly because they live different kinds of lives from the pagans living around them. Societies develop cultures with norms often not based on God's creational principles. People who violate the norms of society are often criticized and even ostracized simply because they do not conform. Ironically, Christians were looked at as atheists, since they did not participate in the worship of the pagan gods of the cities who the society felt protected the city against earthquakes. Organizations within the cities - particularly trade organizations - had meetings in which the god associated with the industry was honored. Again, Christians refused to participate.

Of the greater offense was the Christians' unwillingness to repeat the oath: Caesar is Lord. Christians said: Jesus is Lord. The Roman emperors were worshiped in temples with great ceremony, especially on the emperor's birthday. Again, Christians refused to participate.

Christians also suffered from the behavior of other Christians. Not all Christians who were baptized lived the Christian life but continued in the pagan ways. They often abused other

Christians who attempted to remain humble and forgiving and peaceful. Yet Christians took solace in the fact that when Jesus came again, they would be vindicated.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter encourages Christians to remain steadfast in their faith and always do good no matter what other people do. He says to not get upset or angry but instead live in peace with all people as Jesus did keeping confidence that God will give them strength to do the right thing and persevere in living a godly life.

He also encourages them to be willing to discuss their faith when asked and to do it in a kind and helpful manner. Do everything, he says, to keep your conscience clear. The Hebrew word for conscience *synesis* appears 32x in the New Testament. Peter uses it in **1 Peter 2:19, 3:16,21**. A conscience is an inner voice within a person that tells them right from wrong depending on their moral values

Christians should remember that on the last day everyone will be given a judgment by Christ based on *the deeds they have done*. **Revelation 20:12-13**. Christians will suffer in this life because God allows it for his own reasons. So Christians must entrust themselves to their faithful good creator.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Peter says that *even if we suffer for what God approves of, we are blessed*. Why does God allow us to suffer? This seems to be in conflict with the psalm:

Trust the Lord and do good things. Live in the land and practice being faithful. Be happy with the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Entrust your ways to the Lord. Trust him and he will act on your behalf. **Psalm 37:3-5**

2. Peter says that it is good to suffer for doing good than doing wrong. Paul tells Timothy:

Certainly we work hard and struggle to live a godly life because we place our confidence in the living God. He is the Savior of all people, especially those who believe. **1 Timothy 4:10**

Earlier, Paul told Timothy to *train yourself to live a godly life*. **1 Timothy 4:7** Christians must struggle to live in a godly way. They must live intentionally. Why didn't God create us to live in a godly way naturally? Are struggling and suffering the same thing?

3. What gives us the confidence and ability to witness for Christ effectively?
4. Peter says that Christ went to Sheol called Hell to minister to the souls who had died. **Verse 19** What was his purpose? Why is it that only Peter says this and the concept appears nowhere else in the Bible?
5. Peter says that baptism doesn't save us. Rather, baptism is a request to God for a clear conscience. **Verse 21**. What does Peter mean?
6. Peter says that *a person who has suffered physically no longer sins*. **4:1** What does he mean?
7. Why does Peter say *Christians should be happy as they share in Christ's sufferings*? **4:13**

Session Six

Being a Disciple and a Spiritual Leader

1 Peter 5:1-13

PREVIEW

Peter now appeals to the spiritual leaders in the various churches in the Roman Provinces. He instructs them to be shepherds over the flock rather than rulers. This is the concept of servant leadership Jesus taught his disciples. **Luke 22:25-27**. He then goes on to instruct young people and then says all must serve each other with humility. Finally, Peter warns them about their vicious enemy – the devil is prowling around. So be firm in your faith.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 5

Instructions for Spiritual Leaders

¹ I appeal *parakleo* to your spiritual leaders *presbyteros*. I make this appeal as a spiritual leader *sympresbyteros* ^{IX} who also witnessed *martys* Christ's sufferings *pathema* and will share *koinonos* in the glory *doxa* that will *mello* be revealed *apokalypto*.

² Be shepherds *poimnion* over the flock *poimnion* God *theos* has entrusted *en*-among to you. Watch over it *episkope*-oversee as God *theos* does. Don't do this because you have to *anagkastos*-constaint, but because you want to *hekousios*-willingly. Don't do it out of greed *aischrokerdos* but out of a desire to serve *prothymos*-willing mind.

³ Don't be rulers over *katakyrieuo*-lordship over ^{4x} the people entrusted to you *kleros* <God's> heritage, but be *ginomai* examples *typos* for the flock *poimnion* to follow.

⁴ Then, when the Chief Shepherd *archpoimen* ^{IX} appears *phaneroo*, you will receive *komizo* the crown *stephanos* of glory *doxa* that will never fade away *amarantinos*. ^{IX}

Jesus taught servant leadership many times to his disciples. He used himself as an example:

Jesus called the apostles and said: You know that the acknowledged rulers of nations have absolute power over people and their officials

have absolute authority over people. But that's not the way it's going to be among you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. Whoever wants to be most important among you will be a slave for everyone.

It's the same way with the Son of Man. He didn't come so that others could serve him. He came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people. **Mark 10:42-45**

Remember that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples in **John 13:1-17**.

Instructions for Christians

⁵Young people *neos* in a similar way *homoios* place yourselves under the authority *hypotasso* of spiritual leaders *presbyteros*.

Furthermore, all of you must serve *hypotasso* each other *allelon* with *egkoomboomai* clothed humility *tapeinophrosyne* because God *theos* opposes *antitasso* the arrogant *hyperephanos* but favors *didomi* gives *charis* grace the humble *tapeinos*.

People will be brought down. Everyone will be humbled. And the eyes of arrogant people will be humbled. The Lord of Armies will be honored when he judges. The holy God will show himself to be holy when he does what is right. Then lambs will graze as if they were in their own pasture and foreigners will eat among the ruins of the rich. **Isaiah 5:15:17**

⁶Be humbled *tapeinoo* by *hypo*-under God's *theos* power *krataios*-mighty *cheir*-hand so that when the right time *kairos* comes he will honor *hypsoo* you.

⁷Turn *epiripto* all *pas* your *hymon* anxiety *merimna* over to *epi* God *theos* because he cares *melei* for *peri*you *hymon*.

[A person's anxiety will weigh him down but an encouraging word makes him joyful.] **Proverbs 12:25**

⁸ Keep your mind clear *nepho*-sober and be alert *gregoreo*. Your opponent *antidikos* the devil *diabolos* is prowling around *peripateo* like a roaring *oryomai* lion *leon* as he looks for *zeteo* someone to devour *katapino*.

[One day when the sons of God came to stand in front of the Lord, Satan the accuser came along with them. The Lord asked Satan: Where have you come from? Satan answered the Lord: From wandering *shuwt*-going to and fro *halak*-walking up and down all over the earth.]
Job 1:6-7; 2:1-2

⁹ Be firm *steros* in the faith *pistis* and resist *anthistemi* him knowing *eido* that other believers *adalphotes* throughout the world *kosmos* are going through the same *autos* kind of suffering *pathema*.

James, the Lord's brother advises us:

Place yourself under God's authority. Resist the devil and he will run away from you. Come close to God and he will come close to you. Clean up your lives, your sinners, and clear your minds, you doubters.
James 4:7-8

¹⁰ God *theos* who shows you *pas*-all his kindness *charis* and who has called *kaleo* you through Christ Jesus to his eternal *aionos* glory *doxa* will restore you, strengthen *sthenoo* you, make *katartizo* you strong *katarizo*-perfect, *sterizo*-establish and support *themelioo*-settle you as you suffer *pascho* for a little while *oligos*. ¹¹ Power *doxa*-glory *kratos*-dominion belongs to him forever *eis aion aion*. Amen *amen*.

