

The First Epistle Of Peter



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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Pilgrims Of The Dispersion

1 Peter 1:1

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout the New Testament, various phrases are used to describe those people of God who make up the Lord's church
 - a. **Individually**, they are referred to as disciples, saints, believers, priests, Christians, etc.
 - b. **Collectively**, they are called the church, the church of God, churches of Christ, the body of Christ, the temple of God, the family of God, etc.
 - Each of these terms describe various relationships maintained by those who are Christians
2. An interesting phrase not commonly used in reference to the people of God is found in **1 Pe 1:1**, where Peter addresses "**The Pilgrims Of The Dispersion**"
3. A proper understanding of this phrase can be very beneficial, and give us insight into:
 - a. What the Christian life is
 - b. An important responsibility expected of Christians
 - c. Our true home, and goal in this life

[Let's start by...]

I. DEFINING "PILGRIMS OF THE DISPERSION"

A. THE WORD TRANSLATED "PILGRIM" IS INTERESTING...

1. Transliterated from Greek, it is **parepidemos** {par-ep-id'-ay-mos}, which is a combination of three words:
 - a. **para** - "alongside of"
 - b. **epi** - "upon"
 - c. **demos** - "used in Biblical Greek of the people of a heathen city" (**Wuest**)
2. Here, then, is how **Thayer** defines the word...
 - a. "one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives"
 - b. "a stranger"
 - c. "sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner"
 - d. "in the NT metaph. in reference to heaven as the native country, one who sojourns on earth: so of Christians (**1 Pe 1:1**)...of the patriarchs (**He 11:13**)."
3. Another definition: "One who stays in a place as a stranger or visitor; to describe Christians whose final citizenship is in heaven and who are regarded as temporary dwellers on earth." (**Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible**)

B. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "DISPERSION"...

1. The Greek word is **diaspora** {dee-as-por-ah'}
 - a. It is noun form of the verb **diaspeiro**
 - b. Which means "to sow, to scatter seed"
2. The term is found in **Jn 7:35**, where it refers to the Jews who scattered among the Greeks
 - a. As a result of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities

- b. This has caused some to conclude that Peter was writing to Jewish Christians
- c. Who were living in the regions of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) - cf. **1 Pe 1:1**
- 3. But there is good reason to believe that Peter was writing to ALL the Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, who were scattered throughout Asia Minor
 - a. Comments are made in this epistle that cannot be understood in reference to the original recipients being Jews - cf. **1 Pe 1:14,18,20-21**
 - b. More likely, Peter employs terms once limited to the Jews, but now applicable to all who are in Christ
 - 1) For example, terms like “elect” (**1:2**), “holy nation” (**2:9**), “people of God” (**2:10**)
 - 2) Even as Paul did: “circumcision” (**Ph 3:3**), “Israel of God” (**Ga 6:16**)
- 4. If this be so, then Peter implies by using the term “pilgrims of the dispersion” that all Christians are:
 - a. Pilgrims living in a world not their own
 - b. Like scattered seed, spread out among those in the world

[With this understanding of the phrase, “**Pilgrims Of The Dispersion,**” we can now draw insights that are implied by it...]

II. INSIGHTS FROM BEING CALLED “PILGRIMS OF THE DISPERSION”

A. THIS PHRASE REVEALS WHAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE REALLY IS...

1. It is but a **journey**, begun when we first became Christians, ending only when we reach our true destination
 - a. This ought to affect our entire perspective on life
 - 1) It is not an end in itself
 - 2) Only a temporary trip toward our final destination
 - 3) Our homes, our jobs, take on a different meaning when viewed in this light
 - b. This ought to affect our perspective on death
 - 1) Not the end of life, but the end of our journey!
 - 2) Not the end of life, but the beginning of eternity in our true home!
2. Embarked on this **journey**, we become like our spiritual father, Abraham
 - a. Notice **He 11:8-10, 13-16**
 - b. If this be our attitude towards this life...
 - 1) Then God is not ashamed to be called our God
 - 2) And we can honestly sing songs like “**This World Is Not My Home**”

B. THIS PHRASE REMINDS US OF AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY...

1. Our responsibility as “pilgrims” is to be **separate** - cf. **1 Pe 2:11-12**
 - a. We may be “in the world,” but we are not to be “of the world” - **Jn 17:15-16; 2 Co 6:14-7:1**
 - b. Remaining separate may cause some to think we are strange - cf. **1 Pe 4:3-4**
 - c. But Jesus said this would happen, even as it did to Him - **Jn 15:18-19**
2. Figuratively speaking, we should be like those foreign refugees now in our country:
 - a. Who resist giving up their heritage, their language
 - b. Who resist attempts to “Americanize” them and destroy their cultural traditions
3. Can it be said of us who are Christians, that we are keeping ourselves **separate** from the world?
 - a. Are we allowing the world to influence our...
 - 1) Speech?

- 2) Dress?
- 3) Conduct?
- b. If we so, then we are no longer “pilgrims,” but “naturalized citizens” of this world!
- c. Remember John’s warning in **1 Jn 2:15-17**

C. THIS PHRASE OUGHT TO REMIND US OF OUR TRUE HOME...

1. Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly await our Savior - **Ph 3:20-21**
2. We are to be looking for “a new heavens and a new earth” - **2 Pe 3:13-14**
3. That is where we will find our true home, the **city**...
 - a. “which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” - **He 11:10,16**
 - b. That is “the one to come” - **He 13:14**
 - c. That “comes down out of heaven from God” - **Re 21:1-22:5**
-- That is where we, who are now simply strangers and foreigners scattered like seed in this world, will one day be gathered together!
4. Those who are truly “pilgrims” will think often of their true home
 - a. When my family lived in Taiwan, we thought often our home in the states
 - b. And so we will think often of our heavenly home, if we are truly **“Pilgrims Of The Dispersion”!**

CONCLUSION

1. Are we **“Pilgrims Of The Dispersion”**? We are, if as Christians we...
 - a. View our life here on earth as a journey in a foreign land!
 - b. Keep ourselves separate from things in the world that would lead us away from God!
 - c. View our as true home, the heavenly city God has prepared from those who confess they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth!
2. But you are not a **“Pilgrim Of The Dispersion”** if...
 - a. You have not yet begun your spiritual sojourn by obeying the gospel of Christ!
 - b. Having done so, you allow the attractions of the world to discontinue your journey and “settle down” in things which would separate you from God!

Are you a “Pilgrim Of The Dispersion”?

The “Elect” Of God

1 Peter 1:2

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we noticed Christians referred as “**Pilgrims Of The Dispersion**”...
 - a. This description implies that Christians are but strangers, foreigners, sojourning in a land not their own, and scattered about like seed
 - b. With their citizenship in heaven, they may be **in** this world, but they are not to be **of** this world
 - c. Therefore, one of their important duties is to be **separate** - cf. **1 Pe 2:11**
2. One might think that since Christians are “scattered strangers” in this world, they are to be pitied
3. Not so, for though they are strangers in the world, they are the “**elect**” of God - **1 Pe 1:2**
 - a. The word “**elect**” simply means “**chosen**” and is thus translated in **1 Pe 2:9-10**
 - b. There we learn Christians are “**a chosen generation**”; they are truly God’s chosen people!
4. In this lesson, we shall consider what it means for Christians to be “**The ‘Elect’ Of God**”

[Using comments in **1 Pe 1:2** as an outline for this study, we see first that as “**The ‘Elect’ Of God**” ...]

I. WE ARE A PART OF GOD’S PREDETERMINED PLAN

A. PETER SAYS “ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD”...

1. The word “**foreknowledge**” comes from “**prognosis**” {prog’ - no - sis }
2. It means “**forethought, pre-arrangement**”
3. I.e., being the “elect” (chosen) of God is in keeping with God’s plan designed beforehand
4. As **B. W. Johnson** says in his “People’s New Testament” commentary: “Their election and salvation was in accordance with God’s predetermined purpose to save men through the gospel, and hence, according to foreknowledge.”

B. PAUL EXPOUNDS UPON THIS “PRE-ARRANGEMENT” IN EPHESIANS...

1. God planned it before the world began - **Ep 1:4**
2. It anticipated the “chosen” being holy and without blame - **Ep 1:4**
3. It looked forward to the “elect” being adopted as sons - **Ep 1:5**
4. This plan is according to God’s good pleasure - **Ep 1:5**
5. This plan has a goal that the “elect” walk in good works - **Ep 2:10**

C. WAS THIS “ELECTION” INDIVIDUAL OR CORPORATE...?

1. I understand election by God to have been general, not particular; corporate, not individual
2. That it would be “the body of Christ, the church as a whole”...
 - a. Which God chose to be the recipients of His divine and gracious purposes
 - b. And which He planned beforehand (foreknowledge) to carry out in Christ Jesus
3. While in the “corporate” sense this choice is unconditional and final, as “individuals” we must be “diligent to make your calling and election sure” - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - 1) Just as Israel (as a nation) had been chosen by God to receive His blessings
 - 2) But individually, the Israelites also had to make “their calling and election sure”

[So by being in Christ, we are God's "elect", and involved in a plan which was in the mind of God before time began and which is still in the process of being worked out! The implication of this is that those who are God's "elect" are very special to God. As we return to **1 Pe 1:2**, we learn also that...]

II. WE BECOME GOD'S "ELECT" THROUGH THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF THE SPIRIT

A. SANCTIFICATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. Sanctification, the process by which we are "set apart" for God's purpose, is accomplished by the Holy Spirit
2. There are several passages that describe the connection between the Holy Spirit and our sanctification - **Ro 15:16; 1 Co 6:11; 2 Th 2:13**

B. HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT ACCOMPLISHES THIS "SANCTIFICATION"...

1. It is through the Word of God
 - a. The Holy Spirit would reveal the Word to the apostles - cf. **Jn 16:12-13**
 - b. Through this revealed Word, we are "sanctified" (set apart) - cf. **Jn 17:17**
2. Therefore, when people obey the Word of God which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit, they become "chosen...to salvation" through:
 - a. "**sanctification of the Spirit**" (the Divine side of conversion, as the Spirit has revealed the Word and convicts men of sin through it)
 - b. "**and belief of the truth**" (the human side of conversion, as they believe it) - cf. **2 Th 2:13-14**

[Having been "sanctified" (set apart) by belief in the truth, and as God's "elect" now a part of His eternal plan, you might expect such privileges would call for certain responsibilities. Indeed it does, for as God's "elect"...]

III. WE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OBEDIENCE!

A. GOD'S CHOSEN ARE EXPECTED TO BE OBEDIENT...

1. We saw earlier in **Ep 2:10** that it was part of God's plan before time began that the people of God would "walk in good works"
2. This is all part of God's wonderful grace as defined by Paul in **Ti 2:11-14**
3. We do not earn salvation by such good works (cf. **Ti 3:5**), but nonetheless we are to be diligent in doing them - **Ti 3:1,8,14**

B. PETER WILL LATER EXPOUND UPON THE NEED FOR OBEDIENCE...

1. As obedient children of God, we are to be holy - **1 Pe 1:14-16**
2. We are even to submit to civil authorities, that we might silence the ignorance of foolish men - **1 Pe 2:13-16**
3. Peter implies grave consequences to those "who obey not the gospel of God" - **1 Pe 4:17**

[Peter also tells servants and wives to be obedient, but this should suffice to impress upon us that the privilege of being God's "elect" involves the responsibility of being obedient to the will of the Lord. Finally, being the "elect" of God also means...]

IV. WE HAVE THE BLESSING OF FORGIVENESS!

A. WE ENJOY THE “SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST”...

1. A clear reference to the blessing of forgiveness of sins made possible by the death of Christ
2. The blessing of forgiveness is one enjoyed...
 - a. When we first become Christians upon our baptism into Christ - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. As we confess sins throughout our daily walk with God - **1 Jn 1:7-9**

B. THIS BLESSING IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL MENTIONED IN PETER’S EPISTLE...

1. He later speaks of “an inheritance” - **1 Pe 1:4**
2. And the “salvation of souls” - **1 Pe 1:9**
3. He describes Jesus as the “Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” - **1 Pe 2:25**
4. He also refers to the care of God - **1 Pe 5:7**

CONCLUSION

1. We hope to examine some of these blessings for God’s “elect” in greater detail in future lessons
2. But what we have seen from **1 Pe 1:2** is that while Christians may indeed be “pilgrims”, strangers living in a world not their own, they are not to be pitied!
3. For by the grace of God and their obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are God’s “elect”, His “chosen ones”, and as such they are...
 - a. Part of God’s predetermined plan
 - b. Chosen through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit
 - c. Given responsibilities in keeping with the fact they are the children of God
 - d. Recipients of the richest blessings God has to offer (such as forgiveness of sins)
4. Is it surprising, then, that Peter would address such people with: ***“Grace to you and peace be multiplied”***?
5. Certainly those who are God’s “elect” receive in multiple measure the saving grace of God and the peace which accompanies such unmerited favor!

How about you? Are you one of the “elect” of God? You are if you have answered the call of the gospel through the obedience of faith (cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38-41**)!

If you have not yet rendered obedience to the gospel, then please do so today, especially in view of the warnings giving by both by Peter and Paul (**1 Pe 4:17; 2 Th 1:7-10**).

A “Living” Hope

1 Peter 1:3-5

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of Peter’s epistle so far, we have noticed...
 - a. That as far as the world is concerned, Christians are but “pilgrims”
 - b. But as far as God is concerned, we are His “elect”
2. As the “elect” (chosen) of God, we are the recipients of many blessings that God offers to all who will obey and follow Christ...
 - a. One of these blessings is described in **1 Pe 1:3-5**
 - b. There we learn that God has caused us to be born again unto “**a living hope**”
3. An understanding of this “living” hope can help Christians who are “pilgrims” be more joyful during their sojourn in this life
4. Therefore, in this lesson we shall examine what Peter says about the Christian hope that makes it a “living” hope

[Vs. 3 begins with Peter praising God, and this leads us to the first reason our hope is a “living” hope...]

I. BECAUSE GOD IS MERCIFUL!

A. THE BASIS FOR OUR HOPE LIES NOT IN OUR OWN PERFECTION OR RIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. It is a good thing that it does not, for all are sinners in God’s sight - cf. **Ro 3:23**
2. Even as Christians we find ourselves guilty before God - cf. **1 Jn 1:8,10**

B. THE BASIS FOR OUR HOPE LIES IN THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD’S MERCY...

1. Mercy bestowed while we were yet sinners - cf. **Ro 5:6,8**
2. Mercy bestowed upon the conditions of faith, repentance, and baptism - cf. **Ac 2:36-38**
3. Mercy bestowed continually upon Christians as they repent of and confess their sins - cf. **1 Jn 1:9**

[Because of God’s “abundant mercy”, then, we who are sinners can have a “living” hope! But according to vs. 3 there is another reason to have hope...]

II. BECAUSE JESUS IS ALIVE!

A. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS IS CRUCIAL TO OUR HOPE...

1. If Christ is not risen, then the apostles were liars, and our faith is vain! - **1 Co 15:14-15**
2. If Christ is not risen, we are still held guilty for our sins, no forgiveness has occurred! - **1 Co 15:17**
3. If Christ is not risen, those who have died as Christians have perished, they are lost! - **1 Co 15:18**
4. If Christ has not risen, then we do not have a “living” hope, instead we are to be pitied by

others! - **1 Co 15:19**

B. BUT THROUGH JESUS' RESURRECTION, WE HAVE BEEN "BORN AGAIN" TO A LIVING HOPE...!

1. Peter may have reference not to the process of conversion (though he does in **1 Pe 1:23**), but to the renewed hope produced by the resurrection of Jesus
 - a. E.g., after Jesus' death and prior to His resurrection, the disciples were despondent
 - b. But after the resurrection of Jesus, His disciples were "born again" in regards to their hope
 - c. As **Guy N. Woods** says in his commentary: "The reference here is...to the re-establishment of the faith of the disciples by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead."
2. Surely the fact that Jesus did rise gives us reason for a "living" hope
 - a. God would not raise a liar, so anything Jesus said about our hope is true - e.g., **Jn 11:25**
 - b. Since Jesus rose from the dead, we have a firm hope that we too will one day rise from the dead - cf. **1 Co 15:20-23**

[By the abundant mercy of God, and upon the basis of Jesus' own resurrection, then, we have been "born again" to a living hope! But there are two more reasons discussed in **vs. 4-5** as to why our hope can be described as "living". One is...]

III. BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF OUR INHERITANCE!

A. THE DEGREE OF HOPE WE HAVE IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE INHERITANCE WE HAVE...

1. If our inheritance is a good one, our hope is strong, or "living"
2. If our inheritance is a poor one, then our hope is weak, or "dead"

B. AS DESCRIBED BY PETER, OUR INHERITANCE...

1. **Is incorruptible**
 - a. The Greek word is **aphthartos** {af'-thar-tos}, meaning "not liable to corruption or decay, imperishable"
 - b. Unlike this present heavens and earth in which now live, and which will one day be destroyed - **2 Pe 3:10-13**
2. **Is undefiled**
 - a. The Greek word is **amiantos** {am-ee'-an-tos}, meaning "not defiled, unsoiled"
 - b. It is unlike the earthly Canaan, which could be and was defiled by its inhabitants
 - c. Our hope pertains to that where the defiled are not allowed to enter - cf. **Re 21:27**
3. **Does not fade away**
 - a. The Greek word is **amarantos** {am-ar'-an-tos}, meaning "unfading, perennial"
 - b. The word is a variation of "amaranth" which was the name of a mythical flower whose bloom was perpetual and whose loveliness never faded
 - c. Such is our heavenly reward: it will not rust, fade, or wither like so many things do here on earth
4. **Is reserved in heaven**
 - a. The word "reserved" comes from **tereo** {tay-reh'-o}, meaning "to watch, to observe, to guard, protect, to reserve, set aside"
 - b. Therefore, our inheritance is safely guarded in heaven itself!
 - c. No one, not even Satan himself, can steal it from you!