Peter again emphasizes that God the Father calls us to become Christians. This isn't something we decide to do on our own. Remember that Jesus says:

Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me. I haven't come from heaven to do what I want to do. I've come to do what the One Who Sent Me wants me to do. The one Who Sent Me doesn't want me to lose any of those he gave me. He wants me to bring them back to life on the last day. **John 6:37-39**

Farewell

¹² I've written *grapho* this short letter *dia oligos* briefly to you and I'm sending it by Silvanus *Silouanos* whom I regard as a faithful *pistos* brother *adelphos*. I've written to encourage *parakaleo* you and to testify *epimartyreo* that this is God's *theos*-genuine *alethes* good will *charis*-grace. Remain firmly established in it *histemi*-stand.

[My mercy I will keep for him forever and my covenant shall stand firm with him.] Psalm 89:28 KJV

¹³ Your sister church in Babylon <Rome>, chosen *syneklektos* by God, and my *mou* son *huios* Mark *Markos* send you greetings *aspazomai* ¹⁴ Greet *aspazomai* each other *allelon* with a kiss *philema* of love *agape*. Peace *eirene* to all *pas* of you *hymin* who are in *en* Christ *Christos ieous*. *Amen*

Silvanus apparently is Peter's scribe. This is why the Greek language in this letter is of such high quality. Peter's final admonition is to stand firm in your faith and live in peace. Today, the Russian Orthodox churches today still send greetings to each other.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Having given instructions to the spiritual leaders in the church, Peter reminds them that the chief shepherd Jesus will soon return in his second coming *parousia* so they must be good shepherds rather than simply rulers. He then reminds young people to obey their leaders warns everyone to humbly serve each other.

Peter stresses that all our fear should be turned over to God who loves us and protects us. Then he warns his readers to be alert to the machinations of the devil who prowls around seeking someone to destroy. Remain firm in the faith, he says: and be an overcomer knowing that other believers are going through the same tests and trials we are experiencing.

Remember, says Peter, that God has called you to be his witnesses in the world and he will strengthen, solidify, and support you in your sufferings. Remain firm and established in your faith. As John the prophet in Patmos later says many times in The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Be overcomers.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Peter reiterates Jesus' instructions regarding servant leadership. Why is this concept repeated so much in the Bible?

2. Only Peter refers to Jesus as *the Chief Shepherd*. Why is this concept so important for church leaders to remember?

3. Peter again stresses humility as he exhorts us to serve one another. This is a rare word *tapeinophrosyne* that appears only seven times in the New Testament. List the situations where Peter learned humility.

4. The Book of Proverbs says:

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression. But a good word makes it glad. **Proverbs 12:25 KJV**

What is *the good word* Peter prescribes to drive away anxiety or worry?

5. What is the best way to deal with the Devil?

6. Peter at the end of his letter reminds believers that God has **called** them to become disciples of Jesus. Why is this so important to Peter when he stumbled so many times?

7. Peter says he testifies what he says in this letter is a testimony about God's grace. Why can Peter say this?

Introduction to 2 Peter

The new heaven and earth that I am about to make will continue in my presence, declares the Lord. So your descendants and your name will also continue in my presence. From one month to the next and from one week to the next all people will come to worship me. Then they will do out and look at the corpses of those who have rebelled against me. The worms that eat them will not die. The fire that burns them will not go out. All humanity will be disgusted by them. **Isaiah 66:22-24**

Like many good sermons, the Second Letter of Peter has three subjects:

1. An encouragement to grow in the grace the Holy Spirit gives us in faith by seven attributes: integrity, knowledge, self-control, patient endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and self-sacrificial love.
2. An encouragement to remain steadfast in the faith with a warning against the assaults of false teachers who distort the teaching of the apostles of Jesus.
3. An encouragement to look forward to the soon return *parousia* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to earth.

This letter builds on Peter's first letter amplifying on the life of discipleship God has planned for each of us. Early Christians faced the onslaught of many false teachers who did not follow the teachings of the apostles of Jesus. Peter encourages Christians to remain steadfast in the faith by looking to Jesus following in his footsteps by holy living. **1 Peter 2:21**

Session 7

Qualities of a Disciple of Jesus

2 Peter 1:1-21

PREVIEW

In these first few verses of his second letter, Peter has practically given us the entire Gospel – the Good News about what Jesus Christ has done for us. And Peter says God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. But then he says we need to make every effort to apply this power and ability God has given us. *Use more effort to make God's calling and choosing of you secure.*
Verse 10

As Paul says:

... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. **Philippians 2:12**

Peter goes on to say he wants to emphasize how important it is to look to the Scriptures for guidance. For the Holy Spirit guided the Hebrew prophets living in past times to give us the knowledge of God we can use today.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 1

Although God in his **calling** and **justification** of us has given us everything we need <verse 3>, Peter encourages believers to grow in grace by prayer, study, meditation, holy living, witness, fellowship, and self-examination as we live the life of **sanctification** by becoming more Christ-like as the Holy Spirit molds us into the image of Jesus. **Romans 8:29**

Greeting

¹From Simon Peter, a servant *doulos* and apostle *apostolos* of Jesus Christ.

To those who have obtained *lagchano* a faith *pistis* that is as valuable *isotimos* precious as ours, a faith based on the approval *dikaiosyne* righteousness that comes from our God and Savior *soter* Jesus Christ.

²May good will *charis* grace and peace *eirene* fill *plethyno* be multiplied your lives through your knowledge *epignosis* about Jesus, our God and Lord *kyrios*.

Peter will use the title *Lord and Savior* in referring to Jesus five times in this letter in 2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2,18.

God's Power Gives Us the Ability to Live Godly Lives

³God's divine *theios* power *dynamis* has given *doreomai* us everything *pas*-all we need for life *zoe* and for godliness *eusebeia*. This power was given to us through knowledge *epignosis* of the one who called *kaleo* us by his own glory *doxa* and integrity *arête*-virtue.

Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me. The one who sent me doesn't want me to lose any of those he gave me. He wants me to bring them back to life on the last day. **John 6:37-39**

You didn't choose me but I chose you. I have appointed you to go to produce fruit that will last and to ask the Father in my name to give you whatever you ask for. **John 15:16**

Peter emphasizes that we received this gift of faith when God called *kaleo* us to himself. **Ephesians 2:8-10**. This is called **justification**. Given the Holy Spirit by God, we are set off on a journey of **sanctification** for the rest of our lives where we become more like the image of Jesus in all we say and do. **Romans 8:29**. We call this *Christ-likeness*, a term that does not appear in the Bible. Peter calls it *godliness eusebeia* using this word 4x in 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7 and 3:11. Paul uses this word 8x in 1 Timothy.

⁴Through his glory and integrity he has given *doreomai* us his *timos*-precious promises *epaggelma* that are of the highest value *megistos*-exceedingly great. Through these promises you will share *koinonos*-partake in the divine *theios* nature *physis* because you have escaped *apopheugo* the corruption *phthora* that sinful desires *epithymia*-lust cause in the world *kosmos*.

God has given us many promises in the Bible. Our faith that God will keep these promises enables us to live the godly kind of lives God desires.

Peter Describes Qualities That Demonstrate Our Progress in Sanctification

⁵Because of this, make *pareisphero*-give every *pas*-all effort *spoude*-diligence to add *epichoregeo* integrity *arete*-virtue to your faith *pistis*; and to integrity *arête* add knowledge *gnosis*; ⁶to knowledge *gnosis* add self-control *egkrateia*-temperance; to self-control *egkrateia* add endurance *hypomone*-patience; to endurance *hypomone* add godliness *eusebeia*; ⁷to godliness *eusebeia* add Christian affection *philadelphia*-brotherly kindness; and to Christian affection *philadelphia* add love *agape*-self-sacrificing love.

Although God has already given us everything we need in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are expected to react and cooperate with God as he forms us into the image of his Son. These qualities illustrate the kind of persons God wants us to be.