[Since this is the nature of our “inheritance” upon which our hope rests, we can see why our hope is described as a “living” hope. There is one more reason to call our hope a “living” hope: not only is our inheritance safely guarded in heaven, but also...]

IV. BECAUSE WE ARE SAFELY GUARDED!

A. CHRISTIANS ARE “KEPT” FOR THE SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME...

1. The word “kept” is from **phroureo** {froo-reh’-o}, and is a military term
2. It means “to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight”
3. “While our inheritance is being kept guarded in heaven under the watchful eye of God, we are being garrisoned about by God’s protecting care for it.” (**Wuest**)

B. NOTE THAT BEING “KEPT” INVOLVES TWO THINGS...

1. First, **the power of God!**
 - a. We have the help of God Himself, who knows how to help those in temptation
 - b. He knows how to deliver them out of temptation - cf. **2 Pe 2:9**
 - c. He knows how to enable them to bear with the temptation - cf. **1 Co 10:13**
 - d. He supplies the armor necessary to withstand in the evil day - cf. **Ep 6:10-13**
2. Also, **our faith!**
 - a. To be safely guarded by God’s protective care requires faith on our part
 - b. The only way we can ever lose our inheritance reserved in heaven is to become unfaithful to the Lord! - cf. **Re 2:10**
 - c. While the Bible teaches the security of the “believer”...
 - 1) It also teaches that a “believer” can become an “unbeliever” - cf. **He 3:12-13**
 - 2) And it teaches that “unbelievers” have no hope - cf. **He 3:14-4:3**
 - d. As long as we remain “faithful”, then, we have the assurance of God’s protective care to guide us until we receive that inheritance reserved in heaven for us!

CONCLUSION

1. In this passage (**1 Pe 1:3-5**), then, are four reasons why the hope of the Christian is called “a living hope”...
 - a. Because God is merciful!
 - b. Because Jesus is alive!
 - c. Because of the nature of our inheritance!
 - d. Because we are safely guarded!
2. Have a “living” hope can be a source of great joy in the lives of Christians; it certainly was to the original recipients of Peter’s epistle:

“In this (the living hope that pertains to the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.” - 1 Pe 1:6

3. Do you have this “living” hope...?
 - a. You do if you have received God’s mercy offered in Christ, and are remaining faithful to the

Lord

- b. If you have not received this mercy, or have neglected it through unfaithfulness, why not come to the Lord according to His conditions found in His Holy Word? - cf. **Ac 2:38; 1 Jn 1:9**

Joy Inexpressible And Full Of Glory

1 Peter 1:6-9

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the many blessings available to the “elect” (chosen) of God is a very special kind of joy...
 - a. For reasons we shall notice in our lesson, Christians are able to “**greatly rejoice**” (lit., “leap for joy”) - **1 Pe 1:6**
 - b. They have access to joy that is “**inexpressible and full of glory**” - **1 Pe 1:8**
 - c. A joy so great, so glorious, that it is impossible to truly express with words!
2. In this lesson, we shall focus our attention on Peter’s remarks in **1 Pe 1:6-9** concerning this “inexpressible joy” that Christians are blessed to have

[Notice first that in **vs. 6** Peter begins by saying “**in this** you greatly rejoice...” He is referring to those things which serve as...]

I. THE BASIS FOR INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

A. THERE ARE “PAST” GROUNDS FOR REJOICING...

1. We have been “set apart” by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit - **1 Pe 1:2**
2. We have been “sprinkled” with the blood of Jesus Christ - **1 Pe 1:2**
3. We have been “born again” to a living hope - **1 Pe 1:3**

B. THERE ARE “PRESENT” GROUNDS FOR REJOICING AS WELL...

1. We are God’s “elect” - **1 Pe 1:2**
2. We are “kept” by the power of through faith - **1 Pe 1:5**

C. AND THERE ARE “FUTURE” GROUNDS FOR REJOICING...

1. We have an “inheritance” reserved for us in heaven - **1 Pe 1:4**
2. We look forward to the “salvation” which will be revealed in the last time - **1 Pe 1:5**, cf.

[All these blessings (past, present, future) serve as the basis for inexpressible joy. Because of them, we can “greatly rejoice!” Exactly how great is this joy? In **vs. 6-7**, Peter explains...]

II. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THIS JOY

A. IT ENABLES ONE TO REJOICE EVEN IN TRIAL... (1:6)

1. No matter what degree of suffering one may experience, in Christ there is joy to match it
 - a. As Peter explains in **1 Pe 4:12-13**
 - b. As he and the rest of the apostles exemplified in **Ac 5:40-41**
2. How can Christians find joy in such trials?
 - a. Informed Christians understand the purifying nature of such trials - **1 Pe 1:7**; cf. **2 Co 4:17-18**
 - b. Knowing what trials can produce, it is possible to be joyful in trials - cf. **Ja 1:2-4,12**; **Ro 5:1-4**

B. WHAT KIND OF TRIALS...?

1. The word “various” includes all kinds
2. Primarily, it includes those which come as a result of living for Christ - e.g., **Mt 5:10-12**
3. But we can also rejoice in the everyday afflictions of life
 - a. E.g., sickness, heartbreak, frustration, approaching death
 - b. For these things also provide an opportunity to test our faith, hope, love, longsuffering and patience

[If one is able to rejoice even in the midst of such trials, surely they have a joy “inexpressible and full of glory”! But how can Christians be sure to possess this joy? For it must be admitted that all do not, and there are times when even the best of us do not. In **vs. 8**, Peter alludes to two things which I suggest are necessary to...]

III. POSSESSING THIS INEXPRESSIBLE JOY**A. WE MUST LOVE JESUS...**

1. **“whom having not seen you love”**
2. Jesus is the ultimate source for being able to rejoice in all things - cf. **Ph 4:4**
 - a. He has promised that if we truly love Him, He and His Father will be with us - **Jn 14:23**
 - b. If Jesus is with us, we can receive that joy which is inexpressible! - **Jn 15:11; 16:33**
3. But can we who have never seen Jesus, love Him? Yes! - cf. **1 Pe 1:8**
4. How can we come to love Him we have not seen? Through a devotional study of:
 - a. The Old Testament, with its prophecies of the Messiah
 - b. The Gospels, with their description of His life, teachings, compassion, suffering, death, and glorious resurrection
 - c. The Acts, with its action-packed portrayal of the Lord working together with His church
 - d. The Epistles, where we learn of many blessings found in Christ, and of His ministry as High Priest interceding in our behalf
 - e. The Revelation, in which we learn of the glorious victory to be won by the Lamb and His followers

B. WE MUST ALSO BELIEVE IN JESUS...

1. **“Though now you do not see Him, yet believing...”**
2. Through believing in Jesus we can “rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”
3. But such faith is more than a mental assent, or academic knowledge of Jesus
4. It involves the key element of faith itself, which is “trust”
 - a. Trusting in His commands to be for our ultimate good
 - b. Trusting in His promises to be fulfilled
 - c. The kind of trust that prompts us to obey Jesus wholeheartedly
 - d. This kind of faith comes from the Word of God - cf. **Ro 10:17**

CONCLUSION

1. When we have this kind of faith in Jesus, and when we truly love Him with our whole being...
 - a. A blessing we receive is that “joy inexpressible and full of glory”!
 - b. A blessing that can sustain us till we reach the end (goal) of our faith: salvation! - **1 Pe 1:9**
2. And that is because this “inexpressible joy”...
 - a. Is based upon many other blessings: past, present, and future

- b. Enables us to joyfully persevere through all kinds of trials in this life
- 3. But again, this blessing is only for those who truly love Jesus and believe in Him...
 - a. Do you love Jesus? If you do, you will keep His commandments - **Jn 14:15,23**
 - b. Do you believe in Jesus? If you do, you will do what He says - cf. **Lk 6:46**

Are there commandments of Jesus you have not yet obeyed? If so, why not obey them today so that this “inexpressible joy” can be yours as well!

Ministering Not To Themselves, But To Us

1 Peter 1:10-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Already in Peter's epistle we have seen several blessings enjoyed by the "elect" of God...
 - a. E.g., born again to a "living" hope - **1 Pe 1:3**
 - b. E.g., having a joy "inexpressible and full of glory" - **1 Pe 1:8**
2. As one continues in **vs. 10-12**, he finds that Peter expands upon the topic of the "salvation" Christians enjoy as a result of their faith
3. If one takes the time to contemplate upon what is found in this passage, he should not fail to be impressed with how privileged we are in God's sight
 - a. For there we learn that we are the recipients of a gospel that was prophesied and has come to us only through the efforts of a very distinguished company of individuals!
 - b. And in their efforts, they were ministering not to themselves, but to us who are now Christians!

[To illustrate just how privileged we are, let's begin identifying those who have ministered to us...]

I. WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY "THE PROPHETS"!

A. WHICH IS THE MAIN THOUGHT OF THIS PASSAGE...

1. When the prophets prophesied, they were often intrigued by what they revealed - **1 Pe 1:10-11**
 - a. This is because they were inspired or moved by the Holy Spirit, and not by their own will - cf. **2 Pe 1:21**
 - b. Therefore, they often expressed perplexity concerning those things they prophesied - e.g., **Dan 7:28; 8:26-27**
2. But as pointed out in our text, it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but us! - e.g., **Dan 12:8-9**

B. CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS POINT...

1. We who are Christians have been served by such people as:
 - a. Moses, Samuel, and David
 - b. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel
2. These men (and many others) spent their lives, and in many cases even gave their lives, in service to you and me!
3. Yes, these great "heroes of faith" suffered much in their service to God and to us who are now in Christ - cf. **He 11:36-38**

[Does this not indicate that we must be very special in God's sight? We who have ministered unto by prophets of Almighty God, who endured all these things for our sake? And yet, there is even more...]

II. WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY "THE HOLY SPIRIT"!

A. THIS THOUGHT IS ALSO EXPRESSED IN OUR TEXT...

1. For it was the Holy Spirit who inspired the **prophets** to proclaim things to come - **1 Pe 1:11**
 - a. It was He who inspired David and Isaiah to foretell the sufferings of Christ - e.g., **Psa 22; Isa 53**
 - b. It was He who likewise moved the prophets to proclaim the glories to follow
 - 1) E.g., the resurrection of Jesus - **Psa 16: 9-11**
 - 2) E.g., His ascension and coronation - **Dan 7:13-14**
2. And it was the Holy Spirit inspired the **apostles** to reveal the gospel - **1 Pe 1:12**
 - a. As Jesus promised He would, in His discourse to His apostles - **Jn 16:13**
 - b. As Paul said He did, in writing to the Ephesians - **Ep 3:5**

B. AGAIN, CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRUTH...

1. Through His ministry of inspiration and revelation in the lives of the prophets and apostles, we have been served by the Holy Spirit
2. Because of His work, we have the completed revelation of God's Word in our hands!
3. This is in addition to the "sanctifying work" of the Holy Spirit to which Peter referred in **1 Pe 1:2**

[Do we appreciate the service that the Holy Spirit has rendered for us throughout the ages? Is this not an indication of the great value God must place upon His people? But there is even another group of distinguished individuals who served their lives in our behalf...]

III. WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY "THE APOSTLES"!

A. THIS WE CAN GLEAN FROM VERSE 12...

1. "...those who preached the gospel to you"
 - a. This is a likely reference to the apostles of Jesus Christ
 - b. Who were commissioned to preach the gospel, as recorded in **Mk 16:15-16**
2. As they carried out this "Great Commission", they considered themselves but servants for those to whom they preached
 - a. As Paul said, they were but "seed-throwers" and "water-boys" - cf. **1 Co 3:5-7**
 - b. They were serving as servants of Christ - **1 Co 3:21-4:1; 2 Co 4:5**

B. THEREFORE, WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY MEN...

1. Such as Peter, James, John, and Paul
2. Who gave their lives for our sake, to convince the world that our faith in their testimony is not unfounded, but that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead! - cf. **2 Co 11:24-29**

[When we take the time to think about those who spent their lives ministering to us, we can't help but conclude that Christians hold a very high place in God's scheme of redemption as it has unfolded throughout the ages! But before we conclude this lesson, let me point out another noble group that has served those who are God's "elect"...]

IV. WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY "ANGELS"!

A. VERSE 12 TELLS US THAT ANGELS HAD A KEEN INTEREST...

1. In things prophesied by the prophets
2. In things proclaimed by the apostles through the gospel

B. WHY SUCH A KEEN INTEREST?

1. They too were involved in the process of foretelling and revealing the salvation in Christ!
 - a. E.g., Gabriel's appearances to Daniel - cf. **Dan 8, 9**
 - b. E.g., Gabriel's appearances to Zacharias and Mary - cf. **Lk 1:11-19, 26-38**
2. But like the prophets, angels were also in the dark concerning the details of coming salvation
3. And so, the angels were serving not themselves but us! - cf. **He 1:13-14**

CONCLUSION

1. Our Father in heaven must hold His "elect" (the church) in high regard to have them served by such a distinguished company!
2. To be so privileged should motivate us to praise God for His grace and to devote our lives in grateful service to Him and His people
3. But the grace God bestowed toward us reached its peak when addition to all these (prophets, the Holy Spirit, apostles, angels) He sent His only Son to serve us as well!

"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." - Mt 20:28

Shall we not respond with grateful service through faithful obedience to His Will?

Fortifying The Focus Of Our Hope

1 Peter 1:13

INTRODUCTION

1. Up to this point in his epistle, Peter has summarized some of the **blessings** enjoyed by God's "pilgrims"...
 - a. Their election, sanctification, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus - **1 Pe 1:2**
 - b. Their rebirth to a living hope - **1 Pe 1:3**
 - c. Their incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven - **1 Pe 1:4**
 - d. Their being kept by the power of God through faith for the salvation to come - **1 Pe 1:5**
 - e. Their great joy, which is inexpressible and full of glory - **1 Pe 1:6-9**
 - f. The honor of having been served by a distinguished group of individuals - **1 Pe 1:10-12**
2. Starting with **vs. 13** , we find a series of **exhortations** ...
 - a. These exhortations are based upon the wonderful blessings listed previously (note the connecting word "therefore")
 - b. These exhortations are found throughout much of the rest of the epistle
3. The first exhortation relates to the "hope" that we have as Christians - **1 Pe 1:13**
 - a. In which we are charged to "rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"
 - b. Put another way, we are being charged to "fortify the focus of our hope"
 - c. What this means, and how we are to accomplish it, will be the focus of this lesson

[Let's start by first noticing...]

I. OUR DUTY TO FORTIFY THE FOCUS OF OUR HOPE

A. THAT IS THE PRIMARY EXHORTATION IN THIS PASSAGE...

1. I.e., the words "rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you" is the main point of this verse
2. The other exhortations which precede it are subsidiary
3. And will be considered later

B. WHAT IT MEANS TO "REST YOUR HOPE FULLY"...

1. It means to "set your hope perfectly, unchangeably, without doubt and despondency"
2. As the NASV puts it: "fix your hope completely on the grace..."
3. Therefore Peter is exhorting us to make our hope one that is complete, strong, and not wavering

C. THE CULTIVATION OF A STRONG HOPE IS THEREFORE A CHRISTIAN DUTY...

1. We have a duty to develop and fortify our hope
2. Just as we need to cultivate patience, self-control, etc., so we need to cultivate our hope!
3. For without a hope that is strong...
 - a. Our faith may waver

- b. We are subject to fear, doubt, and depression
4. Yes, the cultivation (or fortification) of our hope is essential to living joyful and victorious lives as Christians!

[This is the main point of **vs. 13**, an exhortation to fortify our hope, to make it stronger. Just as we are to grow in faith and love, so we are to grow in hope! To do this effectively, it is important to give thought to...]

II. IDENTIFYING THE FOCUS OF OUR HOPE

A. AS DEFINED IN VERSE 13, OUR HOPE IS...

1. The “grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”
2. I.e., the unmerited favor that we will receive when Jesus comes again!

B. AS ALLUDED TO IN THE PRECEDING TWELVE VERSES, OUR HOPE IS...

1. The “inheritance...reserved in heaven for you” - **1 Pe 1:4**
2. The “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” - **1 Pe 1:5**
3. The “praise, honor, and glory” we shall receive “at the revelation of Jesus Christ” - **1 Pe 1:7**
4. The “end of your faith--the salvation of your souls” - **1 Pe 1:9**

C. IN VIEW OF ALL THESE VERSES, THE FOCUS OF OUR HOPE IS TO BE...

1. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wonderful grace He will bring!
2. The wonderful praise, honor, and glory we shall receive when He comes!
3. The complete and final salvation of our souls from sin and its effects!
4. The receiving of our wonderful inheritance, the heavenly city, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that does not fade away!

[Such is to be the focus of our hope. And as stated previously, the main charge in this passage to “rest our hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you” (to fortify the focus of your hope). How we accomplish this is now considered as we examine...]