Peter Encourages Installing These Qualities in Your Life

⁸If you have *hyparcho* these qualities *tauta* and they are increasing *pleonazo*, it demonstrates that your knowledge *epignosis* about our Lord Jesus Christ is living *ou*-not *argos*-barren and productive *oude*-nor *akaparpous*-unfruitful.

⁹If these qualities aren't present *me pareimi* in your life, you're shortsighted *typhlos*-blind *myopazo*-cannot see afar *ix* and have *lambano* forgotten *lethe**ix* that you were cleansed *katharismos* from your past *palai* sins *hamartia*.

¹⁰Therefore, brothers and sisters *adelphos*-brethren, use more effort *spoudazo*-diligence to make *poieo* God's calling *klesis* and choosing of you *ekoge*-election secure *bebaios*-sure

Again Peter reminds us God has called us in his sovereignty and mercy. Our duty to is make our response to his calling a definite "Yes".

If you keep doing this, you will never fall away. ¹¹Then you will also be given the wealth *epichoregeo* of entering into *eisodos* the eternal *aiionios* kingdom *basileia* of our Lord *kyrios* and Savior *soter* Jesus Christ.

Peter's letter is written to encourage Christians to keep the genuine faith with patient endurance *hypomone* despite the trials and sufferings they encounter. The prophet John at Patmos will preach a similar message in his Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He will call a person who keeps the faith and never falls away an *overcomer* *nikao*. This word appears in Luke *ix*, John *ix*, Romans *2x*, 1 John *5x*, and Revelation *15x*.

These Are Peter's Last Words Before He Dies

¹²Therefore, I will always *ou-not ameleo*-negligent remind *hypomimnesko* you about these qualities *touton*, although you already know *eido* about them and are well-grounded *sterizo* in the truth *aletheia* that you now have *pareimi*. ¹³As long as *epi hosos* I'm *eimi* still alive *en-in outo*-this *skenoma*-tent, I think it's right *dikaios* to refresh *diegeiro*-stir up your memory *hypomnesis*.

¹⁴I know *eido* that I will *esti* die *apothosis*-put off *skenoma*-tent soon *tachinos*. Our Lord Jesus Christ has made that clear *deloo*-showed to me. ¹⁵So I will make every effort *spoudazo* to see that you *hekastote*-always *echo*-able remember *mneme* these things *touton* after I die *exodus*-decrease.

Peter wants the sheep of his flock to remember his words of encouragement. He is the second of the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to die according to church tradition. John Zebedee, the author of 1 John, died last according to church tradition about 30 years later around 95 AD.

Pay Attention to God's Words

¹⁶When we apostles told *gnorizo* you about the powerful *dynamis* coming *parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ, we didn't base our message *exakoloutheo*-follow on clever *sophizo* myths *mythos* that we made up. Rather we witnessed *epoptes*-eye-witnesses his majesty *magaleiotes* with our own eyes.

¹⁷For example, we were eyewitnesses when he received *lambano* honor *time* and glory *doxa* from God *theos* the Father *pater* and when the voice *phone* of our majestic God *megaloprepes*-excellent *doxa*-glory spoke these words to him: This *houtos* is my Son *huios*, whom I love *agapetos* and in whom *hos* I delight *eudokeo*-well-pleased. Mark 9:2-8; Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36

¹⁸We heard *akouo* that voice speak *phero*-come to him from *ek* heaven *ouranos* when we were *on* with *syn* him *autos* on the holy *hagios* mountain *oros*.

As Apostles of Christ, We Saw the Words of the Prophets Come to Life in Jesus

¹⁹So we regard the words *bebaios*-more sure word of the prophets *prophetikos*-prophecy as confirmed beyond all doubt. You're doing *poieo* well *kalos* by paying attention *prosecho*-take heed to their words.

Continue to pay attention as you would to a light *lychnos* that shines *phaino* in a dark *auchmeros* place *topos* as you wait for *heosp* until day *hemera* to come *diaugazo*-dawn and the morning star *phosphoros* IX to rise *anatello* in your hearts *kardia*.

Peter emphasizes that the events he speaks of really happened for he was an eyewitness of them. He saw the words of the Hebrew prophets like Isaiah who lived 700 years before come to life as they were fulfilled by Jesus. Peter amazingly saw God's Plan of Redemption fulfilled right before his eyes.

[He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace and we received healing from his wounds. It was the Lord's will to crush him with suffering. When the Lord has made his life a sacrifice for our wrongdoings, he will see his descendants for many days.

The will of the Lord will succeed through him. He will see and be satisfied because of his suffering. My Righteous Servant will acquit many people because of what he has learned through suffering. He will carry their sins as a burden.] **Isaiah 53:5, 10-11**

Many see these words prophesying not only Jesus' crucifixion, but also surprisingly his resurrection and ascension to heaven.

²⁰ First *proton* you must understand *ginosko*-know this *touto*. No *ou pas*-all prophecy *propheteia* in Scripture *graphe* is a matter of one's own *idios*-private interpretation *epilysis*. ²¹ No *ou* prophecy *propheta* ever originated *phero*-came from *thelma*-will humans *anthropos*. Instead *alla*, it was given by *hypo* the Holy *hagios* Spirit *pneuma* as humans *hagios*-holy *anthropos*-men spoke *laleo phero*-moved under God's direction.

While God used human authors to convey his message to human authors, he directed their words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is a very mysterious action even the prophets didn't understand.

[Your words were found and I devoured them. Your words are my joy and my heart's delight because I am called by your name, O Lord of Armies. **Jeremiah 15:16**]

[Everything I speak, I have to cry out and shout: Violence and destruction. The Lord's word has made me the object of insults and contempt all day long. I think to myself: I can forget the Lord and no longer speak his name. But his word is inside me like a burning fire shut up in my bones. I wear myself out holding it in, but I can't do it any longer. **Jeremiah 20:8-9**]

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter begins by summarizing the Gospel. God gives us a knowledge of everything we need to live in his creation, including his promises of redemption from sin through faith in Jesus Christ. With this gift of faith, Peter encourages believers to work hard and cooperate with God to make their salvation certain. He lists virtues Christians should work hard to incorporate into their lives.

Peter then says that although he will soon die, he wants Christians to remember his words. He wants them to remember that he was an eyewitness to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and tells them accurately of what he did and said. He actually saw Jesus with Moses and Elijah on the mountain of transfiguration. This confirmed to him that the words of the prophets he heard growing up were true and accurate. So Christians should read these words of the prophets to understand God's Plan of Redemption. These words are God's inspired words.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. *Grace* and *peace* appear in almost every epistle. When a writer wishes them to his readers, what specially is he asking for?
2. Through the Holy Spirit that Peter calls *God's divine power*, Christians are given everything they need for life and godliness. What does the Holy Spirit give us?
3. God makes many promises to us. List five of them.
4. Peter lists seven virtues. What could you add to this list?
5. God has given us faith in Jesus. Yet Peter encourages believers to work together with God to achieve **sanctification** as they journey in the Christian life. How does he suggest we do this?
6. Peter emphasizes remembering the teaching of the Twelve Apostles who were eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. Why is this important?
 7. Peter also emphasizes the teaching and prophecies of the Hebrew prophets as important to understanding the Christian faith. Why is this important?

Session 8

Dealing with False Teachers

2 Peter 2:1-22

PREVIEW

In the last chapter, Peter emphasized the need to remember the teaching of the apostles and the prophetic writings of the Hebrew prophets. Now he warns about the many false teachers that have arisen – primarily the Gnostics who apply Greek philosophy to Christian distorting the teachings of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus. Christians must stick to the genuine faith and not wander off.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

¹ False prophets *pseudoprophetes* were among *en* God's people *laos* in the past as false teachers *pseudodidaskalos* will be *esomai* among *en* you *hymin*.

[One of your people, claiming to be a prophet or to have prophetic dreams may predict a miraculous sign or an amazing thing. What he predicts may even take place. But don't listen to that prophet or dreamer if he says: Let's worship and serve other gods. Those gods may be gods you never heard of. The Lord your God is testing you to find out if you really love him with all your heart and with all your soul. Worship the Lord your God, fear him, obey his commands, listen to what he says, serve him, and be loyal to him.

That prophet or dreamer must be put to death because he preached rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt and freed you from slavery. He was trying to lead you away from following the directions the Lord your God gave you. You must get rid of this evil. Deuteronomy 13:1-5]

They will secretly bring in *pareisago* their own destructive *apoleia*-damnable teachings *haireisis*-heresies. They will deny *arneomai* the Lord *kyrios* who has bought *agorazo* them and they will bring *apago* themselves *heautou* swift *tachinos* destruction *apoleia*.

Peter is probably referring to the Gnostics who applied Greek thinking to Christianity. They taught that Jesus was only a divinity who appeared to be human. Jesus never died on the cross but gave secret information or knowledge on how to be spiritual. Matter was evil so it wasn't significant how holy you lived. All you needed to be reconciled to God was the secret knowledge to gain spiritual freedom. If you disobeyed God's creational principles, that didn't matter.

² Many *polys* people will follow *exakoloutheo* them in their sexual freedom *apoleia* and will cause others to dishonor *blasphemo* the way *hodos* of truth *aletheia*. ³ In their greed *pleonexia*-covetousness they will use good-sounding *plastos* arguments *logos* to exploit *emporeuomai*-make merchandise of 2x YOU. The verdict *krima*-judgment against them from long ago *ekpalai* is still in force *argeo* and their destruction *apoleia*-damnation is not *ou* asleep *nystazo*.

God gave his revelation to the descendants of Abraham which was first written down by Moses in the Towrah. God's principles of living in his creation were defined. The false prophets disregard this truth of God. Jesus endorsed the validity of the Hebrew Scriptures:

[Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true. Amen, amen. Until the earth and the heavens disappear, neither a period nor a comma will disappear from the Scriptures before everything has come true. So whoever sets aside any command that seems unimportant and teaches others to do the same will be unimportant in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches what the commands say will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I can guarantee that unless you live a life that has God's approval and do it more faithfully than the experts in Moses' Teachings and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5:17-20**]

God Punished Rebellious Angels

⁴ God *theos* didn't *ou* spare *pheidomai* angels *aggelos* who sinned *hamartano*. He threw them into Hell *tartaroo* ^{IX} where he has secured *paradidomi* them with chains *seira* of darkness *zophos* and is holding *tereo* them for judgment *krisis*.

[The number of people increased all over the earth and daughters were born to them. The sons of God saw that the daughters of other humans were beautiful. So they married any woman they chose. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, as well as later, when the sons of God slept with the daughters of other humans and had children by them. These children were famous long ago. Genesis 6:12, 4]

God Punished the Ancient World with a Flood

⁵God didn't *ou* spare *pheidomai* the ancient *archaios* world *kosmos* either. He brought *epago* the flood *kataklysmos* on the world *kosmos* of ungodly *asebes* people but he protected *phylasso* Noah *Noe* and seven other people. Noah was his messenger who told people *keryx*-preacher about the kind of life that has God's approval *dikaioyne*-righteousness. Genesis 6:9-8:22

The Bible does not say that Noah ever preached orally, but he did preach by his obedience to God in building the ark while people ridiculed him.

God Condemned the Wicked Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah

⁶God condemned *katakrino* the cities *polis* of Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed *katastrophe* them by burning *tephroo* them to ashes *tephroo*. He made *tithemi* those cities an example *hypodeigma* to ungodly *asebeo* people of what is going to happen to them.

⁷Yet, God rescued *rhyomai* Lot a man who had his approval *dikaios*. Lot was distressed *kataponeo* by the lifestyle *anastrophe*-conversation of people who had no principles *aselgeia*-filthy and lived in sexual freedom *athesmos*-wickedness. ⁸Although he was a man who had God's approval *dikaios*, he lived *agkatoikeo* among the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Each day was like torture *basanizo*-vexed *dikaios*-righteous *psyche*-soul to him as he saw *blemma* and heard *akoe*-the immoral *anomos*-things *ergon* that people did. Genesis 18:16-19:29

It appears that God rescued Lot simply because of Abraham. The Bible never says that Lot was a righteous man. Why then would he have lived in the city of Sodom? Even though he called what the men of Sodom contemplated to do to the angels wicked *ra'a'* Genesis 19:6, there is no other indication he disapproved of their sinful lifestyle.

God Will Punish Immoral People on the Day of Judgment

⁹Since the Lord *kyrios* did all this, he knows *eido* how to rescue *rhyomai* godly *eusebes* people when they are tested *ek*-out *peirasmos*-temptations. He also knows how to hold *tereo* immoral people *adikos* for punishment *kolazo* on *eis* the day *hemera* of judgment *krisis*. ¹⁰This is especially true *malista* of those who follow *poreuo* their corrupt nature *opiso*-after *sarx*-flesh along the path *epithymia*-lust of impure desires *miasmos* and who despise *kataphroneo* the Lord's authority *kyriotes*-government.

What These False Teachers Do

These false teachers are bold *tolmetes*-presumptuous and arrogant *authades*-self-willed. They aren't *ou* afraid *tremo* to insult *blasphemo* the Lord's glory *doxa*. ¹¹Angels *aggelos* who have more *meizon* strength *ischys* and power *dynamis* than these teachers don't bring *phero* an insulting *blasphemos* judgment *krisis* against *kata* them *autos* from *para*-before the Lord *kyrios*.

¹²These false teachers insult *blasphemeo* what they don't understand *agnoeo*. They are like animals *physikos*-natural which are creatures *zoon* of instinct *alogos* that are born *gennao* to be caught *halosis* and killed *phtora*. So they will be destroyed *kataphtheiro* like animals ¹³and lose what their *auto* wrongdoing *phthora*-corruption earned them and *komizo*-receive *misthos*-reward *adika*-unrighteousness

These false teachers are stains *spilos* and blemishes *mosimos*. They take *hegeomai* pleasure *hedone* in holding wild parties *tryphe*-riot in broad daylight *hemera*. They especially enjoy *entryphao* deceiving *apate* you while they eat *syneuocheomai* with you.

¹⁴They're always *mestos* looking *ophthalmos* for an adulterous *moichalis* woman. They can't stop looking for *akatapaustos* sin *hamartia* as they seduce *deleazo* people who aren't sure of *asteriktos*-unstable what they believe *kardia*-heart. Their minds are focused *gymnazo* on their greed *pleonexia*. They are cursed *katara teknon*-children.

Peter describes these false teachers as totally self-centered, rebellious against God, seeking only their own pleasure.

Balaam Was a False Prophet

¹⁵These false teachers have left *kataleipo* the straight *euthys* path *hodos* and wandered off *planao* to follow *exakoloutho* the path *hodos* of Balaam, son of Beor. Balaam loved *agapao* what his wrongdoing *adikia* earned *mithros*-wages him. ¹⁶But he was convicted *elegxis* for his *idios*evil *paranomia*. A donkey *aphonos*, which normally can't talk, spoke *phtheggomai* with *en* a human *anthropos* voice *phone* and wouldn't allow *kolyo* the prophet *prophetes* to continue his insanity *paraphronia*. Numbers 22:1-24:25

Balaam was a gentile prophet living near the Euphrates River. King Balak of the Moabites was afraid of the Israelites who had come to camp on the plains of Moab before crossing the Jordan River into Canaan. Balak was afraid of them and paid Balaam to come to Moab to curse them. Balaam says that he will only say what God tells him to say.