III. WHAT IS NECESSARY TO FORTIFY THE FOCUS OUR HOPE

A. “GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND...”

1. “gird up” is an oriental expression...
 - a. It refers to the act of gathering up around the waist the long, loose robes worn by those in the east
 - b. Such “gathering up” was necessary or one’s progress in running or some other act of exertion would be impeded
2. With the use of this metaphor, Peter is saying...
 - a. We must put out of the mind all things that would impede the free action of the mind in connection with developing our hope
 - b. We must put out of the mind such things like worry, fear, or obsession with material possessions
3. I.e., remove anything and everything that is not conducive to having a strong hope in the coming of our Lord
 - a. Such as carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life - cf. **Lk 21:34-35**
 - b. Such things as these “choke” us and hinder our ability to bear fruit (such as the fruit of a strong hope) - cf. **Lk 8:14**

B. “BE SOBER...”

1. The word “sober” means “to be calm and collected in spirit, to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect”
2. It is that state of mind in which the individual is self-controlled, able to see things without the distortion caused by worry or fear
3. I.e., to fortify the focus of our hope requires a **calm** and **serious** attention to the task at hand - cf. **Lk 21:36** (“Watch therefore, and pray always...”)
4. We cannot cultivate and fortify a strong hope if we are so “weak-minded” that we allow things to divert us away from our true calling!

CONCLUSION

1. And what is our calling? To sojourn through this life as pilgrims, but with a hope that is resting fully upon the grace we will receive when Christ comes again!
2. The problem with many Christians today is **not** that they have no hope...
 - a. But that their hope is weak and shallow
 - b. And that is because they are preoccupied with the affairs of this temporary life
3. To remain faithful to the Lord, we need to heed the exhortation to fortify the focus of our hope by...
 - a. Freeing our minds of those things which would hinder us
 - b. Being more serious about the kind of lives our Heavenly Father would have us live - cf. **Lk 12: 35-40**

Our next lesson will elaborate upon how God would have us live; but for now, are we living for God at all?

Proper Conduct As Obedient Children

1 Peter 1:14-21

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we saw from **vs. 13** that we have the responsibility to fortify the focus of our hope and set it fully upon the grace that we are to receive when Jesus comes again
2. Another responsibility we have as Christians is to conduct ourselves as “**obedient children**” - **1 Pe 1:14**
3. While the need to be obedient is often misconstrued by some as sounding legalistic, it is stressed in the New Testament nonetheless - cf. **He 5:9; 2 Th 1:8**
4. In what way are we to be obedient? There is much the Bible has to say on the subject...
 - a. But in this lesson we shall focus our attention to **1 Pe 1:14-21**
 - b. Where we learn that “**Proper Conduct As Obedient Children**” has both negative and positive connotations (i.e., both “thou shalt nots” and “thou shalt”)

[For example, we learn from **vs. 14** that as “obedient children”...]

I. WE ARE NOT TO CONFORM TO FORMER LUSTS

A. UNDERSTANDING WHAT PETER IS SAYING...

1. The word “conform” (“fashion” in the KJV) means “**to conform one’s self (i.e. one’s**
2. The “former lusts” refer to the evil desires and behavior in which we once engaged, and in which the world continues to engage
3. In essence, then, Peter is saying:
 - a. “Don’t act like you once did, or like those still in the world.”
 - b. “Do not adopt their sinful habits, mannerisms, dress, and speech, which you did before you became Christians.”

B. APPLYING WHAT PETER IS SAYING...

1. We will not seek to act like those who are not Christians
2. For Christians are not to be “conformists”, but true “nonconformists”, or “transformists” - cf. **Ro 12:1-2**
 - a. “Conformists” simply imitate others, sometimes claiming to do so only outwardly
 - b. But “transformists” are those who:
 - 1) Have undergone a true change on the “inside”
 - 2) And who manifest the difference on the “outside”
3. To behave properly as “obedient children”, then, we need to be sure we are not adopting the sinful habits or mannerisms of those in the world
 - a. Like accepting the **popular fashions** of our society which appeal to fleshly desires
 - 1) E.g., short dresses, tight “designer jeans”, and other immodest apparel
 - 2) Christians, rather than conforming, are to adorn themselves in modest apparel - cf. **1 Ti 2:9-10**
 - b. Like filling our **speech** with suggestive language or jokes - cf. **Ep 4:29; 5:3-4**

- c. Or delighting in various forms of **entertainment** which cater to fleshly desires - cf. **Ph 4:8**
4. But too many Christians **do** conform to the world and its lusts...
 - a. Therefore it is not surprising to hear many becoming entrapped by the world
 - b. As is indicated by the rise of marital unfaithfulness and divorce
5. So Christians need to heed what Peter is saying (as well as what was said by John - **1 Jn 2:15-17**)

[In a more “positive” vein, we learn from **vs. 15-16** that as “obedient children”...]

II. WE ARE TO BE HOLY IN ALL OUR CONDUCT

A. CONCERNING THE WORD “HOLY”...

1. It is closely related to the words “sanctify” and “sanctification”
2. All of which stress the idea of being “set apart”
3. To be “holy”, then, means that we are “set apart” or dedicated to God

B. WE ARE TO BE “HOLY” FOR AT LEAST TWO REASONS...

1. The first reason is that given in our text: **“For I (God) am holy.”**
 - a. The God who has called us through His gospel is a holy God
 - b. He Himself is “set apart” from sin and wickedness
 - c. His very nature demands a similar holiness on our part - cf. **He 12:14**
2. **It is also Jesus’ desire** that we be holy (He died for this very purpose!) - cf. **Ep 5:25-27**

C. NOTE ALSO THAT WE ARE TO BE HOLY IN “ALL” OUR CONDUCT...!

1. Holiness is not something we put on when convenient, like on Sundays
2. Instead, our daily life, our entire conduct is to be “set apart” in service to the Lord - cf. **Ro 12:1**
3. For this to be true, every aspect of our life must be in harmony with God’s demand for holiness!
 - a. This means our work, our speech, our dress, our recreation...
 - b. ...**All** should be in harmony with the principles of God’s Word
4. Even the most mundane things, when done in keeping with God’s Will, become a part of our holy service to God!
5. Can it be said of our lives, that we are holy in all our conduct?
 - a. Do we go about our business, our play, with the thought of being “set apart” to the Will of God, so that it is evident in our business or play?
 - b. I am sure that all of us can improve in this area of our service as “obedient children”!

[There is one more point that can be made in reference to our conduct as “obedient children”, taken from **vs. 17-21...**]

III. WE MUST CONDUCT OURSELVES IN FEAR

A. AS PILGRIMS, “FEAR” HAS A PROPER PLACE DURING OUR SOJOURN...

1. Even as **Jesus** taught His disciples - **Mt 10:28**
2. And as **Paul** wrote the Philippians - **Ph 2:12**

B. PETER GIVES TWO REASONS FOR SUCH “FEAR”...

1. **In view of the judgment by our Father - 1 Pe 1:17**
 - a. He will not be partial - “without partiality”
 - b. He will be personal - “judges according to each one’s work”
-- No one will receive special favors, no one will escape His discerning eye!
2. **In view of the high cost of redemption - 1 Pe 1:18-21**
 - a. We were not redeemed from our sins with silver or gold
 - b. But only by the precious blood of Christ!
 - 1) Who was without blemish and without spot
 - 2) Who was foreordained to die for our sins before the world began
 - 3) Who came to this earth for our sakes
 - 4) By whom our faith and hope are in God!
 - c. Any Christian who does not conduct himself in a manner appreciative of the price paid for his sins, can expect a fate worse than death if he does not repent! - cf. **He 10:26-31**

CONCLUSION

1. From **vs. 14-21**, then, we learn that **“Proper Conduct As Obedient Children”** means that...
 - a. We are not to conform ourselves to former lusts
 - b. We are to be holy in all our conduct
 - c. We are to conduct ourselves in fear

2. Paul said much the same thing in writing to the church at Corinth:

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

(2 Co 7:1)

3. This we cannot do on our own, but by the redeeming grace of God...
 - a. We can be forgiven by the precious blood of Christ
 - b. We can be strengthened by the power of His Spirit to live the sort of lives pleasing to our Heavenly Father

Have you responded to the grace of God in order to receive such wonderful blessings? - cf. **Ac 2:38**

Loving One Another Fervently

1 Peter 1:22

INTRODUCTION

1. In our last study, we saw that **“Proper Conduct As Obedient Children”** means:
 - a. Not to conform ourselves to the former lusts - **1 Pe 1:14**
 - b. To be holy in all our conduct - **1 Pe 1:15-16**
 - c. To conduct ourselves in fear - **1 Pe 1:17-21**
2. Another responsibility we have as obedient children is found in **vs. 22...**
 - a. Simply stated, we are to “love one another fervently”.
 - b. A closer look at **vs. 22** reveals:
 - 1) What “fervent love” is
 - 2) And how it is possible for Christians to **“love one another fervently”**

[But before we take that closer look...]

I. WHY IS “FERVENT LOVE” IMPORTANT?

A. IT IS A DEMONSTRATION OF DISCIPLESHIP...

1. While Judas had gone to betray Him, Jesus gave a new commandment - **Jn 13:33-35**
2. It is a commandment to love one another, even as Jesus loved us
3. The reason for such a commandment: to convince the world that we are truly His disciples!
4. Where there is no “Christ-like love”, our actions betray our words
 - a. We may profess to be Christ’s disciples...
 - b. But failure to have a fervent love like Christ had for us will cause the world to doubt our discipleship!

B. IT IS A DEMONSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE...

1. “Love of the brethren” is an indication that we have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life - **1 Jn 3:14**
2. Failure to love the brethren is an indication that we are still spiritually dead!

C. THIRDLY, IT DEMONSTRATES OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD...

1. God is love, and those who truly love have been born of God - **1 Jn 4:7**
2. Failure to love leaves the impression that we have not been born again and that we do not truly know God! - **1 Jn 4:8**

[Certainly these three reasons should convince us that ‘loving one another fervently’ is important. But what qualifies as a “fervent love”? What kind of love will demonstrate our discipleship, our spiritual life, our relationship with God?]

II. WHAT IS “FERVENT LOVE”?

A. CLEARLY IT IS “FERVENT”...

1. The same word is used in reference to prayer in **Ac 12:5**

- a. There it is translated “constant” or “earnest”
 - b. Just as the disciples were constantly praying for the release of Peter, so our love for one another is to be “unceasing”
2. Therefore, only that love which is constant and earnest can qualify as “fervent love”

B. IT MUST ALSO BE “SINCERE”...

1. Translated “unfeigned” in some versions
2. The Greek word literally means “not hypocritical”
3. This makes it clear that “fervent love” is not to be some kind of show, but coming from the heart - cf. **Ro 12:9**

C. FINALLY, IT MUST ALSO BE “PURE”...

1. Love of the brethren must always be kept in the context of moral purity
2. Under no circumstances is our love to be a cover for sexual immorality - **Ep 5:2-3**
3. Pure, sincere, fervent love, then, is one that emulates Christ’s love, i.e., a sacrificial love!

[How do we measure up to this type of love? Do we have a pure and sincere love for one another? Does the word “fervently” accurately describe our feelings and actions towards each other? If our only contact with one another is a weekly assembly, and if we are not opening our hearts and our homes to one another, can it be said that we love one another fervently? Brethren, think upon these things! Finally...]

III. HOW IS “FERVENT LOVE” POSSIBLE?

A. IT IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OUR SOULS HAVE BEEN PURIFIED...

1. By obeying the truth we have been forgiven - **1 Pe 1:22**; cf. **Ac 2:38**
2. By continuing to heed the truth, we are taught to be pure - cf. **Ep 4:20-24**
3. Therefore we can be fervent in our love for it will be a pure love

B. IT IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN “BORN AGAIN”...

1. Born again by the incorruptible word of God! - cf. **1 Pe 1:23**
2. How does being born again by the Word of God prepare us to love one another fervently?
 - a. By the Word of God we come to know what true love really is
 - b. For the Word of God tells us of:
 - 1) The love of Jesus - **1 Jn 3:16-18**
 - 2) The love of God - **1 Jn 4:9-10**

C. IN OTHER WORDS...

1. We **can** have this fervent love because we have been purified and understand the need for a sincere, pure love of the brethren
2. We **will** have this fervent love, because the love of Jesus and God motivates us!

CONCLUSION

1. If we fail to “**love one another fervently**” with sincerity and purity, it is an indication that we either:
 - a. Have never been purified, born again
 - b. Or are not allowing the love of God and Jesus to motivate us

2. Furthermore, failure to love one another fervently presents a picture to the world which belies our claim to:
 - a. Be true disciples of Christ
 - b. Possess spiritual life
 - c. Have a relationship with God as our heavenly Father
3. Perhaps this is the reason Peter exhorts us to love one another fervently, not only here in **vs. 22**, but also in **1 Pe 4:8**!
4. In view of these truths found in God's Word, how are we doing in our love for one another...?
 - a. Even if we excel in this department, there is room for improvement - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**
 - b. In the days ahead, think of how you can be more fervent in your love of the brethren
 - c. But just don't think, **act!** Open your hearts and homes to each other!

If you are not a Christian, we want you to enjoy the blessings of God's love and the love of His children. But these blessings are only for those who have purified themselves by obeying the truth! Why not do so today?

The Living And Abiding Word

1 Peter 1:22-2:3

INTRODUCTION

1. As Christians, we are but pilgrims in this world; our lives are but a sojourn toward our true home which is in heaven...
 - a. But as we travel through this life, we are not left without a “spiritual road map”
 - b. To guide us on our journey, God in His grace has given us His wonderful Word, contained in the pages of what we call the Bible
2. What is sad is the fact...
 - a. That many people go through their lives and never seriously consult this book which can direct them to heaven
 - b. That even many Christians go through life ignorant of much of its content!
3. I am hoping that in the course of this lesson...
 - a. I can awaken any such people to the value of the wonderful Word of God
 - b. And that I can impress upon you the importance and necessity of reading the Word of God on a daily basis

[In an effort to do so, I encourage you to open your Bibles to **1 Pe 1:22-2:3**, where we read of the nature of God’s Word (read). Within this passage of scripture, we can glean various attributes possessed by the Word of God that make it so wonderful. Consider, then...]

I. THE WONDER OF GOD’S WORD

A. IT LIVES AND ABIDES FOREVER...

1. **Verses 23-25** stress this point:
 - a. “not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible”
 - b. “which lives abides forever”
 - c. “the Word of the Lord endures forever”
2. Jesus has also spoken of the indestructibility of the Word of God - **Mt 24:35**
3. History has borne out the fact that despite man’s efforts to destroy and do away with it, the Bible continues to endure forever
 - a. The efforts of **Diocletian**
 - 1) In 303 A.D. he proclaimed an edict requiring Christians and their sacred scriptures to be destroyed
 - 2) But within 25 years, the succeeding emperor ordered that 50 copies be made and distributed at government expense!
 - b. The claims of **Voltaire**, the French atheist (who died in 1778)
 - 1) He boasted that within 100 hundred years of his lifetime, Christianity would be swept from the earth
 - 2) But only fifty years after his death, his own printing press and house were being used by the Geneva Bible Society to produce stacks of Bibles!
4. How true, then, is the statement of Isaiah as quoted by Peter in **1 Pe 1:24-25**

B. IT CAN CAUSE ONE TO BE BORN AGAIN...

1. There is a law of science known as the Law of Biogenesis which states that “Life begets life”
2. Because the Word of God is what it is, it is able to produce spiritual life! What is it?
 - a. It is “incorruptible” seed which “lives and abides forever” - **1 Pe 1:23**
 - b. It is “living and powerful” - **He 4:12**
 - c. As Jesus said: “...The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” - **Jn 6:63**
3. When a person receives the Word of God and obeys it, he or she is truly born again! - cf. **Ja 1:18**

C. IT CAN PURIFY THE SOUL...

1. Notice carefully: “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth...” - **1 Pe 1:22**
2. By obeying the truth (the Word of God), our souls are purified - cf. **Jn 17:17**
3. That is because the truth contains the gospel, which when believed and obeyed, results in the remission of sins by the blood of Christ!

D. IT CAN PRODUCE CONTINUAL GROWTH...

1. “...desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,” - **1 Pe 2:2**
2. Spiritual growth as a Christian is totally dependent upon the Word of God!

[Do you see why the Word of God is too wonderful to neglect? There is no way you can destroy it, and if you desire to be born again and to grow spiritually, it is impossible without the incorruptible seed of the Word of God! Now if we desire to allow the Word of God to produce in our lives its desired effect (spiritual life and spiritual growth), there are at least two things mentioned by Peter which are essential...]