On his way, God's angel stood in front of Balaam riding his donkey blocking his way. Balaam struck his donkey who asked him: Why did you hit me? Finally, Balaam continued on his way. But he couldn't curse the Israelites so Balak sent him away without pay. But later, Balaam told Balak how to curse the Israelites. The king sent Moabite women into the Israeli camp. These women enticed the Israelite men to worship the Baal of Peor. God then sent a plague on Israel that killed 24,000 people. Numbers 25:9

More About What These False Teachers Do

¹⁷These false teachers are dried-up *anydros* springs *pege*-well. They are a mist *nephele* clouds blown around *elauno* by a storm *lailapas*. Gloomy *zophos*-mist darkness *skotos* has been kept *tereo* for them *eis aion*-forever.

Jesus spoke of being separated from God as *outer darkness*. Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30

¹⁸They arrogantly *hyperogkos*-great swelling use *phtheggomai*-speak nonsense *mataiotes*-words of vanity to seduce *deleazo* people by appealing to their sexual desires *epithymia*-lusts *sarx*-flesh, especially to sexual freedom *aselgeia*-wantonness. They seduce *deleazo ontos* clean people who have just escaped *apopheugo* from those who live *anastrepho* in error *plane*. ¹⁹They promise *epaggellomai* these people freedom *eleutheria*, but they themselves *autos* are slaves *doulos* to corruption *phthora*. A person is a slave *douloo* to whatever he gives in to *hettaomai*-overcome.

[Jesus answered them: Whoever lives a sinful life is a slave to sin. A slave doesn't live in the home forever but a son does. So if the Son sets you free, you will be absolutely free. **John 8:34-35**]

It seems that sexual immorality was as great a problem in the first century, as it is in 21st century America.

Backsliders Are A Curse to Themselves

²⁰ People can know *epignosis* our Lord *kyrios* and Savior *sotor* Jesus Christ and escape *apopheugo* the world's *kosmos* filth *miasma*. But if they get involved *empleko* in this filth again *palin* and give in to it *ou-not ginomai hettaomai* overcome, they *eschatosp* latter end are worse off *cheiron* than they were before *protos*.

²¹ It would have been better *kreitton* for them never me to have known *epigiknosko* the way *hodos* of life that God approves of *dikaiosyne* righteousness than to know *epiginosko* it and turn *epistrepho* their backs on *ek* from the holy *hagios* life *entole* commandment God told them to live *paradidomi* delivered.

²² These proverbs *paroimia* have come true *alethes* for them: A dog goes back to its vomit **Proverbs 26:11** , and A sow that has been washed goes back to roll around in the mud.

In the Book of Hebrews, the writer says the same thing. What a terrible warning.

Some people once had God's light. They experienced the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit. They experienced the goodness of God's word and the powers of the world to come. Yet they have deserted Christ. They are crucifying the Son of God again and publicly disgracing him. Therefore, they cannot be led a second time to God.

God blesses the earth. So rain often falls on it and it produces useful crops for farmers. However, if the earth produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. **Hebrews 6:4-8**

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter's first complaint about false teachers is that they *deny the Lord* perhaps falling into one of two heresies. The first is that Jesus was only divine, he never had a human nature. He was God walking around in a mask. This is called Docetism. The second heresy is that Jesus was only human. He was never divine.

Peter's second complaint is their sexual immorality. Nothing was beyond them. The Gnostics taught that what you did in your physical life didn't matter. Only your spiritual life, what you thought, was important.

Peter then gives several examples of God's punishment of sin and rebellion. First there were the angels who sinned. Then there were the people who sinned in Noah's day that were wiped out by the flood. The people in Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day were so immoral God sent fire and sulfur down from heaven.

Peter reminds his hearers that God will bring about a last day – a day of Judgment separating the righteous from the wicked. Then he goes into a diatribe characterizing these false teachers in villainous ways. He compares them to Balaam, a gentile prophet to whom God spoke. Balaam was hired by gentile Moabites to curse Israel. At first he refused to do so but then he secretly told the King of Moab how to get God to punish his own people by their sexual immorality.

After then mentioning that people who sin are slaves to sin, Peter warns that a person who intentionally sins after learning God's truth, cannot be redeemed.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. False teachers who distort the Christian message were very prevalent in both the first century and now. What motivates the false teachers to distort the Christian message?
2. How can Christians avoid being deceived by false teachers?
3. Peter says if Christians emphasize the seven virtues and live the holy life, they will never fall away. **2 Peter 1:10**. How does paying attention to implementing the seven virtues in your life keep you on God's path?
4. If a Christian sins, does that mean they are not a genuine Christian? Why not?
5. Why do some false teachers want to divorce the teachings in the Hebrew Bible from Christianity? Are they simply anti-Semitic?
6. Why is sexual immorality such a strong attraction taking people away from the genuine Christian faith?

7. The concept that a second repentance after giving up the faith is impossible is a very disputed doctrine. Yet it is taught both here **2 Peter 2:20-21** and in Hebrews. The warning is that a person although once converted and made a new creation can throw away that salvation by hardening their heart. After that, it is impossible for them to be saved.

Does this mean that a person can bring himself to do something that is beyond God's mercy?
Does being saved depend on God or on what humans do?

Session 9

Get Ready to Meet Jesus in Person

2 Peter 3:1-18

PREVIEW

Peter begins the final chapter of his letter by asking his hearers to remember the truth of the Gospel as given by the words of Jesus taught by his Apostles and the Hebrew prophets. Then he will focus on his primary subject: Jesus Christ will come again to bring you to himself. This is the message of the Christian hope.

This physical creation of God will be destroyed by fire and God will make a new creation – a new heaven and a new earth – a place where righteousness dwells. Why doesn't it arrive earlier? The reason is that God is patient so that everyone who he calls will be saved. Christians, keep this hope constantly in your mind and don't be deceived by false teachers. It is an eternal day.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Peter States Why He Is Writing This Letter

¹ Dear friends *agapetos* this is the second *deuteros* letter *epistole* I'm writing *grapho* to you. In both letters I'm trying to refresh *diegeiro*-stir up your memory *eilikrines*-pure 2x *dianolia*-minds *en*-by way of *hypomnesis*-remembrance

² I want you to remember *mnaomai*-mindful the words *rhema* spoken *polego* in the past by the holy *hagios* prophets *prophetes* and what the Lord *kyrios* and Savior *sotor* commanded *entole* you through your apostles *apostolos*.

Peter is most probably aware that of the apostles only John and he are still alive to give counsel to the early Christians. So he is preparing his flock to listen only to those who follow the teaching of the apostles. The letters of Paul and the Gospel According to Mark <50 AD> and perhaps According to Matthew <55 AD> may have already been written by this time. Yet there also may have been sermons of these apostles written down or memorized.

Prepare Yourself for the Day of Lord at the Last Day

³ First *proton* you must understand *ginosko* this. In the last *eschatos* days *hemera* people *empaiktes*-scoffers who follow *poreuo kata*-after their *auto* own *idios* desires *epithymia*-lusts will appear *erchomai*-come.

These disrespectful people will ridicule God's promise ⁴by saying: *lego*. What's happened to *pou* his promise *epaggelia* to return *parousia*? Ever since *apo* our ancestors *pater* died *koimao*, everything *pas*-all continues *houto diameno* as it did from *apo* the beginning *arche* of the world *ktrisis*-creation.

In the first Gospel written based on the preaching of Peter, According to Mark, Jesus says:

Then people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. He will send out his angels and from every direction under the sky, they will gather those whom God has chosen. **Mark 13:26-27**

⁵They are deliberately *theo*-willingly ignoring *lanthano* one fact: Because of God's *theos* word *logos*, heaven *ouranos* and earth *ge* existed a long time ago *ekpalai*. The earth appeared out *synistemi* of water *hydor* and was kept alive by *dia*-in water *hydor*.

⁶Water *hydor* also flooded *kataklyzo* and destroyed *apollymi* that world *kosmos tote*-that then was.

Peter wants people to remember that God promised Noah he would not destroy the earth again by water:

[I will never again kill every living creature as I have just done. **Genesis 8:21**]

[I am making my Covenant to you. Never again will all life be killed by floodwaters. Never again will there be a flood that destroys the earth. **Genesis 9:11**]

[Whenever I form clouds over the earth, a rainbow will appear in the clouds. Then I will remember my Covenant to you and every living animal. Never again will water become a flood to destroy live. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember my everlasting Covenant to every living animal on earth. **Genesis 9:14:-16**]

⁷By God's word *logos*, the present *nyn* heaven *Ouranos* and earth *ge* are designated *tereo*-reserved to be burned *pyr*. They are being kept *thesaurizo*-kept in store until the day *hemera* ungodly *asebes* people *anthropos* will be judged *krisis* and destroyed *apoleia*.

Peter teaches God will destroy the world by fire, perhaps referring to this prophecy of Isaiah:

The power of the Lord will be made known to his servant but he will condemn his enemies. The Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a thunderstorm. He will pay them back with his burning anger and punish them with flames of fire. The Lord will judge with fire and he will judge all people with his sword. Many people will be struck dead by the Lord. Isaiah 66:14-16

God Wants All People to Repent

⁸ Dear friends *agapetos*, don't *me* ignore *lanthano* this fact *heis*-one *touto*-thing. One *heis* day *hemera* with *para* the Lord *kyrios* is like *hos* a thousand *chilloi* years *etos* and a thousand *chilloi* years *etos* are like *hos* one *mia* day *hemera*.

⁹ The Lord *kyrios* isn't *ou* slow *bradyno* to do what he promised *epaggelia*, as some *tis* people think *hegeomai*-count *bradytes*-slackness. Rather *alla*, he is patient *makrothymeo* ^{10x} for your sake *eis hemus*. He doesn't *me* want *boulomai* to destroy *apollymi* anyone *tis* but *alla* wants all *pas* people to have an opportunity to turn to him *choreo*-come and change the way they think and act *metaneo*-repent.

[Tell them. As I live, declares the Almighty Lord, I don't want wicked people to die. Rather, I want them to turn from their ways and live. Change the way you think and act. Turn from your wicked ways. Do you want to die, people of Israel? Ezekiel 33:11]

No One Knows When the Last Day Will Arrive

¹⁰ The day *hemera* of the Lord *kyrios* will come *heko* like *hos* a thief *kleptes* in the night *nyx*.

[No one knows when that day or hour will come. Even the angels in heaven and the son don't know. Only the Father knows. Therefore be alert because you don't know on what day your Lord will return. You realize that if a homeowner had known at what time of the night a thief was coming, he would have stayed awake. He would not have left the thief break into his house. Therefore, you too must be ready because

the Son of Man will return when you least expect him. **Matthew 24:16,42-44**]

On that day heaven *ouranos* will pass away *parerchomai* with a roaring sound *rhoizedon*. Everything that makes up the universe *stoicheion*-elements will burn *tyo*-melt and be destroyed *kausoo*-fervent heat. The earth *ge* and everything that people have done on it *ergon* will be exposed *katakaio*-burned up.

Live Holy Lives Until Jesus Comes Again

¹¹All *pas* these things *touton* will be destroyed *tyo* in this way. So think of the kind *potapos* of holy *hagios* and godly *eusebeia* lives *anastrophe-conversation* you must live ¹²as you look forward *prosdokao* to the day *hemera* of God *theos* and eagerly wait for *pseudo* it *parousia* to come.

Jesus told his disciples:

Who then is the faithful and wise servant? The master will put that person in charge of giving the other servants their food at the right time. That servant will be blessed if his master finds him doing this job when he comes. Amen, amen. He will put that servant in charge of all his property. On the other hand, that servant, if he is wicked, may think that it will be a long time before his master comes. The servant may begin to beat the other servants and eat and drink with the drunks. His master will return unexpectedly. Then his master will severely punish him and assign him a place with the hypocrites. People will cry and he in extreme pain there. **Matthew 24:45-51**

The Present Heaven and Earth Will Be Destroyed and God Will Create a New Heaven and a New Earth

When that day comes, heaven *ouranos* will be on fire *pyroo* and will be destroyed *tyo*-dissolved. Everything that makes up the universe *stoicheion*-elements ^{7x} will burn and melt *teko kausoo*-fervent heat.

¹³ But we look forward *prosdokao* to what God has promised *epaggelma* — a new *kainos* heaven *ouranos* and a new *kainos* earth *ge* — a place where everything that has God's approval *dikaiosyne*-righteousness lives *katoikeo*.

[I will create a new heaven and a new earth. Past things will not be remembered. They will not come to mind. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create because I'm going to create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people to be a joy. **Isaiah 65:17-18**]

[Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, the City of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to tens of thousands of angels joyfully gathered together and to the assembly of God's firstborn children whose names are written in heaven. You have come to a judge, the God of all people, and to the spirits of people who have God's approval and have gained eternal life.

You have come to Jesus, who brings a new covenant from God and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better message than Abel's. **Hebrews 12:22-24**]

Again Peter Encourages Us to Look Forward to Jesus' Coming

¹⁴ Therefore ,dear friends *agapetos* , with this *tauta* to look forward to *prosdokao* make every effort *spoudazo* to have him find *heurisko* you at peace *eirene* without spiritual stains *aspilos* or blemishes *amometos*-blameless. ¹⁵Think of our Lord's patience *makrothymia* as an opportunity for us to be saved *soteria*.

[Therefore, be alert, because you don't know when the owner of the house will return. It could be in the evening or at midnight or at dawn or in the morning. Make sure he doesn't come suddenly and find you asleep. I'm telling everyone what I'm telling you. Be alert. **Mark 13:35-6**]

[Be alert at all times. Pray so that you will the power to escape everything that is about to happen and to stand in front of the Son of Man. **Luke 21:36**]

The Apostle Paul Also Speaks of God's Patience

This is what our dear *agapetos* brother *adelphos* Paul wrote to you about using *kata* the wisdom *sophia* God gave *didomi* him. ¹⁶ He talks about this subject in all his letters *grapho*.

Paul uses words for patience in Romans 4x, 2 Corinthians 2x, Galatians IX, Ephesians IX, Colossians 2x, 1 Timothy IX, 2 Timothy 2x.

Some things in his letters *epistles* are hard to understand *dysnoetos*. Ignorant *amathes*-unlearned people and people who aren't sure of what they believe *asteriktos*-unstable distort *strebloo* what Paul says in his letters the same way they distort the rest *loipos* of the Scriptures *grapho*. These people will be destroyed *apoleia*.

Peter's Final Words

¹⁷ Dear friends *agapetos*, you already know these things *proginosko*. So be on your guard *phylasso* not to be carried away *synapago* by the deception *plane*-error of people who have no principles *athesmos*. Then you won't fall *ekpipto* from your *idios* firm position *sterigmos*-steadfastness.

¹⁸ But grow *auxano* in the good will *charis*-grace and knowledge *gnosis* of our *hemon* Lord *kyrios* and Savior *soter* Jesus *Iesous* Christ *Christos*. Glory *doxa* belongs to him *autos* now *nyn* and for that eternal *eis anios*-forever day *hemera* ! Amen *amen*.

Peter concludes by saying remember the good things taught to you by the apostles and the prophets. Don't look for new and novel things which will only distract you from the truth of God. Instead, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Peter returns to the fundamental thesis of both of his letters. Keep your faith strong and true by your confidence in the second coming of Jesus Christ and by continuing to live a holy life as Jesus wants you to.

Many people doubt that Jesus will return again. But Jesus himself promises it not once but many times.