II. GROWING BY THE WORD OF GOD**A. FIRST, WE MUST PREPARE THE SOIL OF OUR HEARTS...**

1. Just as when we prepare the ground for planting a garden
 - a. We cleanse the ground of all insects and weeds
 - b. So that seeds can grow unhindered
2. Likewise, there are things Peter says we must lay aside...
 - a. **Malice** - an evil disposition, malignant spirit, a desire to injure another
 - b. **Guile** - that is, craftiness
 - c. **Hypocrisy** - deceptive and deceitful actions and attitudes
 - d. **Envy** - feelings of unhappiness because another has that which one desires for oneself
 - e. **Evil speaking** - slanderous and defamatory statements about others
 -- For the Word of God to flourish in our lives, we must rid ourselves of these things
3. Note also that these attributes must be rid of, if we are to be able to “love one another fervently” (as commanded in **1 Pe 1:22**)

B. SECOND, WE MUST HAVE THE PROPER DESIRE FOR THE WORD...

1. Peter illustrates the proper desire...
 - a. We are to be like “newborn babes” who desire milk - **1 Pe 2:2-3**
 - b. Just as babies “long” for milk, we are to “long” for the Word of God
2. Do our present attitudes toward the Word of God indicate such longing?
 - a. Do we demand regular feeding upon the Word of God?
 - b. If we feasted upon food as often as we feasted upon the Word of God, would we

- survive physically? - cf. **Mt 4:4; Ps 119:165; Jer 15:16**
3. Failure to have this longing for the Word of God is a main reason for the lack of spiritual growth in many today
 - a. It is why many do not overcome sin in their lives - cf. **1 Jn 2:14**
 - b. It is why many never become the godly men and women you would expect of Christians who have been such for 5,10, 15 years or more
 4. A question I often raise...
 - a. If we do not read, study and meditate upon the Bible daily...
 - b. If we go year after year, failing to read through the Bible on a regular basis...
 - Can it be said that we have the proper desire for the Word of God?

CONCLUSION

1. The Word of God is too wonderful for Christians to neglect! Yet I dare to say that there has been a wholesale neglect of the Word of God among Christians in the Lord's church today
2. "If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious", as Peter says, if you have been born again by the Word of God, then I plead with you to make Bible reading an integral part of your daily life!

If you have not even obeyed the gospel, why not do so this very day? For the wonderful Word of which we have been speaking is contained within the gospel (cf. **1 Pe 1:25b; Mk 16:15-16**).

Yes, be born again through obedience to the Word of God (cf. **1 Pe 1:22-23**), and begin a life where you can continue to grow, feeding upon "**The Living And Abiding Word!**"

Jesus: Cornerstone, Or Stumblingstone?

1 Peter 2:4-10

INTRODUCTION

1. When the infant Jesus was being presented to the Lord at the temple, an interesting statement was made concerning Him by Simeon:

“Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel...”
(Lk 2:34)

2. In other words, Jesus was destined to have different effects on different people...
 - a. To some, He would be the cause of their rising
 - b. For others, He would be their down fall
3. In **1 Pe 2:4-10**, the apostle Peter expands upon this same theme...
 - a. To some people, Jesus serves as a **“cornerstone”**
 - b. To others, He is a **“stumblingstone”**

[What’s the difference? Well...]

I. TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE, JESUS IS A “CORNERSTONE”

A. HE IS A “LIVING STONE”... (4)

1. Which was rejected by men
 - a. As stated by John in **Jn 1:10-11**
 - b. Instead, they crucified Him
2. And yet, He was chosen by God, considered to be precious
 - a. As foretold in **Psa 118:22**, God has taken that which was rejected by men and made it the cornerstone
 - b. The cornerstone of what?

B. THE “CORNERSTONE” OF A GREAT SPIRITUAL HOUSE OR TEMPLE... (5-6)

1. Upon which we are being built
2. The same thought or illustration is used by the apostle Paul - **1 Co 3:9-11, 16-17; Ep 2:19-22**
3. As this spiritual house built upon Christ, we fulfill certain responsibilities...
 - a. We serve as a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God, e.g.:
 - 1) Our bodies - **Ro 12:1-2**
 - 2) Our praise - **He 3:15**
 - 3) Our doing good and sharing - **He 13:16**
 - 4) Even our deaths - **2 Ti 4:6-8**
 - b. We therefore serve as God’s special people (**9-10**)
 - 1) With a special task of proclaiming the praises of God
 - 2) For by His grace...
 - a) We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light
 - b) We who were not a people, are now the people of God

c) We have obtained mercy!

C. JESUS IS ALSO THE ROCK UPON WHICH WE AS INDIVIDUALS BUILD OUR LIVES...

1. By following His teachings, we are able to establish our lives on solid ground - **Mt 7:24-27**
2. And this enables us to withstand the “storms” of life

[So in more ways than one, Jesus is truly a “cornerstone” to those who believe in Him and follow Him. But what about those who do not believe in Jesus, who do not make Him the “cornerstone” of their lives?]

II. TO THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE, JESUS IS A “STUMBLINGSTONE”

A. THERE IS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE... (7-8)

1. Either Jesus is the cornerstone...
 - a. Upon which we are being built as stones in His temple (the church)
 - b. Upon which we are building our lives by following His teaching
2. Or He will be the “stumblingstone” over which we will meet our doom!

B. THAT JESUS WOULD BE A STUMBLINGSTONE TO SOME...

1. Was foretold by Isaiah, which Peter quotes - cf. **Isa 8:13-15**
2. We saw that Simeon also foresaw the same thing when Jesus was presented in the temple as a newborn - **Lk 2:34**
3. Even Jesus saw Himself as this stumblingstone - **Mt 21:42-44**

C. SADLY, JESUS HAS BECOME A STUMBLINGSTONE TO ISRAEL...

1. Cf. **Ro 9:30-33; 1 Co 1:23**
2. Jesus was a stumbling block to the Jews because...
 - a. They thought that they could attain righteousness by keeping the Law
 - b. They could not accept the need for a suffering Messiah to atone for their sins!

D. IN A SIMILAR WAY, JESUS IS A STUMBLINGSTONE FOR MANY PEOPLE TODAY...

1. Pride prevents them from accepting Jesus on His terms!
2. They think that they can please God and go to heaven on the basis of their good deeds
3. Therefore, they are unwilling...
 - a. To confess their sinfulness, and their need for Jesus Christ
 - b. To turn their lives over to Jesus, and to do His Will

E. THE SAD PART IS THIS: TO THOSE WHO STUMBLE BY BEING DISOBEDIENT, DOOM AWAITS...!

1. For such doom has been appointed by God - **1 Pe 2:8**
2. Such is logically necessary, for without Christ...
 - a. We will die in our own sins - cf. **Jn 8:24**
 - b. Righteous punishment can only follow - cf. **Re 20:11-15**

CONCLUSION

1. We often sing “**Jesus, Rock of Ages,**” for truly Jesus is like a rock. But what kind of rock is He

to us?

2. If we are willing to believe and obey Slim, He can be the **cornerstone** ...
 - a. Upon which we can be added as part of His church, the spiritual temple
 - b. Upon which can build our lives so as to have a full and meaningful life

3. But if we disbelieve and are disobedient, then by necessity Jesus will be our **stumblingstone** ...
 - a. Over which we will fall
 - b. Under which we will be broken and be ground to powder

There is no middle ground. What will Jesus be for you? Are you obedient to His Word?

Spiritual Sacrifices Acceptable To God

1 Peter 2:5

INTRODUCTION

1. An important principle taught in the New Testament is that of “**The Priesthood Of All Believers**”
 - a. It is true that under the Law of Moses there was a distinction made between priests the common people
 - b. Even today, many religions professing to be Christian have developed a clergy-laity distinction
 - c. But the New Testament teaches otherwise - **Re 1:5-6; 1 Pe 2:9**
2. The fact is, in Christ we are **all** “clergy”
 - a. I used to say that we had no clergy in the church, but in reality we have no “laity”
 - b. Does this mean we are all free to use “clergy-parking”? I’ll let you discuss that with the security guards at the hospitals! <grin>
3. As “**a royal priesthood**”, our responsibilities are described in **1 Pe 2:5**
 - a. “to offer up spiritual sacrifices”
 - b. “sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”
4. My goal in this lesson...
 - a. Is to make sure that we understand our duties as “a holy priesthood”
 - b. And to encourage us to carry them out faithfully

[Let’s take a closer look at the idea of “spiritual sacrifices”...]

I. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

A. TYPES OF SACRIFICES TO BE OFFERED BY CHRISTIANS...

1. Our bodies, as “living sacrifices” - **Ro 12:1-2**
2. A lifestyle characterized by sacrificial love - **Ep 5:1-2**
3. Praise and thanksgiving, which we do in prayer and song - **He 13:15**
4. Doing good and sharing with others - **He 13:16; Ph 4:15-18**
5. Even in the way we die for the Lord! - **Ph 1:20; 2:17; 2 Ti 4:6**

B. THE PURPOSE OF THESE SACRIFICES...

1. In the Old Testament, sacrifices were offered for one of two reasons...
 - a. For those **out** of fellowship with God, to restore them back to the Lord
 - b. For those **in** fellowship with God, to express thanksgiving, praise, love and devotion
2. But in the New Testament...
 - a. Only Jesus can provide the sacrifice needed to restore us back to God - **He 10:11-18**
 - b. Therefore, it should be clearly understood that our sacrifices are not to “remove sin” or in any other way to try to “earn our way” into heaven!
3. Rather, to express thanksgiving and praise, love and devotion, for the goodness and mercy God has shown to us!

[Such is the nature of the “spiritual sacrifices” we offer to God. But as our text says, they must be “acceptable to God”. We can learn some valuable lessons from the Book of **Malachi** about what constitutes “acceptable sacrifices”...]

II. ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

A. IT MUST BE THE BEST WE HAVE TO OFFER...

1. Otherwise we despise the Name of God by offering “defiled food” - cf. **Mal 1:6-8**
2. Would we render the same kind of service to our employers, etc.?
3. If not, God would rather someone “shut the doors” or let someone else serve Him - cf. **Mal 1:9-11**

B. IT MUST BE OFFERED WITH SINCERITY AND ZEAL...

1. Lack of zeal is evidence of lack of sincerity! - cf. **Mal 1:12-13**
2. Lack of both results in offering “blemished sacrifices”, which brings a curse from Him who deserves proper reverence - **Mal 1:14-2:1-9**
3. How does this apply to our spiritual sacrifices?
 - a. Like singing praises?
 - b. Like doing good to others?

C. IT MUST BE OFFERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH RIGHTEOUS LIVES...

1. The priests of Malachi’s day had been quick to divorce their wives - cf. **Mal 2:13-16**
2. Even Peter taught that our treatment of wives would have a bearing on the effectiveness of our prayers - **1 Pe 3:7**
3. This can be applied to many other things as well - cf. **Ps 41:1-3**

CONCLUSION

1. Some in Malachi’s day did not think it of any value to serve the Lord faithfully - **Mal 3:13-15**
2. But others heeded his words, and it is touching to read what was said about them - **Mal 3:16-18**
3. Shall we be among those who serve God? May we never forget that in the sight of God we are...
 - a. To be “a royal priesthood”
 - b. called to offer “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”!

May God help us to truly be one of His “jewels”!

A Plea To Pilgrims

1 Peter 2:11-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Having said that as Christians we are...
 - a. “a chosen generation”
 - b. “a royal priesthood”
 - c. “a holy nation”
 - d. God’s “own special people”...Peter makes a heartfelt plea concerning our conduct before those in the world - **1 Pe 2:11-12**

2. As we consider this “**Plea To Pilgrims**”, remember that Peter is speaking by inspiration; i.e., it is actually **God** who is making this plea!

[Before we examine the plea itself, let’s notice some things mentioned in the passage that serve as...]

I. THE BASIS OF THE PLEA

A. YOU ARE “BELOVED”...

1. Beloved by whom?
 - a. By Peter, of course - **1 Pe 2:12**; cf. also **1 Pe 4:12**
 - b. By Paul, James, John, & Jude, all of whom used this same term of endearment
 - c. But most of all, we are beloved of God and Jesus! - cf. **Ro 1:7**; **Co 3:12**
2. It is out such human and divine love that this plea is made

B. YOU ARE “SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS”...

1. You have not yet reached your heavenly home
2. As we will see later, failure to heed the plea will mean you will never reach it!
3. In view of that real possibility, we find this plea made even in form of “begging”!

C. YOU ARE ENGAGED IN WARFARE...

1. A war in which “fleshly lusts” wage war against the “soul”
2. The outcome of this “war” will determine whether or not we will reach our heavenly home

D. YOU ARE BEING OBSERVED BY OTHERS...

1. Some of which who often speak evil of you (even as they did of Christ)
2. But by heeding this plea, it is possible to cause those very ones who speak evil of you to glorify God in “the day of visitation”
 - a. This “day of visitation” might refer to the Day of Judgment
 - b. In my opinion, it refers to the “day” when God’s grace is shown through a presentation of the gospel to them - cf. **Lk 19:44**
 - c. In either case, we have an opportunity to bring glory to God by the way we heed this plea

[In view of these four reasons, then, God through Peter is making a heartfelt plea. What is this plea? It contains two parts, which we shall now look at closely...]

II. THE PLEA ITSELF

A. TO “ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS”...

1. The word “abstain” means “to hold one’s self constantly back”
2. From what are we to abstain?
 - a. “Fleshly lusts”, some of which are defined by Paul in **Ga 5:19-21**
 - b. Notice that they involve more than just “sexual” sins (such as fornication)
 - c. They also include sins of the “emotions” (hatred, outbursts of wrath, jealousies, envy, etc.)
3. Why must we “hold ourselves constantly back” from these things?
 - a. According to Peter, they “wage war against the soul”
 - b. According to Paul, they can keep us out of the kingdom of God! - cf. **Ga 5:21**
 - c. So if we want to succeed in our spiritual “pilgrimage” and reach our heavenly destination, we must heed this “plea to pilgrims”!
4. How can one abstain from fleshly lusts? In his epistles, Paul explains how...
 - a. Keep your mind on the things of the Spirit, and not on the things of the flesh - **Ro 8:5-6**
 - b. Grow in Christ, and don’t provide opportunities for the fulfillment of fleshly lusts - **Ro 13:13-14**
 - c. Should such opportunities arise, flee them (remember Joseph and Potiphar’s wife?), and pursue after that which is good - cf. **2 Ti 2:22**

[By following Paul’s advice, we can win the “war” between the flesh and soul, and successfully complete our pilgrimage! But abstaining from fleshly lusts is not the only thing expected of God’s pilgrims...]

B. TO “HAVE HONORABLE CONDUCT”...

1. The word “honorable” (“honest”, KJV) in the Greek is “**kalos**”
 - a. It means that which is good, beautiful, harmonious, and lovely
 - b. I.e., our conduct is to be something beautiful and refreshing to behold
2. We can have conduct that is “honorable”...
 - a. If on the one hand, we abstain from “fleshly lusts”
 - b. And on the other hand, we do “good works” (“good” is the same word in the Greek as “honorable”)
3. We have seen what are “fleshly lusts”, what “good works” can we do that are beautiful to behold?
 - a. We can see to the needs of those who are poor, fatherless, widowed, sick, and otherwise afflicted - cf. **Ja 1:27**
 - b. We can demonstrate love and hospitality to brethren, friends, neighbors, even strangers - **He 13:1-3**
 - c. We can react kindly to those who despise us, speak evil of us, and mistreat us - **Lk 6:27-31**
4. The effect of such conduct is that it will likely prompt others to glorify God!
 - a. As Jesus taught us in **Mt 5:16**
 - b. Even those who at the present may speak against us as evildoers! - **1 Pe 2:12**

CONCLUSION

1. By heeding this “**Plea To Pilgrims**” as found in **1 Pe 2:11-12**, it is possible to accomplish several

things at the same time...

- a. We can save ourselves
 - b. We can glorify God
 - c. We might even help save those who presently speak evil of us!
2. As the “people of God” who have “obtained mercy” (**1 Pe 2:10**), can we do any less?
- a. Abstain, then, from those fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul!
 - b. Conduct yourselves, then, in ways that are honorable and a thing of beauty for others to behold!
-- In so doing, you will ensure the successful completion of your spiritual pilgrimage!

Speaking of the mercy of God, have you received the mercy that comes through the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”? - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**

Pilgrims And The Governments Of Men

1 Peter 2:13-17

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout our study in 1st Peter, we have noticed that as “pilgrims” those who are Christians have many blessings and responsibilities
2. For example, in our previous study we saw that as “pilgrims and sojourners” we are to have our conduct honorable among those with whom we live
3. But what about our responsibilities to those governments of men under which we live?
4. When our true citizenship is in heaven, do we have any responsibilities to the countries on earth?

[Peter addresses this very question in **1 Pe 2:13-17...**]

I. THE PILGRIMS' RESPONSIBILITY IN ONE WORD: SUBMIT! (13-14)

A. WE ARE TO “SUBMIT...TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN”...

1. The word “**submit**”...
 - a. Means “be subject to,” signifying “to place one’s self under subjection; to render one’s self subordinate”
 - b. This will not be the only time in this epistle that Christians will be told to be submissive - cf. **1 Pe 2:18; 3:1; 5:5**
2. In this case, we are told to submit “**to every ordinance of man**”
 - a. The word “ordinance” literally means “a creation”
 - 1) The Greeks and Romans were accustomed to describe the appointment of officers as the “creation” of them
 - 2) Therefore, the expression “ordinance” actually refers...
 - a) Not to a particular law passed by government
 - b) But to the civil government or institution itself
 - 3) Cf. the NASV, “to every human institution”
 - b. Note also, we are to submit to **every** human institution
 - 1) Whether it be a monarchy, democracy, or totalitarian state
 - 2) The responsibility of pilgrims is still the same: submit!

B. PAUL TAUGHT THE SAME PRINCIPLE...

1. We are to be subject to the governing authorities (“higher powers”, KJV) - **Ro 13:1**
2. We **must** be subject, and show such submission by paying taxes and customs, and showing respect and honor to our officials - **Ro 13:5-7**

[Our responsibility as pilgrims to the governments of men under which we live is quite simple: Submit to them. But submission is not always an easy thing to do. What reasons do Peter and Paul give that might motivate us to submit to our governments as we should?]