In According to Mark based on the preaching of Peter, Jesus first mentions it halfway through the Gospel:

If people are ashamed of me and what I say in this unfaithful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of those people when he comes again with the holy angels in his Father's glory. **Mark 8:38**

Jesus mentions it again when he discusses end times with his disciples;

Then people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. He will send out his angels and from every direction under the sky, they will gather those whom God has chosen. **Mark 13:26-27**

Jesus declares it to the Jewish high priest when he asked if Jesus was the Messiah:

Jesus answered: Yes, I am *sy lego* you have said so and you will see the Son of Man in the honored position – the one next to God the Father on the heavenly throne. He will be coming with the clouds of heaven. **Mark 14:62**

Peter goes on to explain the delay in Jesus not coming immediately by referring to God's great love and mercy in desiring that everyone repent and turn to him and live holy lives. He then states the last day will be sure and sudden and involve separation. So Christians must live holy lives and be prepared at any moment looking forward to the great day and the new heaven and the new earth.

Peter is not teaching anything new. He is only teaching what Jesus has taught. So people should remember Peter's teachings and not be deceived by new, unfamiliar teachings.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does God want Jesus to come to earth twice with a long time in between the incarnation and the second coming or *parousia*?
2. Peter goes out of his way to repeat that he wants his hearers to remember what he has said. He hasn't said anything new in his two letters. He has said the same thing from the beginning repeating the words and thoughts of Jesus. The apostle John also says in his first letter:

Make sure that the message you have heard from the beginning lives in you. **1 John 2:24**

How should Christians remember these things Peter has said?

3. How can Christians believe that God will keep all his promises?

4. Peter characterizes the Hebrew Scriptures as God's word. How do we prove the statements Peter says are *by God's word*. **2 Peter 3:5, 7**
5. God is outside of time. How does this impact what God does?
6. Jesus says that no one knows the date of the last day. When then should we expect the last day to come?
7. Peter says God wants to find believers *at peace without spiritual stains or any blemishes* **verse 14**. What does this mean?
8. Peter at the end of his letter again says he is not saying anything new. *You already know these things* **verse 17**. Does this mean everything about Jesus is already known by the apostles or will new things about Jesus be discovered?
9. Peter uses *doxa* translated glory **11x** in 1 Peter and **4x** in 2 Peter. In **2 Peter 1:3** he says that God has *called us to glory*. In **2 Peter 3:18** Peter wishes *God be given glory*. Explain how we are to give God glory.

Session 10

Peter Learns What Forgiveness Means

John 21:1-19

PREVIEW

Peter learned an important lesson – that of the great mercy of God especially as it applies to forgiveness. Forgiveness is the hallmark of a Christian.

Whenever you pray, forgive anything you have against anyone. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your failures. **Mark 11:25**

In fact, I have personally experienced this when God commanded me to forgive a person I didn't want to forgive. I fought God and then fought him again, but I finally gave in. It took 10 hours. Forgiving someone you don't want to forgive from a human perspective can demonstrate that you are a genuine Christian. This is something never to forget.

The apostle John teaches us:

The blood of God's Son Jesus cleanses us from every sin. If we say: We aren't sinful, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong. If we say: We have not sinned, we turn God into a liar and his Word is not in us. My dear children, I'm writing this letter to you so that you will not sin. Yet if anyone does sin we have Jesus Christ who has God's full approval. He speaks on our behalf when we come into the presence of the Father. He is the payment for our sins and not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world. **1 John 1:7-2:2**

So we have the last two living apostles focusing on forgiveness – God's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of each other. John adds:

But whoever obeys what Christ says is the kind of person in whom God's love is perfected. That's how we know we are in Christ. Those who say they live in him must live the way he lived. **1 John 2:5-6**

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

John 21

¹ Later sometime <after Jesus' resurrection> by the Sea of Tiberias <Galilee> Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. This is what happened.

² Simon Peter, Thomas, called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two other disciples of Jesus were together. ³ Simon Peter said to the others: I'm going fishing. They told him: We're going with you.

They went out in a boat but didn't catch a thing that night. ⁴ As the sun was rising, Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples didn't realize that it was Jesus.

⁵ Jesus asked them: Friends haven't you caught any fish? They answered him: No we haven't. ⁶ He told them: Throw the net out on the right side of the boat and you'll catch some. So they threw the net out and were unable to pull it in because so many fish were in it.

⁷ The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter: It's the Lord. When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord he put back on the clothes that he had taken off and jumped into the sea. ⁸ The other disciples came with the boat and dragged the net full of fish. They weren't far from the shore only about 100 yards.

⁹ When they went ashore, they saw a fire with a fish lying on the coals and they saw a loaf of bread. ¹⁰ Jesus told them: Bring some of the fish you've just caught. ¹¹ Simon Peter got into the boat and pulled the net ashore. Though the net was filled with 153 large fish it was not torn.

¹² Jesus told them: Come, have breakfast. None of the disciples dared to ask him who he was. They knew he was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus took the bread, gave it to them and did the same with the fish.

¹⁴This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after he had come back to life.

Seven disciples have gone north from Jerusalem to Galilee. They put out a boat and fish all night, but do not catch anything. At dawn, a figure calls to them from the beach asking how the catch went. They said: We caught none. He said: Throw your net over the right side of the boat, and the net was full.

The Beloved Disciple recognized Jesus and told Peter. Peter, who desperately wanted to see Jesus, immediately jumped in the water and swam ashore.

The disciples brought the boat closer to land.

Peter saw the charcoal fire *anthrakia*-fire of coals **John 18:18** reminding him of his denial of Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest. Then they all ate the bread and fish. When they had finished, Jesus drew Peter aside.

Jesus Restores Peter

¹⁵After they had eaten breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, do you love *agapao* me more than the other disciples do? Peter answered him: Yes, Lord. You know that I love *phileo* you. Jesus told him: Feed my lambs.

In Greek, there are four kinds of love. The highest form is *agape* or self-sacrificial love. Next is *storge* or family love. Following is *phileo* or *philadelphia* or brotherly love. Finally, there is *eros* or sexual love, a word not used in the Bible. Jesus uses the word *agape* while Peter uses the word *phileo* not feeling worthy enough to use the higher form of love.

¹⁶Jesus asked him again a second time: Simon, son of John, do you love *agapao* me? Peter answered him: Yes, Lord. You know that I love *phileo* you. Jesus told him: Take care of my sheep.

¹⁷Jesus asked him a third time: Simon, son of John, do you love *phileo* me? Peter felt sad because Jesus had asked him a third time: Do you love *phileo* me? So Peter said to him: Lord you know everything. You know that I love *phileo* you. Jesus told him: Feed my sheep.

After Peter's three denials of Jesus, Jesus has now cancelled these denials three times. So Peter is restored to fellowship in Jesus' eyes. This is visible forgiveness - a concept so important for all

disciples. And Jesus has accepted Peter just as he is by using Peter's word *phileo* for love instead of *agapao*.

¹⁸I can guarantee this truth: When you were young, you would get ready to go where you wanted. But when you're old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will get you ready to take you where you don't want to go. ¹⁹Jesus said this to show by what kind of death Peter would bring glory to God.

Jesus is telling Peter he will die by crucifixion.

After saying this, Jesus told Peter: Follow me.

Jesus warns Peter that he must not go off on his own. He must keep steadfast faith by following Jesus and obeying his words.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

John 21:1-19

What Peter needs to remember is that Jesus forgave Peter even before Peter denied him. In Luke's account of the Last Supper. Jesus takes the initiative to tell Peter what will happen:

Then the Lord said: Simon, Simon, listen. Satan has demanded to have you apostles for himself. He wants to separate you from me as a farmer separates wheat from husks. But I have prayed for you Simon, that your faith will not fail. So when you recover, strengthen the other disciples.