II. REASONS WHY WE MUST SUBMIT (15-17)

A. PETER GIVES US TWO GOOD REASONS...

1. First and foremost, **“this is the will of God” - 1 Pe 2:15a**
 - a. Cf. also, “for the Lord’s sake” - **1 Pe 2:13**
 - b. That ought to suffice for all true servants of God
 - c. But Peter does explain why this is the Lord’s will...
2. That we may **“put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” - 1 Pe 2:15b**
 - a. Because of their allegiance to a heavenly King, Christians are often falsely accused of sedition or treason - e.g., **Ac 17:5-8**
 - b. By doing good (e.g., submitting to the governing authorities), we can “silence” (lit., muzzle) such ignorant charges

B. PAUL GIVES US ANOTHER GOOD REASON...

1. Governing authorities that exist have been appointed by God! - **Ro 13:1**
 - a. This truth is emphasized in the book of Daniel - cf. **Dan 2:20-21; 4:17, 25a, 32a**
 - b. Even those that are evil, which God uses for His divine purposes and then replaces - cf. **Exo 9:16** (Egypt); **Isa 10:5-12** (Assyria)
2. This being the case, to resist the government means to resist God Himself! - **Ro 13:2-4**

[So lest we find ourselves resisting against God Himself, let God’s “pilgrims” freely submit to the powers ruling over them. In so doing, we will also silence those who might falsely accuse us of wrongdoing. But is the principle of submission to government without exception? Is there ever a time when Christians are justified in refusing to obey governmental authorities? From Peter himself, we learn...]

III. THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE**A. IT IS NOT JUST WHEN GOVERNMENT IS OPPRESSIVE...**

1. Consider the government and conditions under which Peter and Paul wrote:
 - a. The government was totalitarian, with Nero as ruler, an evil, despotic emperor
 - b. Under his reign, Christians suffered greatly - cf. **1 Pe 4:12-13; 5:8-9**
 - c. Eventually, even Peter himself was crucified, and Paul was beheaded
2. Under such oppressive governments, our responsibilities remain clear:
 - a. We are to submit
 - b. We are to pray for our rulers, that peace may prevail - cf. **1 Ti 2:1-2**
 - c. Who knows? Perhaps God who “removes kings and raises up kings” will answer our prayers and give us rulers who are good and just!

B. THE EXCEPTION: WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN...!

1. As illustrated by Peter and the rest of the apostles - cf. **Ac 4:18-20; 5:27-29**
2. Only when government tries to force us to disobey God, must we then disobey the government
3. Even then, it is only the particular laws designed to force us to disobey God that we have a right to break; we have no authority to break other laws in protest
4. Rather, we are charged to pray for those in authority, and submit to them in all other areas

CONCLUSION

1. Such is our responsibility as pilgrims under whatever government we may find ourselves as we

sojourn here on earth...

- a. Even though we have liberty and freedom in Christ, we should use that freedom in serving the Lord - cf. **1 Pe 2:16**
 - b. As we do so, we will show honor and respect to those in authority - cf. **1 Pe 2:17**
2. Of course, we who live in countries that allow freedom of religion should be especially quick to show our respect and submission, and to thank God daily for this wonderful privilege!

Speaking of freedom of religion, are we taking advantage of such freedom by rendering obedience to God? Perhaps there are those who have not yet done so... - cf. **He 5:9**

Commendable Conduct Before God

1 Peter 2:18-25

INTRODUCTION

1. Our last study introduced the importance of submission to human institutions that rule over us - **1 Pe 2:13-17**
2. Now in **vs. 18-25**, Peter addresses those who were servants, emphasizing again the principle of submission
3. In the course of his instructions, Peter mentions conduct that is considered “commendable” before God...
 - a. In the NKJV, the word “commendable” is used twice - **1 Pe 2:19,20**
 - b. The NASV translates it as “finds favor”
4. In this study, we shall consider...
 - a. What is commendable conduct before God
 - b. Why it is considered commendable
 - c. How we can be sure to have this “**Commendable Conduct Before God**”

[First of all, then...]

I. WHAT IS COMMENDABLE CONDUCT BEFORE GOD?

A. TO SUFFER PATIENTLY WHEN MISTREATED FOR DOING GOOD...

1. Consider the example given by Peter...
 - a. A servant is trying to serve his master well
 - b. For some reason, however, his master mistreats him
 - c. The servant “finds favor” in God’s sight if he patiently and submissively endures the mistreatment!
2. To put it in other words:
 - a. When you are doing that which is good...
 - b. And despite it you are being mistreated...
 - c. But you endure the unjust treatment patiently...
 - d. Your patient forbearance is commendable in the sight of God!
3. Note carefully:
 - a. It is not simply suffering patiently that is commendable
 - b. But suffering patiently when you did good, and yet are abused for it - **1 Pe 2:20**

B. IS THIS APPLICABLE ONLY IN A MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONSHIP...?

1. No! Consider **1 Pe 3:13-14,17**, where Peter speaks to brethren in general
2. In writing to servants, then, Peter is applying a general truth to a specific application
3. It is therefore applicable to any situation where we are told to submit...
 - a. E.g., in our relationship to government - **1 Pe 2:13**
 - b. E.g., in a wife’s relationship to her husband - **1 Pe 3:1**
 - c. E.g., in our relationship to one another - cf. **Ep 5:21**

[So whenever we do good and suffer for it, to endure that suffering patiently is “**Commendable Conduct Before God.**” But that is hard! It is our natural inclination to resist and defend ourselves when we are “in the right” and being mistreated. Indeed, we want to “stand up for our rights.” To appreciate why patiently enduring suffering while doing good is commendable before God, let’s address the question...]

II. WHY IS THIS CONDUCT COMMENDABLE BEFORE GOD?

A. WE WERE CALLED FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE...!

1. Consider **1 Pe 2:21-23**
 - a. Christians are called to follow the example of Jesus
 - b. Just as He suffered patiently when mistreated without cause, so should we!
2. We have therefore been called to respond to ill treatment with good treatment - cf. **1 Pe 3:9; Lk 6:27-36**

B. IN VIEW OF THE POTENTIAL GOOD THAT CAN RESULT...!

1. See what Jesus accomplished by His patient forbearance to mistreatment done to Him! - cf. **1 Pe 2:24-25**
 - a. The forgiveness of our sins!
 - b. The restoration of straying sheep back to their Shepherd!
2. By following the example of Jesus, we can have an effect for good also
 - a. Returning good for evil, we are more likely to overcome evil - **Ro 12:19-21**
 - b. In this way we are more likely to change those who persecute us
 - c. For they are often ashamed when they see how we patiently endure their mistreatment by doing good

[Just as we were moved by the sacrificial death of Jesus for our sins, so we might best move others to change their evil ways by patiently doing good even when they mistreat us. That is why we have been called to follow the example of Jesus! Finally, here are some suggestions to the question...]

III. HOW WE CAN BE SURE TO HAVE THIS COMMENDABLE CONDUCT?

A. “REJOICE” THAT YOU ARE COUNTED WORTHY TO SUFFER...

1. So Peter commanded later in this epistle - **1 Pe 4:12-14**; cf. also **Ac 5:41**
2. Just as Christ did in His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:10-12**
3. Knowing that we are blessed in the sight of God, and have joined a great group of prophets, apostles, and disciples in suffering for Christ, can help us to have the proper attitude (one of joy, not vengeance)
4. Even if those mistreating us do not know that we are Christians, if our response is governed by Christ’s teachings, we can still have satisfaction in knowing that God is pleased!

B. “RESIST” THE TEMPTATION TO RETALIATE...

1. When we suffer mistreatment by others, Satan is behind it all - cf. **1 Pe 5:8-9**
2. He would love to hinder the cause of Christ by having us retaliate just as people in the world would, proving that Christians are no different than sinners of the world
3. Don’t let him win!

C. “RESPOND” TO MISTREATMENT BY DOING MORE GOOD...

1. When mistreated for doing good, just do more good! - cf. **1 Pe 3:9; Ro 12:20-21**
2. For “**endure**” (**1 Pe 2:19**) means “**to bear from underneath, i.e. (fig.) to undergo hardship**”, thus to bear up under pressure
3. There is nothing noble (commendable) about stopping when “the going gets tough”; but when “the tough get going”, and going about doing good, now **that** is commendable!

D. “RELY” ON GOD...

1. Suffering patiently when mistreated for doing good does not always bring immediate satisfaction
2. We must therefore trust in God, believing that His will is best
3. So just as Jesus “committed Himself to Him judges righteously” (**1 Pe 2:23**), so should we - **1 Pe 4:19**
4. And if our Christ-like behavior does not change the behavior of those who mistreat us, God will one day do what is right - cf. **Ro 12:19; 2 Th 1:6**

CONCLUSION

1. Hopefully by following the “four R’s” (**rejoice, resist, respond, rely**) we can follow in the steps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
2. If so, then we can be sure to have “**Commendable Conduct Before God**”!

We have made reference to what Jesus accomplished by suffering for us, how He bore our sins on the tree (**1 Pe 2:24**). Peter also says Jesus did this so “that we, having died to sins might live for righteousness”.

Have you “died to sins”? Do you even know how that it is accomplished? The answer is found in **Ro 6:1-8...**

Our Duties As Wives And Husbands

1 Peter 3:1-7

INTRODUCTION

1. In this study of 1st Peter, we are seeing that God teaches the Christian how to conduct himself in all relations of life...
 - a. **Before God**, he is to be holy, even as God is holy - **1 Pe 1:14-16**
 - b. **Before the world**, he is to live an honorable life, one filled with good works - **1 Pe 2:11-12**
 - c. **As a citizen**, he is to submit to civil authorities - **1 Pe 2:13-17**
 - d. **As a servant**, he is to do good, even it means to suffer patiently the mistreatment of others - **1 Pe 2:18-25**
2. As we come to chapter three, we find there are also certain responsibilities in our relations as husbands and wives - **1 Pe 3:1-7**
3. In a society where “dysfunctional families” seem to be the norm, it is even more imperative that the people of God demonstrate through their families that which is the will of God, and is “honorable” (good, beautiful to behold) conduct

[Our text goes a long way in describing the sort of conduct that is “honorable” for wives and husbands, beginning with...]

I. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WIVES

A. BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR HUSBANDS... (1-2)

1. The word “likewise” refers back to the discussion in the previous chapter
 - a. In which the principle of submission has already been applied to:
 - 1) Our responsibility to governmental authorities
 - 2) The servant’s relationship to his master
 - b. This would suggest that the same principles discussed earlier hold true to wives in their relationship with husbands
 - 1) I.e., to submit not only to the good, but also to the harsh - cf. **1 Pe 2:18**
 - 2) That if a wife suffers wrong from her husband when she was doing good, it is commendable before God if she bear that mistreatment patiently - cf. **1 Pe 2:19**
2. The value of submission is best illustrated in the case where a Christian wife is married to an unbeliever
 - a. He might be converted by her “conduct”
 - 1) Even though he might not have previously obeyed “**the**” word (the gospel)...
 - 2) Without “**a**” word (persistent nagging), he may be reached by her conduct!
 - b. The type of “**conduct**” likely to have that effect is described as:
 - 1) “**chaste**” - that is, purity in all manner of life
 - 2) “**accompanied by fear**” - that is, reverence; which in this case...
 - a) Is manifested toward the husband
 - b) And is an attitude consistent with the principle of “submission”
3. So the first duty of wives as outlined by Peter is that of “submission”, especially if the husband is unbeliever

B. ADORN YOURSELVES PROPERLY... (3-4)

1. It is likely that Peter's comments are in the form of a **"Hebraism"**
 - a. I.e., a Hebrew idiom (form of speech) commonly found in the Scriptures
 - b. In this case, there is a contrast ("not this...but this") for the sake of emphasis
 - c. A good example of this is found in **Jn 6:27**
 - 1) Jesus is not saying that it is wrong to work so we can eat
 - 2) But that our priority in life should be to have everlasting life
2. A similar emphasis by way of contrast is being made by Peter
 - a. I.e., don't let your emphasis on "beauty" pertain to outward adornment
 - b. Not that is always wrong to arrange the hair, wear gold, or put on apparel
 - c. But place your emphasis elsewhere!
3. Let your beauty be "the hidden person of the heart"
 - a. Conduct yourself so that beauty of the "inner person" shines forth
 - b. Where people notice more "who" you are rather than "what" you wear!
4. It is a "gentle and quiet spirit" that constitutes true inner beauty
 - a. Unlike hair, gold, and apparel, it is incorruptible! - cf. **2 Co 4:16**
 - b. It is also very precious in the sight of God - cf. **Isa 66:1-2**
5. So Christian women, let your inner beauty be your most noticeable feature!
 - a. Without inner beauty, any outward beauty is like a ring of gold in the nose of a pig! - **Pro 11:22**
 - b. Parents, are we teaching this truth (by word and example) to our daughters?

C. BE "DAUGHTERS OF SARAH"... (5-6)

1. Remember, the holy women in the Old Testament who trusted in God...
 - a. Adorned themselves with a gentle and quiet spirit
 - b. Were submissive to their husbands
2. A case in point is that of **Sarah**:
 - a. Who was so beautiful outwardly...
 - 1) That Pharaoh wanted her when she was over 65 years old!
 - 2) That the king of the Philistines wanted her when she was over 90 years old, and long past the age of childbearing!
 - b. Yet her true beauty was demonstrated by her submissive spirit (calling her husband "lord")
3. Christian women can become the "daughters of Sarah," provided they...
 - a. "do good" (be submissive to their husbands)
 - b. "are not afraid of any terror" (composed with a gentle and quiet spirit)

[To be considered a "daughter of Sarah" by God would be a very special honor! It can be had by any woman who heeds the words of the apostle Peter. But a failure to heed these words will result in being more like a "daughter of Jezebel." Remember, she delighted in her physical beauty and in manipulating her husband. May such never be true of women professing godliness and wearing the name of Christ!

Peter's instructions to husbands are brief, but nonetheless extremely important...]

II. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HUSBANDS**A. DWELL WITH YOUR WIVES "WITH UNDERSTANDING"...**

1. The KJV says "with knowledge"

2. Husbands are expected to know, and understand...
 - a. Their responsibilities in marriage - e.g., **Ep 5:25**
 - b. The nature of women, as “weaker vessels”
 - 1) Refers to physical strength
 - 2) Not to intellectual abilities, moral courage, or spiritual strength
3. Such understanding is to govern how the husband lives with his wife -- with love and thoughtfulness

B. “GIVE HONOR” TO THE WIFE...

1. The word “give” means “to assign”
2. “honor” involves the idea of that which is “precious, of high value”
3. So the husband is to assign the honor of being precious and of high value in his sight
4. A good reason to consider our wives in such light: they are truly “heirs together of the grace of life”
5. I.e., sisters in Christ, and therefore worthy of the respect we give any other child of God!

C. “THAT YOUR PRAYERS MAY NOT BE HINDERED”...

1. Here is good reason to heed Peter’s instruction!
2. The word “hindered” literally means “cut off”
3. Thus the way we treat our wives may result in our access to God being cut off!
4. This is what happened to the O.T. priests who divorced their wives - cf. **Mal 2:13-14**

CONCLUSION

1. We learn from Peter, then, that how we conduct ourselves as husbands and wives can have a bearing on our personal relationship with God
 - a. If wives are to be considered “very precious in the sight of God...”
 - b. If husbands are to keep open the avenue of their prayers to God...
-- Then we must apply the principles in this passage (**1 Pe 3:1-7**) to our lives!
2. If we do, then we all can be “heirs together of the grace of life!”

Speaking of being heirs of the grace of life, do you know one can become such an heir? - cf. **Ti 3:3-7**

Our Duties To Each Other

1 Peter 3:8-12

INTRODUCTION

1. So far in his epistle, Peter has defined the Christian's duties in various relationships...
 - a. Our duty in relation to those of the world - **1 Pe 2:11-12**
 - b. Our duty in relation to governmental authorities - **1 Pe 2:13-17**
 - c. Our duty in a servant-master relationship - **1 Pe 2:18-25**
 - d. Our duty in wife-husband relationships - **1 Pe 3:1-7**
2. Beginning now in **verse 8** of the **third chapter**, Peter defines our duty to each other as brethren in Christ...

[Peter will provide motivation to fulfill our duties to one another in **vs. 10-12**, but let's first consider what these duties are...]

I. OUR DUTIES TO EACH OTHER (8-9)

A. TO "BE OF ONE MIND" (NASV, "harmonious")...

1. That is, to be united in the same purpose, the same goal
2. Jesus prayed for this kind of unity in **Jn 17:20-21**
3. A church that demonstrated this "oneness of mind" is that of Jerusalem - **Ac 4:32**
4. How can we have this "oneness of mind"?
 - a. It is attainable only to the extent that we all submit to the will of God
 - b. Therefore, we all need to make God's Will our will, His Purpose our purpose
 - c. Even as Christ did while on earth - cf. **Jn 5:30**

B. TO HAVE "COMPASSION FOR ONE ANOTHER" (NASV, "sympathetic")...

1. This means to have pity, a feeling of distress toward the ills of others
2. It is that disposition which is moved by the problems of others (like sickness, hardships, etc.)
3. This is the attitude manifested by Jesus...
 - a. During His earthly ministry - **Mt 9:35-36**
 - b. During His heavenly ministry - **He 4:15**
4. Such compassion can only come from a tender, loving heart, which may be why Peter goes on to say that we need...

C. TO "LOVE AS BROTHERS"...

1. Literally, this means to be "brother lovers"
2. This attribute is essential, if we are to...
 - a. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:7-8**
 - b. Convince the world that we are truly disciples of Jesus - **Jn 13:35**
3. Are you a "brother lover"? If not...
 - a. You are not a lover of God, either! - **1 Jn 4:20**
 - b. You do not even know God! - **1 Jn 4:7-8**
4. Here is one way to know if you are a "brother lover"...

- a. Ask yourself this question: “Do I even know my brother?”
- b. If you don’t, how can you honestly say that you are a “brother lover”?

D. TO “BE TENDERHEARTED” (NASV, “kindhearted”)...

1. It is this kind of heart that is compassionate, capable of loving our brethren
2. The opposite would be “cold-hearted”, where we are insensitive to the needs and feelings of others
3. Even if we start out as “cold-hearted”, in Christ Jesus we can and must undergo a transformation, in which we develop a “tender heart” - cf. **Ep 4:22-24, 31-32; Co 3:8-12**
4. Have you considered what kind of heart you have?

E. TO “BE COURTEOUS” (NASV, “humble in spirit”)...

1. Literally, to be “friendly of mind, kind”
 - a. Such courtesy would imply a humility of spirit
 - b. For an arrogant or proud spirit does not bother to be courteous
2. Christians are to imitate their Lord and Savior, and not think so highly of themselves that they cannot be kind and courteous to others - cf. **Ph 2:3-5**

F. TO “RETURN BLESSING FOR EVIL”...

1. When someone (e.g., a brother) does us evil, we are to respond with a blessing!
2. While this may go against “human nature”, Peter gives two reasons why we are to react in this way:
 - a. We are called to follow the example of Christ - cf. **1 Pe 3:9** with **1 Pe 2:21-23**
 - b. That we might receive a blessing from God - cf. **Lk 6:35**

[These are six duties that we have one toward another. They are part of what constitutes the Christ-like character that we are to develop as His disciples. Being saved, then, is not the end of God’s plan for us; He would have us become like His Son (cf. **Ro 8:29**). To motivate us in fulfilling these duties, Peter quotes from the **34th Psalm**...]

II. MOTIVATION TO FULFILL THESE DUTIES (10-12)

A. THAT WE MIGHT “LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS”...

1. Everyone wishes to enjoy life as they experience it from day to day...
 - a. But too often, many make their own lives miserable by their own self-seeking, self-destructive attitudes
 - b. Constantly complaining, contentious, retaliating to evil with evil, they only aggravate the situation
2. But David in his psalm gives the secret to loving life and seeing good days:
 - a. Refrain the tongue from evil, and lips from speaking guile - **1 Pe 3:10**
 - 1) I.e., don’t engage in slander, backbiting, complaining, lying, murmuring, and grumbling
 - 2) It doesn’t solve difficulties, but only makes them worse
 - b. Do good, seek peace and pursue it - **1 Pe 3:11**
 - 1) I.e., do the very kind of things mentioned by Peter in **1 Pe 3:8-9**
 - 2) Only then will your life be pleasant, for the qualities described by Peter...
 - a) Make the best out of difficult situations
 - b) Make good situations even better!

B. SO THE LORD WILL BE OPEN TO US...

1. Only by doing the will of God (as found in **1 Pe 3:8-9**) can we ensure that...
 - a. His gracious eyes will watch over us
 - b. His ears will be open to our prayers - **1 Pe 3:12**
2. On the other hand, the Lord's face is against those who do evil, and will not hear their prayers
3. Indeed, consider the list of abominations found in **Pro 6:16-19**, and notice how many are the direct opposite of how we are to be...
 - a. We are to **be courteous (humble)** - but the Lord hates a proud look!
 - b. We are to **be compassionate** - but abusing the innocent is an abomination to the Lord!
 - c. We are to **be tenderhearted** - but the Lord hates a cold heart that thinks evil of others!
 - d. We are to **return good for evil** - but those who respond quickly with evil, the Lord abhors!
 - e. We are to **be of one mind** - but if we sow discord by murmuring and complaining, we are abominable in God's sight!

CONCLUSION

1. So if we want the Lord to watch over us, if we want Him to heed our prayers, let us be sure to fulfill our duties to each other as brethren as outlined by Peter in **vs. 8-9**
2. In so doing, we will enjoy life to its fullest, and see many good days during our pilgrimage here on earth!

Preparing For Persecution

1 Peter 3:13-18

INTRODUCTION

1. Having described the proper conduct of Christians in various relationships, Peter now turns more specifically to the subject of suffering
2. That the first recipients of this epistle were experiencing or would experience persecution is evident from **1 Pe 1:6; 4:12-19; 5:8-10**
3. Now, under normal circumstances, what Peter writes in **vs. 13** is the rule...

“And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?”

4. But there are times when Satan will make every effort to bring harm to those who try to follow the will of God (remember Job?) - cf. **1 Pe 5:8-9; Re 12:17**
5. How, then, should Christians prepare themselves so that they might be victorious in overcoming whatever persecution might come their way?

[In **vs. 14-18**, we can glean at least five points in “**Preparing For Persecution**”...]

I. REMEMBER, YOU ARE BLESSED IF YOU SUFFER FOR CHRIST (3:14,17)

A. THIS TRUTH IS STRESSED TWICE BY PETER IN THIS EPISTLE...

1. In our text - **1 Pe 3:14**
2. Even more definitively in **1 Pe 4:14**
 - a. Where he adds that the “Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”
 - b. Those who suffer for the cause of Christ are fortunate, for God is with them

B. THIS REINFORCES WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT IN MT 5:10-12...

1. That those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake are blessed
2. In this passage, two reasons are given for such blessedness:
 - a. Your reward will be great in heaven
 - b. You are in the company of God’s prophets of old

C. CERTAINLY YOU ARE BETTER OFF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST, THAN SUFFERING FOR EVIL...

1. As Peter writes in **1 Pe 3:17**
2. Suffering for evil is what **will** happen if we are not willing to stand up for Christ
3. And suffering for Christ is only temporary, but the suffering for evil is eternal!

II. SANCTIFY THE LORD IN YOUR HEARTS (3:14-15)

A. WHAT DOES IS MEAN TO “SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS”...?

1. The word “sanctify” means “to set apart”

2. Thus it means to set the Lord up on the throne of your heart, to make Him the Lord and Ruler of your life
 - a. Ruling over your own desires
 - b. His Will taking precedent over your own will and that of others
3. The NU-Text suggests that it is Christ under consideration

B. THIS IS THE KEY TO FACING PERSECUTION WITHOUT FEAR OR WITHOUT BEING TROUBLED...

1. For unless we sanctify the Lord in our hearts, we will be afraid of what man might do, or be troubled by what he threatens
2. But when we make Christ and God Lord, we will not fear what man might do - cf. **He 13: 5-6**

III. ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE FOR THE REASON FOR YOUR HOPE (3:15)

A. OBSERVE CAREFULLY WHAT PETER IS NOT SAYING...

1. He is **not** saying that we need to be ready to give an answer for **every** question on religious matters that someone might ask
2. As some have used this verse as a proof-text
3. While we should certainly strive to be able to explain why we do what we do in matters of religion, that is not the point Peter is making here

B. INSTEAD, PETER IS SAYING...

1. To always be ready to give a reason why you have the **hope** you do
 - a. I.e., to explain the basis of your hope (your strong desire and expectation)
 - b. This implies that our desire and confidence for the future is so strong that it is observable by others
 - c. Even in the midst of persecution, we are demonstrating joy over the hope we have - cf. **1 Pe 1:6,8**
2. To do so in the proper spirit
 - a. In the spirit of **meekness**
 - 1) This pertains to our attitude toward men
 - 2) We should be humble, not arrogant or angry
 - b. In the spirit of **fear**
 - 1) This pertains to our attitude toward God
 - 2) It should be reverent, not flippant

IV. KEEP YOUR CONSCIENCE CLEAN (3:16)

A. A REASON TO KEEP YOUR CONSCIENCE CLEAN...

1. As given by Peter in our text
2. That this together with your good conduct will likely to cause your enemies to be ashamed for mistreating you
3. If not ashamed in this life, they will certainly be ashamed on the day of judgment!

B. ANOTHER REASON FOR A CLEAN CONSCIENCE...

1. A guilty conscience will not enable one to face the threat of death without fear and trembling
 - a. For before we can stand before men without fear...

- b. We need to be able to stand before God without fear
2. That is impossible without a clear conscience! - cf. **1 Jn 3:21**

V. REMEMBER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (3:18)

A. HE SUFFERED FOR OUR SAKES...

1. That He might bring us to God - **1 Pe 3:18**; cf. also **2:20-25**
2. So we see that suffering for good can sometimes accomplish much good in the long run

B. WE HAVE BEEN CALLED TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE...

1. As Peter already indicated in **1 Pe 2:21**
2. And which he does again in **1 Pe 4:1**

CONCLUSION

1. More will be said later in this epistle on the subject of how to deal with persecution
2. But in this text, we find five good ways to prepare ourselves...
3. By applying these five principles to our lives...
 - a. We will be more useful to the Lord, ready for whatever may come
 - b. Even if we are not faced with the prospects of physical persecutions in our lifetime, it will help in
times of social or verbal persecution

In this lesson, we noticed the value of having a good conscience; in **1 Pe 3:21**, Peter speaks of that which he calls “the answer of good conscience toward God” (i.e., baptism). Have you considered what else he says about it in that passage...?

Peter's Perplexing Passage

1 Peter 3:18-20

INTRODUCTION

1. In **2 Pe 3:15-16**, Peter mentions that Paul wrote some things that were hard to understand
2. The same could be said about some of Peter's own writings, especially the passage in **1 Pe 3:18-20**
3. Considered by some to be one of the most difficult passages in the Bible, various and sometimes fanciful interpretations have been given
4. In a lesson designed to inform rather than exhort...
 - a. We shall examine several of the interpretations that have been offered
 - b. And suggest which one seems to be the right one (to me, at least)

[We shall examine five interpretations, in the chronological sequence in which they have been offered...]

I. THE VIEW OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (200 A.D.)

A. BASIC ELEMENTS...

1. That Christ went to Hades in His spirit **between** His death and His resurrection
2. That He proclaimed the message of salvation to the souls of sinners imprisoned there since the flood

B. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES...

1. This view would suggest that for some reason these souls were given a "second chance"
2. Whereas the Bible consistently teaches against such an idea...
 - a. "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" - **He 9:27**
 - b. Peter himself later wrote that the wicked souls before the flood were being "reserved... under punishment for the day of judgment" - **2 Pe 2:4-5,9**
3. Why would people before the flood be given a second chance when those after the flood are not?

II. THE VIEW OF AUGUSTINE (400 A.D.)

A. BASIC ELEMENTS...

1. That the **preexistent Christ** in His spirit proclaimed salvation through Noah to the people who lived before the flood
 - a. We know that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" in his day - **2 Pe 2:5**
 - b. We know that the Spirit of Christ was at work in O.T. prophets - **1 Pe 1:10-11**
2. This view is held by many brethren today

B. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES...

1. The wording of Peter would more naturally suggest that he is speaking of...
 - a. The Christ who was "put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit"
 - b. I.e., the **crucified and resurrected Christ**, not the **pre-incarnate Christ**

2. Also, the wording would more naturally suggest the preaching occurred...
 - a. To the spirits “in prison”, not before they were imprisoned
 - b. When they “formerly were disobedient”, not during their disobedience

[Augustine’s view dominated the theological scene for centuries, but then other views were presented...]

III. THE VIEW OF CARDINAL BELLARMINE (1600 A.D.)

A. BASIC ELEMENTS...

1. That in His spirit Christ went to release the souls of the **righteous** who repented before the flood and had been kept in “**limbo**”
2. In Catholic theology, “limbo” is the place between heaven and hell, where the souls of the OT saints were kept

B. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES...

1. The Bible is silent about a place such as “limbo”
2. The “spirits” under discussion by Peter were “disobedient” in “the days of Noah”...
 - a. According to **Gen 6:5-13; 7:1**, only Noah and his family were righteous
 - b. If others had repented, would they not also have been on the ark?
3. I.e., there were no righteous before the flood save Noah and his family!

IV. THE VIEW OF FRIEDRICH SPITTA (1900 A.D.)

A. BASIC ELEMENTS...

1. After His death and **before** His resurrection, Christ preached to **fallen angels**, also known as “sons of God”, who during Noah’s time had married “daughters of men”
2. This view is based upon a particular interpretation of **Gen 6:1-4**...
 - a. **Job 1:6; 2:1** is offered as evidence that angels are sometimes referred to as “sons of God”
 - b. **Jude 6**, also, is offered as referring to “fallen angels” in the days of Noah
 - 1) Because it sounds very similar to references in a book called **I Enoch**
 - 2) Which expounds on the idea that the “sons of God” in **Gen 6** were “fallen angels”
 - 3) And Jude seems to quote directly from this book in **Ju 14,15**
 - c. **Josephus**, a Jewish historian born in 37 A.D., took a similar view of **Gen 6**
3. This view is held by many Protestant scholars

B. MAJOR DIFFICULTIES...

1. In responding to the Sadducees, Jesus taught that angels of God do not marry - **Mt 22:30**
2. Of course, Jesus may have been referring to angels who “keep their proper domain”, and do not leave “their own habitation”
 - a. If righteous angels could temporarily take on human form to deliver God’s message (as in the case described in **Gen 18:1-8; 19:1-3**) where they ate food...
 - b. It might have been possible for “fallen angels” to take on human form and cohabit as some believe **Gen 6** suggests
3. But it just as feasible to understand **Gen 6** differently...
 - a. That the “sons of God” were the descendants of Seth (i.e., godly people), and the “daughters of men” were descendants of Cain (ungodly people)
 - b. This view stays clear of speculation which can easily take on mythological proportions!

[We come to a fifth interpretation, one that I think has much to commend for it...]

V. THE VIEW OF SOME CONTEMPORARY COMMENTATORS (PRESENT)

A. BASIC ELEMENTS...

1. That the resurrected Christ, **when He ascended into heaven**, proclaimed to imprisoned spirits his victory over death
2. That the exalted Christ passed through the realm where the fallen angels are kept and proclaimed His triumph over them (**Ep 6:12; Co 2:15** is offered as support for this view)
3. This interpretation has met favorable response in Protestant and Roman Catholic circles
4. More importantly, this view is in beautiful harmony with Peter's wording and context...

B. MAJOR DISTINCTIONS...

1. The preaching was made by Jesus Himself (not through Noah)
2. The preaching was made by Jesus **after** "being put to death in the flesh" (not in His pre-incarnate form)
3. The preaching was made by Jesus **after** He was "made alive by the Spirit" (i.e., after His resurrection, not during the three day period between death and resurrection)
4. The preaching was made to "**the spirits**"
 - a. Not to "the spirits of men" (which is how the souls or spirits of men are commonly referred to, notice **He 12:23; Re 6:9; 20:4**)
 - b. But rather to "angelic spirits"
5. The preaching was made to them "**in prison**" (that there are angels so bound is clearly taught in **2 Pe 2** and **Jude**)
6. The preaching was made to them who were "**formerly disobedient...in the days of Noah**"
 - a. This view does not require that the rebellious angels were the "sons of God" in **Gen 6**
 - b. But simply were somehow disobedient at that time (as some were later during Christ's time)
7. The preaching was **a proclamation of victory** over death, not an offer of a second chance to a select few!

CONCLUSION

1. As suggested, this last view is not only in harmony with the very words and grammatical constructions used by Peter, but it is harmony with the **context**...
 - a. Peter had been teaching us to be willing to suffer, if necessary, for doing good - **1 Pe 3:17**
 - b. He appeals to the example of Christ - **1 Pe 3:18a**
 - c. Who despite His suffering and death, was made alive, proclaimed victory to those spirits who had not been willing to submit to God in Noah's day, ascending to the right hand of God, over all angels and authorities! - **1 Pe 3:18b-20**, note especially v.22
 - d. In view of Jesus' triumph over suffering, we should be willing to do the same! - **1 Pe 4:1**
2. Admittedly, this passage is difficult, so one needs to be careful and not dogmatic in one's treatment of it
3. I hope that by presenting this survey of the various views it may serve helpful in drawing your own conclusions about "**Peter's Perplexing Passage**"

But one thing Peter mentions in this passage that is not perplexing is his reference to baptism, and it's necessity for salvation (**1 Pe 3:21**)...

The Antitype In Which God Saves Us

1 Peter 3:21-22

INTRODUCTION

1. In the midst of a section in which he is discussing Christ's suffering and why we need to prepare for suffering, Peter has some revealing comments on the subject of baptism - **1 Pe 3:21-22**
 - a. First, he refers to baptism as an **"antitype"** ("the like figure", KJV)
 - b. Then he makes the striking comment that baptism **"saves us"**
 - c. He describes baptism as **"the answer of a good conscience"**
 - d. But he also says that baptism saves us **"through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"**
2. Any one of these four points is likely to perplex those who read this passage...
 - a. Some may wonder what an "antitype" is
 - b. Others may take issue with the idea that baptism has anything to do with salvation
 - c. Many question what is meant by the phrase, "the answer of a good conscience"
 - d. And how does the resurrection of Christ have anything to do with salvation, when it was His death that provided the forgiveness of sins?

[In this lesson, I hope to share some thoughts which may help us appreciate more fully how baptism is indeed **"The Antitype In Which God Saves Us"**. Beginning with...]