But Peter said to him: Lord, I'm ready to go to prison with you and to die with you. Jesus replied: Peter, I can guarantee that the rooster won't crow tonight until you say three times that you don't know me.
Luke 22:31-34

The Gospels stress the need for Christians to forgive each other. Jesus said:

Whenever you pray, forgive anything you have against anyone. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your failures. **Mark 11:25**

This is echoed in **Matthew 6:14-15**. Later, Peter asks Jesus a question:

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked him: Lord, how often do I have to forgive a believer who wrongs me? Seven times? Jesus answered him: I tell you not seven times but seventy times seven. **Matthew 18:21-23**

Jesus follows this up by telling a parable about a servant who was forgiven by a king, but then refused to forgive a fellow servant. *His master was so angry that he handed him over to the torturers until he would repay everything that he owed.* Jesus ended by saying:

That is what my Father in heaven will do to you if each of you does not sincerely forgive other believers. **Matthew 18:35**

Forgiveness is not optional for Christians. It is required.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

John 21:1-19

1. Following Jesus is called discipleship. But discipleship courses are not normally taught in 21st century American churches. Instead, para-church organizations are brought in to teach this. Why is that?
2. Peter is a leader in the early church. It is on the activities of Peter and Paul that Luke focuses in his second volume, the Acts of the Apostles. Compare the these two leaders in their approach to discipleship.
3. Read through the two letters of Peter again. What is Peter's main emphasis? What does he want disciples of Jesus to remember?
4. Why does Peter constantly refer to the second coming of Jesus? Why does Peter considered this so important for disciples of Jesus to constantly keep in mind?
5. Read the short Gospel According to Mark reportedly based on the preaching of Peter in Rome. Can you locate teachings of Jesus presented in this Gospel that are emphasized by Peter in his two letters?
6. Why were Peter and the disciples in Galilee? Was it because Jesus said when they were walking through Jerusalem on their way to the Mount of Olives on that fateful night?

All of you will abandon me. Scripture says:

I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. **Zechariah 13:7**

But after I am brought back to life, I will go to Galilee ahead of you.

Peter said to him: Even if everyone abandons you, I won't. Jesus said to Peter: Amen, amen: Tonight before a rooster crows twice, you will say three times you don't know me. But Peter said very strongly: Even if I have to die with you, I will never say that I don't know you. All the other disciples said the same thing. **Mark 14:27-31**

7. In According to Matthew, the disciples are told twice to go to Galilee:

The angel said to the women: Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus who was crucified. He's not here. He has been brought back to life as he said. Come see the place where he was lying. Then go quickly and tells his disciples that he has been brought back to life. He's going ahead of them into **Galilee**. There they will see him. Take note that I have told you.

They hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly, Jesus met them and greeted them *chairo*-greetings. They went up to him, bowed down to worship him, and took hold of his feet. Then Jesus said to them: Don't be afraid. Go, tell my followers to go to **Galilee**. There they will see me. **Matthew 28:5-10**

What is it about Galilee that makes it an appropriate place for Jesus to have a reunion with his disciples?

8. Peter refers to Jesus' second coming in his two letters many times. Paul also describes Jesus' *parousia*:

The Lord will come from heaven with a command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First the dead who believed in Christ will come back to life. Then together with them, we who are still alive will be taken in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In this way we will always be with the Lord. So then comfort each other with these words. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

Why is this event so important for Christians to constantly keep in mind?

9. Alistair Begg titles his sermon on October 14, 1990 *Humility*, based on **1 Peter 5**.

Young people, in a similar way, place yourself under the authority of spiritual leaders. Furthermore, each of you must serve each other with humility *tapeinophrosyne* 7x, because God opposes the proud but favors the humble. Be humbled *tapeinoo* 14x by God's power so that when the right time comes, he will honor you. **1 Peter 5:5-6**

Although Peter did not include humility in his seven virtues, Alistair regards humility as a quality most desirable in Christians, especially in preachers. In a talk at Dallas Seminary on January 24, 2017, and also in his book *Made for His Pleasure: Ten Benchmarks of a Vital Faith* (1996), Alistair stressed the necessity of this virtue. The ten qualities Alastair lists in his book are:

1. Spiritual Fitness in a Flabby Generation
2. Prayer that Is Larger Than Ourselves
3. Sacrifice: Whole-hearted Commitment to God's Kingdom
4. Relationships: A Marriage that Pleases God
5. Vocation: Finding the Ideal Place to Serve God
6. Suffering: Pleasing God When the Wheels Fall Off
7. The Narrow Way: Never Did a Heedless Person Lead a Holy Life
8. Intellectualism and Materialism: Chasing after the Wind
9. Putting on the Garment of **Humility**
10. Evangelism: The Necessity of Bringing Others to Christ

Alistair also preached sermons on humility on January 9, 2017 and September 19, 1995. These sermons are in the archives in the *Truth for Life* website on the iphone app. In his book, Alistair cites God's revelation in one of Isaiah's closing verses"

I will pay attention to those who are humble *'aniy* and sorry for their sins
nakeh-contrite *ruwach*-spirit and who tremble *chared* at my word. **Isaiah 66:2**

What is the greatest obstacle to being a genuine, faithful disciple of Jesus?

10. Peter's last words in his second letter are:

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **2 Peter 3:18**

Summarize how disciples are supposed to do this.

Alistair Begg's Sermon Series on 1 Peter

- | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Three Facts True of Any Christian | Feb 25, 1990 | 1 Pet 1:1-2 |
| 2. A Living Hope, Part One | Mar 4, 1990 | 1 Pet 1:3-5 |
| 3. A Living Hope, Part Two | Mar 11, 1990 | 1 Pet 1:3-9 |
| 4. Concerning This Salvation | Mar 18, 1990 | 1 Pet 1:10-16 |
| 5. Resident Aliens | Mar 25, 1990 | 1 Pet 1:17-25 |
| 6. Growing Up | Apr 1, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:1-3 |
| 7. Believing, Belonging, Behaving | Feb 18, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:1-10 |
| 8. The Precious Cornerstone | Apr 8, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:4-10 |
| 9. Principle and Pattern of Submission, 1 | Apr 29, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:11-17 |
| 10. Principle and Pattern of Submission, 2 | May 6, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:13-25 |
| 11. Principle and Pattern of Submission, 3 | May 13, 1990 | 1 Pet 2:15-25 |
| 12. Being a Wife – God's Way | May 20, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:1-6 |
| 13. Being a Husband – God's Way | May 27, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:7 |
| 14. Essentials of Christian Living | Jun 3, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:8-12 |
| 15. Prepared to Give an Answer | Jun 17, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:13-17 |
| 16. The Suffering of Christ, Part One | Jun 24, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:18-22 |
| 17. The Suffering of Christ, Part Two | Jul 1, 1990 | 1 Pet 3:18-22 |
| 18. Living for God | Jul 8, 1990 | 1 Pet 4:1-6 |
| 19. The Priority of Prayer | Jul 22, 1990 | 1 Pet 4:7 |
| 20. Vital Signs | Aug 5, 1990 | 1 Pet 4:7-11 |
| 21. Suffering as a Christian | Aug 26, 1990 | 1 Pet 4:12-19 |

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 22. Shepherding God's Flock | Oct 7, 1990 1 Pet 5:1-4 |
| 23. Humility | Oct 14, 1990 1 Pet 5:5-6 |
| 24. A Biblical Approach to Anxiety | Oct 21, 1990 1 Pet 5:7 |
| 25. Your Enemy the Devil | Oct 28:1990 1 Pet 5:8-9 |
| 26. Christian Security | Nov 11, 1990 1 Pet 5:10-11 |
| 27. Basic Christianity | Dec 9, 1990 1 Pet 12-14 |

Alistair Begg's Sermon Series on 2 Peter

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Growing in Grace | Oct 20, 2002 2 Peter 1:1-4 |
| 2. The Great Escape | Nov 17, 2002 2 Peter 1:8-11 |
| 3. An Eyewitness Account | Nov 24, 2002 2 Peter 1:12-21 |
| 4. False Teachers Among You, Part One | Dec 8, 2002 2 Peter 2:1-10 |
| 5. False Teachers Among You, Part Two | Jan 19, 2003 2 Peter 2:10-22 |
| 6. The Day of the Lord | Feb 16, 2003 2 Peter 3:1-13 |
| 7. Grow in Grace | Feb 23, 2003 2 Peter 3:14-18 |