I. BAPTISM AS AN "ANTITYPE"

A. DEFINING "ANTITYPE"...

1. The Greek word is **antitupon** {an-teet'-oo-pon}, which means "a thing formed after some pattern; that which corresponds to a type"
2. So you have two things that somehow relate or correspond to each other; one is a type, the other is the antitype

B. HOW BAPTISM IS AN ANTITYPE...

1. In our text, the waters of the flood are the "type", and the waters of baptism are the "antitype" - **1 Pe 3:20-21**
2. In his commentary, **Barnes** says...
 - a. "The meaning here is, that baptism corresponded to, or had a resemblance to, the water by which Noah was saved; or that there was a use of water in the one case which corresponded in some respects to the water that was used in the other; to wit, in effecting salvation." (**Commentary on 1st Peter**)
 - b. "The apostle does not say that it corresponded in all respects; in respect, e.g., to quantity, or to the manner of the application, or to the efficacy; but there is a sense in which water performs an important part in our salvation, as it did in his." (**ibid.**)

[An important part in our salvation? Baptism? This may sound foreign to many people today, but the Bible and many Bible scholars over the history of the church have stressed this very point...]

II. BAPTISM AND SALVATION

A. THE BIBLICAL WITNESS...

1. There are several statements of Jesus that emphasize the necessity of baptism for salvation - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Jn 3:3-5**
2. The record of apostolic preaching as found in the Book of Acts continue this thought - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
3. In his epistles, Paul often wrote of the purpose of baptism, and the role it played in salvation - **Ro 6:3-6; Ga 3:26-27; Co 2:11-13; Ti 3:4-5**
4. And in our text, we have Peter's own words, which coincide with what he preached on that first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ - **1 Pe 3:21; cf. Ac 2:38**

B. THE TESTIMONY OF SOME BIBLE SCHOLARS...

1. **Augustine (A.D. 354-430)**
 - a. Referring to the **efficacy** of baptism, he wrote that "the salvation of man is effected in baptism"; also, that a person "is baptized for the express purpose of being with Christ." (as quoted by **Jack W. Cottrell in Baptism And The Remission of Sins, College Press, 1990, p. 30**)
 - b. In regards to the **necessity** of baptism, he refers to the "apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism...it is impossible for any man to attain to salvation and everlasting life." (**ibid., p. 30**)
2. **Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274)**
 - a. "...Men are bound to that without which they cannot obtain salvation. Now it is manifest that no one can obtain salvation but through Christ..."
 - b. "But for this end is baptism conferred on a man, that being regenerated thereby, he may be incorporated in Christ."
 - c. "Consequently it is manifest that all are bound to be baptized: and that without Baptism there is no salvation for men." (**ibid., p. 31**)
3. **Martin Luther**
 - a. In answer to the question, "What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?", Luther replied in his Small Catechism, "It effects forgiveness of sins."
 - b. He also wrote concerning the sinner: "Through Baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins."
 - c. Again, he wrote: "To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save."
 - d. In response to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation, he said "Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's." (**ibid., p. 32-34**)

[Indeed, until the "reformed theology" of Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin came along, the general consensus of religious scholars was in harmony with the Bible: that baptism does indeed save us! But how can that be? The answer can be seen when we consider...

III. BAPTISM AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**A. SALVATION IN BAPTISM IS NOT FOUND IN THE "WATER"...**

1. As Peter makes clear when he says "not the removal of the filth of the flesh"
2. For indeed it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ we can be saved - **Ro 5:8**

B. SALVATION IN BAPTISM IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION**OF CI**

1. If He had not been raised, we would still be in our sins - cf. **1 Co 15:17**

2. But because Jesus was raised from the dead, we who are united together in the likeness of His death (i.e., baptism) can share in the power of His resurrection as we also rise to walk in newness of life - cf. **Ro 6:3-5; Co 2:12-13**
3. In other words, it is the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead which saves us in baptism so we can be “made alive” - cf. **Ep 1:19-20; 2:4-6**

[By God’s saving grace and resurrecting power, then, baptism can indeed save us! Not because of any cleansing power in the water, but because of what God is doing at that moment. But notice finally, what is said about...]

IV. BAPTISM AND THE APPEAL FOR A GOOD CONSCIENCE

A. “THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE...” (NKJV)

1. This is a difficult phrase, but I believe it most likely means “an appeal to God for a clear conscience”
2. This understanding is supported by the following translations:
 - a. “...the craving for a conscience right with God” (Goodspeed)
 - b. “...the prayer for a clean conscience before God” (Moffat)
 - c. “...the request unto God for a good conscience” (Rotherham)
 - d. “...an appeal to God for a clear conscience” (RSV)
 - e. “...an appeal to God for a good conscience” (NASV)

B. THIS COINCIDES WITH THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM...

1. Baptism was “for the remission of sins”, to have one’s sins “washed away” (by the blood of Christ, of course) - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
2. Therefore, people in NT times who realized they were sinners were anxious to be baptized as soon as possible - cf. **Ac 8:35-38**
3. To have a good conscience before God (indeed, to have our conscience “purged” by the blood of Christ - cf. **He 9:14**), one is baptized so their sins can be washed away and they can rise to a new life through the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead!

CONCLUSION

1. It is a tragedy that so many people today downplay the importance of baptism
2. But if we will only allow the Bible to say what it does about baptism, we will see that it is indeed **“The Antitype In Which God Saves Us”!**
3. And like Martin Luther, we will view baptism as “excellent, glorious, and exalted,” as “a most precious thing,” as “an infinite, divine treasure.” (**ibid., p. 34**)

Vs. 21 of our text describes that Christ has now gone into heaven and that all things have been made subject to Him. Have you subjected to His authority by obeying His command to be baptized? - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

Have you made that appeal for a good conscience before God?

The Militant Christian

1 Peter 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. It is quite common today to pick up the newspaper and read about the violent actions of those referred to as “militant fundamentalists”...
 - a. Sometimes the phrase has reference to extremists of the Islamic faith, engaged in what they call “Jihad” (holy war, or struggle)
 - b. But there also times when it is applied to professing Christians, who resort to physical violence in support of their cause (e.g., the radical pro-life movement)
2. As true followers of the “Prince of Peace”...
 - a. We must remember that the Kingdom is spiritual, and therefore not expanded through carnal means - cf. **Jn 18:36**
 - b. We should keep in mind the words of our Savior: “for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” - **Mt 26:52**
3. But this is not to say we do not have a true struggle, nor weapons with which to fight...
 - a. We are engaged in a spiritual struggle, both without and within - **Ep 6:12; 1 Pe 2:11**
 - b. We have in our arsenal weapons that are “mighty in God” - **2 Co 10:3-5**
 - c. Indeed, as we enter the fourth chapter of 1st Peter, we see that Christians are to “arm” themselves in their service to the Lord - **1 Pe 4:1**
4. So in one sense, there is such a thing as “**The Militant Christian**”; but it is important that we properly understand in what sense we are to be militant in our service to the Lord

[Using **1 Pe 4:1-6** as our text, I would first point out that “**The Militant Christian**” is to be...]

I. ARMED WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST (1)

A. WHICH IS A MIND WILLING TO SUFFER...

1. This is the attitude Peter wants us to have
2. Which was the attitude of Christ Himself - cf. **1 Pe 2:21-23; 3:18**

B. TWO REASONS WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO SUFFER...

1. “**since Christ suffered for us**”
 - a. He died for us, that we might live for righteousness - **1 Pe 2:24**
 - b. Is it asking too much that we might be willing to endure hardship for His sake?
2. “**he who suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**”
 - a. One who endures hardship for Christ is not likely to allow sin to have dominance in his or her life
 - b. “One who has embraced the mind of Christ, and whose life is so influenced by him that he suffers persecution is not in danger of succumbing to the weaker temptations of the flesh. To such an individual these allurements lose their appeal. Martyrs, in the hour of persecution and death, do not toy with temptation or surrender to the seductions of the world!” - **Guy N. Woods**

[Armed with the mind of Christ, which includes a willingness to suffer for doing good, **“The Militant Christian”** is also to be...]

II. MILITANT IN HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN (2-3)

A. HERE IS WHERE THE MAJOR BATTLE IS TO BE FOUGHT...

1. A battle between one’s soul and fleshly lusts - cf. **1 Pe 2:11**
2. Unless we first win the battle for our own soul, we are not likely to be of much help in winning the souls of others!
 - a. Therefore we need to remove the plank out of our own eye first - cf. **Mt 7:3-5**
 - b. Only by first being “spiritual” are we prepared to help others - cf. **Ga 6:1**
3. Many immature Christians begin fighting a “spiritual warfare” with others too soon, and lose the “spiritual warfare” within themselves in the process!

B. MOTIVATION FOR THIS STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN...

1. We have wasted enough of our lifetime doing what is called “the will of the Gentiles”
 - a. Briefly summarized in **vs. 3**
 - b. What Paul calls the “works of the flesh” in **Ga 5:19-21**
2. Now it is time to live out the rest of our life for “the will of God”
 - a. Briefly summarized in **vs. 7-11**
 - b. Which will be considered more carefully in the next lesson

[As we think of ourselves “standing strong for the faith” and “fighting the good fight”, let’s not forget that the battle begins within ourselves. Unless the Christian is first militant in “crucifying the flesh” and “putting to death the deeds of the body”, he or she is not likely to have the “spiritual fortitude” necessary to prevent killing one’s self in the “battle for truth” (cf. **2 Ti 2:24-26**).

When **“The Militant Christian”** is living out the rest of his or her life for the will of God, we need to be prepared for the fact that we will...]

III. LIKELY BE MALIGNED (4)

A. OUR FORMER COMPANIONS WILL THINK US “STRANGE”...

1. Because we no longer join with them in their sin
2. Unable to persuade us from our new course, they may resort to “speaking evil of you”
3. Some young Christians are troubled by this “peer pressure”

B. BUT WHEN MALIGNED...

1. We have reason to rejoice - cf. **Mt 5:11-12; 1 Pe 4:13-14**
2. Our response is to be one of love and honorable conduct - cf. **Mt 5:44; 1 Pe 2:12**
3. Who knows? Perhaps our conduct will lead one day to their glorifying God!

[Yes, **“The Militant Christian”** is likely to be thought of by others as a “fanatic”, but I believe that deep down even those who malign us the most have respect for our convictions when held with the proper spirit on our part. Finally, taking a clue from the comments of Peter in **vs. 5-6**, let me suggest that **“The Militant Christian”** is one who is...]

IV. WILLING TO LET GOD BE THE JUDGE (5-6)

A. VERSE 6 IS ANOTHER ONE OF “PETER’S PERPLEXING PASSAGES”...

1. Especially the phrase “the gospel was also preached to those who are dead”
2. Some think Peter is referring back to his comments in **1 Pe 3:18-20**...
 - a. If so, then the “spirits in prison” would be human spirits, not angelic spirits (as I suggested in my earlier lesson)
 - b. If so, then the preaching of the gospel was:
 - 1) Not an offer of salvation (i.e., a second chance)
 - 2) But a proclamation of what Christ has done, explaining how Christ has redeemed the OT faithful, and why others remain condemned
 - 3) Note that they were still “judged according to men in the flesh” (how they lived in the flesh), though they now “live according to God in the spirit”
3. Others believe Peter is simply referring to the preaching of the gospel...
 - a. To people when they were alive
 - b. But who are now among the dead

B. EITHER WAY, AS “MILITANT CHRISTIANS”...

1. **We must remember who is the Judge...**
 - a. God is the judge of those who are “outside” - **1 Co 5:12-13**
 - b. They will have to “give an account to Him who is ready to judge...” - **1 Pe 4:5**
2. **We must therefore be willing to let God be the judge...**
 - a. I.e., leave vengeance to God - cf. **Ro 12:19**
 - b. God will apply the “justice” when necessary, we are called upon to offer His “mercy” until then...
 - 1) Through the preaching of the gospel
 - 2) Through living lives of kindness and mercy - cf. **Ro 12:20-21**

CONCLUSION

1. There is a place, then, for “militancy” in the life of the Christian!
2. But it is to be found in the way we “arm” ourselves with the mind of Christ...
 - a. “Fighting” the spiritual warfare that wages within
 - b. “Militant” in our efforts to live the godly life, do good and showing mercy

Are you “fighting the good fight of faith”? Are you even in the Lord’s army...?

Living In The End Times

1 Peter 4:7-11

INTRODUCTION

1. In **1 Pe 4:2**, Peter wrote concerning the Christian that...

“...he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”

2. As an impetus to live out one’s time in the flesh for the will of God, one should remember that we are living in the “end times” - cf. **1 Pe 4:7a** (*“But the end of all things is at hand;”*)

3. It might be that Peter actually had reference in this text to the destruction of Jerusalem

- Which was the end of the temple, the Levitical priesthood, and of the Jewish economy
- As **MacKnight** points out in his commentary: “This epistle being written A.D. 67, about a year after the war with the Romans began, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish state, Peter, who had heard his Master’s prophecy concerning these events, and concerning the signs of their approach, had good reason to say, that they had approached.”

4. But whether Peter has in mind the destruction of Jerusalem, or the Lord’s second coming, we can still say **“the end of all things is at hand”**...

- For even if the Lord Himself does not return for another two thousand years, the time is not long when we who are alive today will be “in the flesh” no more
- With every passing day, “our salvation is nearer than when we first believed”, and the “end” draws ever closer

5. How then should we live out the rest of our time, living as we do in the “end times”?

[**Vs. 7-11** provide guidance to **“Living In The End Times,”** and we notice first that it involves...]

I. PRAYER THAT IS SERIOUS AND ALERT (7)

A. PETER STRESSES SERIOUSNESS THROUGHOUT HIS EPISTLE...

- The word here is **sophroneo** {so-fron-eh’-o}, which means...
 - To be in one’s right mind
 - To exercise self control
 - to put a moderate estimate upon one’s self, think of one’s self soberly
 - to curb one’s passions
- Words closely related to this are found in **1 Pe 1:13; 5:8** (the word “sober”)

B. THIS QUALITY IS NEEDED ESPECIALLY IN OUR PRAYERS...

- Otherwise we cannot pray as we ought - cf. **Ep 6:18**
- That is, with praying that is “watchful” - cf. **Lk 21:34-36**

[Serious, watchful praying is necessary, therefore, or we might not be ready for that which will come. As we continue in our text, we see that **“Living In The End Times”** also calls for a...]

II. LOVE THAT IS FERVENT & FORGIVING (8)

A. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME PETER COMMANDS “FERVENT LOVE”...

1. The first time was in **1 Pe 1:22**
2. Where we defined “fervent” as “constant” or “earnest”
3. Here Peter tells us to make such “fervent love” the number one priority (“above all things have fervent love...”)
 - a. This is reminiscent of Paul’s words in **Co 3:14**
 - b. And perhaps a reflection of Jesus’ words in **Mt 22:36-40**

B. THE NEED FOR SUCH “FERVENT LOVE” IS SEEN IN ITS POWER TO FORGIVE...

1. “for love will cover a multitude of sins”
2. This appears to be a reference to **Pro 10:12** (“love covers all sins”)
3. To “cover sin” does not mean to ignore it, but as used by James it suggests “fervent love” does what is necessary to restore and forgive the sinner - cf. **Ja 5:19-20**

[As the “time of the end” draws near, and the Day of Judgment looms closer, how important it is that we have the kind of love for one another which will encourage us all to get rid of sin in our lives! As a further expression of “fervent love for one another”, “**Living In The End Times**” will also involve...]

III. HOSPITALITY THAT IS GRACIOUS (9)

A. THIS IS AN UNUSUAL USE OF THE WORD “HOSPITALITY”...

1. For the word is **philoxenos** {fil-ox’-en-os}...
 - a. It literally means “love of strangers” and is normally used in reference to kindness to those we don’t know
 - b. But here Peter applies it to our love towards brethren
2. But if we are to show kindness to those we don’t know, how much more towards those who are “of the household of faith”, our own brethren! - cf. **Ga 6:10**

B. THE NEED FOR HOSPITALITY...

1. There is always a need, as our love for one another is a sign of true discipleship - cf. **Jn 13:34-35**
2. But there may be a special need as “the end draws near”
 - a. Several passages suggest that persecution of the saints will increase before Christ returns (so I understand **Re 20:7-9**)
 - b. In any period of persecution, when some Christians lose all they have, other Christians need to be ready to provide for their needs - cf. **Mt 25:35-40**

C. FOR IT TO BE TRUE HOSPITALITY, IT MUST BE “WITHOUT GRUMBLING”...

1. If one shows kindness with a begrudging spirit, can it be said they truly have a love of strangers (or brethren)?
2. Only by placing a higher premium on our brethren than we do on our possessions can we show hospitality without grumbling

[Finally, in keeping with our Lord’s charge to “Do business till I come” (**Lk 19:13**), “**Living In The End Times**” requires that we offer...]

IV. SERVICE THAT GLORIFIES GOD (10-11)

A. EACH PERSON CAN PERFORM A VALUABLE SERVICE...

1. By the grace of God, which is “manifold” (multifaceted), there are various ways one can serve God
2. And each of us are to be “good stewards” (accountable servants) of whatever gifts or abilities we may have
3. Even as Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome in **Ro 12:3-8**

B. WITH TWO EXAMPLES, PETER ILLUSTRATES THE KIND OF SERVICE THAT GLORIFIES GOD...

1. Those that speak...
 - a. They should speak “as the oracles of God”
 - b. Understanding that they are speaking for God:
 - 1) They should speak only that which God Himself has revealed
 - 2) With “sound speech that cannot be condemned” - cf. **Ti 2:7-8**
2. Those that minister (serve)...
 - a. With the ability or strength supplied by God Himself!
 - b. Certainly not with slothfulness - cf. **Ro 12:11**

CONCLUSION

1. “**Living In The End Times**”, then, is living with the recognition that to God (and Jesus Christ) “belong the glory and dominion forever and ever”
2. With that recognition, we will be careful to develop:
 - a. Prayer that is serious and alert
 - b. Love that is fervent and forgiving
 - c. Hospitality that is gracious
 - d. Service that glorifies God

How are you living now that “the end of all things is at hand”? Are you glorifying God through Jesus Christ?

Persevering Through Persecution

1 Peter 4:12-19

INTRODUCTION

1. We have observed in our study of **1st Peter** that the original recipients of this epistle were undergoing “various trials” - **1 Pe 1:6**
2. In an earlier lesson, “**Preparing For Persecution**” (**1 Pe 3:13-18**), we saw where Peter gave instructions on how they (and we) should prepare themselves for hard times
3. Now in **1 Pe 4:12-19**, Peter continues to discuss persecution, but with a slightly different slant
4. The slant is that he now mentions things that relate to “**Persevering Through Persecution**”, not just preparing for it

[While we might not ever endure “physical” persecution, it is unlikely that we will escape occasional “verbal” or “social” persecution. Therefore, what Peter has to say can be of great benefit to help us persevere in such circumstances. For example.....]

I. EXPECT PERSECUTION (12)

A. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL...

1. A point Peter stresses twice in this verse
 - a. “do not think it strange”
 - b. “as though some strange thing happened to you”
2. It is something other Christians were experiencing at that time as well - **1 Pe 5:9**
3. Jesus warned His disciples of hard times to come - **Jn 15:18-21**
4. Why does God allow such things to happen? Read on...

B. “FIERY TRIALS” SERVE TO TRY ONE’S FAITH...

1. Just as gold is tested by fire, so our faith is tested by persecution - cf. **1 Pe 1:6-7**
2. This is why God allows the devil to bring such persecution (remember Job?)
3. But just as God blessed Job after his trials, so He will bless us! - cf. **1 Pe 5:10**

[As someone has said, “**First comes the cross, then comes the crown.**” So don’t be surprised if you find yourself facing ridicule, ostracism, even physical persecution for the cause of Christ. (cf. **Ac 14:22; 2 Ti 3:12**). Should it come, what then..?]

II. REJOICE IN PERSECUTION (13-14)

A. THE CALL TO REJOICE IS NOTHING NEW...

1. Jesus taught it in His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:11-12**
2. Paul found reason to “glory in tribulations” - **Ro 5:3-5**
3. And James taught that trials ought to be an occasion for joy - **Ja 1:2-4**

B. WHY REJOICE IN PERSECUTION...?

1. **As explained by Jesus...**
 - a. “for great is your reward in heaven”
 - b. “for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”
2. **As explained by Paul...**
 - a. “tribulation produces perseverance”
 - b. Which in turn produces “character, and character, hope”
3. **As explained by James...**
 - a. “the testing of your faith produces patience”
 - b. And patience can help one be “perfect and complete, lacking nothing”

C. PETER OFFERS REASONS TO REJOICE IN PERSECUTION...

1. **It means glory in the future...**
 - a. “when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy”
 - b. This will occur at His second coming - cf. **2 Th 1:10-12**
2. **It means blessing in the present...**
 - a. “blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”
 - b. A reference to the Holy Spirit, and possibly alluding to that blessing...
 - 1) Described by Jesus in **Lk 12:11-12; 21:12-15**
 - 2) Exemplified in the case of Stephen - **Ac 7:54-60**
 - c. Such a blessing might have limited application to the special circumstances of the first century, but God’s grace will still provide whatever we need to endure trials - cf. **1 Co 10:13**
3. **It means Christ is glorified...**
 - a. “on your part He is glorified”
 - b. When we endure persecution through the strength Jesus gives us, we make manifest the “life” (power) of Jesus - cf. **2 Co 4:7-11**
 - c. And so by our conduct we can bring glory to Christ (God) - cf. **1 Pe 2:12**

[We have every reason, then, to rejoice in times of persecution. But for us to make the most of such situations, we need not only to “rejoice”, but also to “reflect”. I.e., use the time to...]

III. EXAMINE YOUR LIFE (15-18)

A. IF WE MUST SUFFER, MAKE IT WORTHWHILE...

1. Make sure it is not for reasons listed by Peter...
 - a. E.g., as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer
 - b. Or for doing what often brings unnecessary suffering to the church: “as a busybody in other people’s matters”
2. Make sure it is because we are Christians...
 - a. In which have an opportunity to glorify God
 - b. In which we can demonstrate the grace He gives us to endure it

B. CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT REMAINING FAITHFUL...

1. God allows persecution of the righteous because it serves as one way to judge “the house of God” (i.e., God’s family, the church) - **1 Pe 4:17**
2. As Paul wrote, it is “evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer” - **2 Th 1:4-5**
3. If God is willing to so “judge” His own faithful children, what about those who are disobedient? As Peter asks:

- a. “What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”
- b. “Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”
4. Paul provides the answer, in **2 Th 1:6-9**...
 - a. Those God will “repay with tribulation”
 - b. Jesus will come “in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - c. Yes, they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction”

[In view of the coming Judgment of God, of which the persecution of the saved is only a precursor, use times of persecution to reflect and make sure of our standing before God. Finally, you can succeed in **“Persevering Through Persecution”** if you will...]

IV. COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD (19)

A. “HOW” TO COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD...

1. By doing good, no matter the circumstances
 - a. Whatever evil is done to you, respond by doing good - cf. **Lk 6:27-28**
 - b. Remember the example of Jesus (**Lk 23:34**) and Stephen (**Ac 7:59-60**)
2. Don’t let persecution be an excuse for misconduct

B. “WHY” TO COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD...

1. Because God is a “faithful Creator”
2. As “Creator”, He has the power to do what is right in the end
3. As “faithful” (trustworthy), He can be trusted to do what is right in the end

CONCLUSION

1. Certainly we should hope and pray that we never have to endure the sort of persecution experienced by the early Christians
2. But if we do, will we be prepared? We can be, if we take to heart the words of the apostle Peter as found in his epistle!

As for being prepared, have you yet “obeyed” the gospel? Some may think it odd that the gospel is to be “obeyed”, and not just “believed”; but both Peter and Paul warn of the end of those “who do not obey the gospel” (**1 Pe 4:19; 2 Th 1:8**).

How does one obey the gospel? - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**

Peter's Exhortation To Elders

1 Peter 5:1-4

INTRODUCTION

1. At all times, but especially during persecution, the people of God need good leadership
2. In His Divine wisdom, the Lord saw fit to organize His church in such a way that the condition He witnessed during His earthly ministry (“**like sheep having no shepherd**” - **Mt 9:36**) should not last for long
3. His plan calls for local congregations to be overseen by qualified men, known as “**elders**”, and whose responsibilities were to “**shepherd the flock of God**”
4. In our text (**1 Pe 5:1-4**), we read of such men, and Peter's exhortation to them. In this lesson, we shall...
 - a. Briefly summarize what is said about elders in the Lord's church throughout the Scriptures
 - b. Consider the exhortation given by Peter to the elders in **vs. 1-4**

[We begin, therefore, with...]

I. A BRIEF SUMMARY CONCERNING ELDERS

A. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH...

1. Local congregations as soon as possible were organized under the leadership of elders - cf. **Ac 14:23**
2. In every example we have, there was a “plurality” of elders in each church, never just one elder - e.g., **Ac 20:17; 21:17-18**

B. THE WORK OF ELDERS...

1. Can be seen by the use of terms that are used interchangeably in the Scriptures
 - a. Such terms as “elder, pastor, bishop, shepherd, overseer”
 - b. That they refer to the same position is evident by their use in
 - 1) **Ac 20:17,28** -- where elders are called “overseers” (bishops), and charged to
 - 2) **Ti 1:5-7** -- where “elder” and “bishop” (overseer) are used together
 - 3) **1 Pe 5:1-2** -- where “elders” are told to “shepherd” (pastor) the flock of God, serving as “overseers” (bishops)
2. As “older men”, therefore, they are to watch over (bishop, overseer) the flock, and to tend (shepherd, pastor) the sheep

C. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS...

1. With such an awesome responsibility to watch over and tend the flock of God, one can understand that it takes men with who are truly qualified
2. Two lists of qualifications for elders is found in **1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**

D. OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ELDERS...

1. Is to recognize and respect them - **1 Th 5:12-13; 1 Ti 5:17-20**

2. To obey and be submissive when they lead scripturally - **He 13:17; 1 Pe 5:5**

[Think of elders, then, as your “spiritual advisors”, as “shepherds”; who are to be mature, experienced Christian men charged by God to “watch out for your souls”! With this brief summary fresh in our minds, let’s now consider...]

II. PETER’S EXHORTATION TO ELDERS

A. THE BASIS FOR THIS EXHORTATION...

1. **As coming from one who is a fellow elder**
 - a. Peter could have “commanded” them, using his apostolic authority
 - b. Practicing what he preaches in **vs. 3**, Peter chose to “exhort” them as a “fellow elder”
2. **As coming from one who is a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that will be revealed**
 - a. He has certainly been an eyewitness of Christ’s suffering
 - b. But he has also been a personal partaker of the suffering of Christ as described earlier in **1 Pe 4:13; cf. Ac 5:40-41**
 - c. And so will be a partaker of the same glory referred to later in **vs. 4**

B. THE EXHORTATION ITSELF...

1. **“Shepherd the flock of God”**
 - a. To tend (pastor) to the people of God; for this reason, elders must be...
 - 1) “able to teach” - **1 Ti 3:2**
 - 2) “able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” - **Ti 1:9**
 - b. As Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus, this involves “taking heed” to themselves as well - cf. **Ac 20:28-30**
2. **“which is among you”**
 - a. Their responsibility is for the sheep in the congregation where they serve
 - b. Even as Paul told the Ephesian elders: “the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” - **Ac 20:28**
 - c. The concept of one or more elders (bishops, pastors) over a plurality of churches is foreign to the New Testament
3. **“serving as overseers”**
 - a. Here the work of elders is summarized: to oversee the flock of God
 - b. But notice that Peter calls such oversight as “serving”
 - c. In keeping with what is said later, the role of elder is one of a servant, not a lord
4. **“not by constraint but willingly”**
 - a. A man cannot be appointed to serve against his will
 - b. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with “desiring the position” - cf. **1 Ti 3:1**
 - c. But the moment he loses the desire to serve willingly, he should step down, for he will not be able to serve as he ought
5. **“not for dishonest gain but eagerly”**
 - a. An elder may be financially supported for his work - cf. **1 Ti 5:17-18**
 - b. But the motive for service is not to be money, but an eagerness to save souls!
6. **“nor as being lords over those entrusted to you”**
 - a. As implied before, the oversight is a position of service, not to be abused by assuming a dictatorial role
 - b. A sobering thought is that elders are “entrusted” with the souls under their care, and they will be called to give an account! - **He 13:17**

7. **“but being examples to the flock”**

- a. Just as sheep are best led, and not driven, so it is with the people of God
- b. Qualified elders will have less problem getting people to follow them and submitting to their care
- c. When elders do not provide examples of spirituality, the flock is more likely to rebel against their leadership

C. MOTIVATION TO HEED THIS EXHORTATION...

1. **First, perhaps a subtle reminder that “elders” are also under authority...**

- a. There is one who is “the Chief Shepherd” (Jesus) who will one day appear
- b. One to whom they will have to give an account - **He 13:17**

2. **But more positively, a promise of recognition for faithful service...**

- a. “you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”
- b. Like the “inheritance” reserved in heaven that “does not fade away” - cf. **1 Pe 1:4**

CONCLUSION

1. Those who serve well as elders are certainly worthy of “the crown of glory” that awaits them
2. Hopefully, as we better understand the exhortation given by Peter, we will appreciate the work they do in the kingdom of God..
 - a. We will “esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (**1 Th 5:13**)
 - b. We will “obey”, and “be submissive”, so they can watch out for our souls “with joy and not with grief” (**He 13:17**)

In our next lesson, we shall consider Peter’s exhortations to those who are younger (**1 Pe 5:5-9**)...

Peter's Exhortation To The Young

1 Peter 5:5-9

INTRODUCTION

1. In this fifth and final chapter, we find Peter concluding with a series of exhortations...
 - a. In our last lesson, we saw that he first directed his remarks toward “elders” - **1 Pe 5:1-4**
 - b. Now, in **1 Pe 5:5-9**, the exhortation is geared toward “younger people”, though much of it certainly applies to all Christians
2. The gist of his remarks reflect themes mentioned previously in his epistle, but Peter was one who understood the value of repetition and reminding - cf. **2 Pe 1:12-15**

[The first exhortation, therefore, is one we have seen stressed throughout 1st Peter...]

I. SUBMIT YOURSELVES (5)

A. PETER HAD ALREADY ENJOINED SUBMISSION UPON...

1. Christians in general, to government authorities - **1 Pe 2:13-14**
2. Christian slaves, to their masters - **1 Pe 2:18**
3. Christian wives, to their husbands - **1 Pe 3:1**

B. NOW HE ENJOINS SUBMISSION UPON...

1. Younger Christians, to their elders - **1 Pe 5:5a**
 - a. This may be a reference to those “elders” described in **verses 1-4**
 - b. Or it may refer to all older Christians
2. Christians in general, to one another - **1 Pe 5:5b**; cf. **Ep 5:21**

C. DEFINING SUBMISSION...

1. The word in Greek is **hupotasso** {hoop-ot-as'-so}
2. Various shades of meaning include:
 - a. to arrange under, to subordinate
 - b. to subject, put in subjection
 - c. to subject one's self, obey
 - d. to submit to one's control
 - e. to yield to one's admonition or advice
 - f. to obey, be subject
3. It was also a Greek military term meaning “**to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader**”
4. In nonmilitary use, it is “**a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden**”

[The quality of submission goes a long way towards preserving unity and peace in churches, especially when all are submissive to one another. Yet true submission comes only if we heed Peter's next exhortation...]

II. BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY (5-7)

A. DEFINING HUMILITY...

1. The word Peter uses is **tapeinophrosune** {tap-i-nof-ros-oo'-nay}
2. It means to have a humble opinion of one's self; lowliness of mind
3. It is an important quality of that which makes up "the mind of Christ" - cf. **Ph 2:3-5**

B. THE NEED FOR HUMILITY...

1. Not only to preserve peace and unity in our relationships with one another
2. But also to preserve a proper relationship with God...
 - a. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"
 - b. A quotation based upon **Pr 3:34**, and quoted also by James in **Ja 4:6**
 - c. A person with a humble spirit is highly esteemed by God - cf. **Isa 57:15; 66:1-2**
3. Understanding God's high estimation of a humble and contrite spirit...

C. PETER'S CHARGE IS TO...

1. "**humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God**" - **1 Pe 5:6**
 - a. That is, to submit to His providential workings in our lives
 - b. Even if means enduring persecution, as was the case in Peter's day!
2. "**cast all your care upon Him**" - **1 Pe 5:7**
 - a. Don't fret or worry about things over which you have no control
 - b. Let your Heavenly Father worry about such things
 - c. Even as Jesus taught in **Mt 6:31-34**

D. THE REWARDS OF HUMBLE SERVICE...

1. God will give grace (show unmerited favor) to the humble - **1 Pe 5:5**
2. He will exalt the humble in due time - **1 Pe 5:6**

[When the time is right, then, God will exalt His people who place their faith and trust in Him, by humbly submitting to His Will and to one another. In the meantime, lest Satan cheat us of our reward, Peter enjoins us to...]

III. WATCH OUT FOR THE DEVIL! (8-9)**A. WE HAVE AN "ADVERSARY"...**

1. He is called the "devil"
 - a. The Greek word is **diabolos** {dee-ab'-ol-os}
 - b. Meaning "one prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely"
2. Peter's describes him as a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"
 - a. What bearing does this verse have on the doctrine of "once saved, always saved"?
 - b. If such a doctrine is true...
 - 1) Why does Peter bother to warn Christians who cannot be "devoured"?
 - 2) Why does Satan bother to seek out those whom he cannot "devour"?
 - 3) Indeed, why **any** warnings (and they are legion) to Christians? - e.g., **He 3:12-15**
 - c. Because there **is** a very real danger of apostasy, we have such warnings!

B. TO DEFEAT THE "ADVERSARY"...

1. We need to be serious ("be sober"), and watchful ("be vigilant") - **1 Pe 5:8a**; cf. **Lk 21:34-36**
2. We need to resist the devil - **1 Pe 5:9a**; cf. **Ja 4:7**

3. We need to remain steadfast in the faith - **1 Pe 5:b**; cf. **Co 1:21-23**
4. It helps to realize that we are not alone in our struggle - **1 Pe 5:9c**; cf. **1 Co 10:13**

CONCLUSION

1. Why God allows such struggle will be more apparent when we consider Peter's "benediction" in **vs. 10**, but we will save that for the next and final lesson in this series
2. While Peter's exhortations in **vs. 5-9** certainly apply to all Christians, they have special value to those who are "younger"..
 - a. They are often the most tested by our adversary, the devil
 - b. They have not had the time or experience to learn the value of such virtues as "submission", "humility", and "watchfulness"
3. But for those who are willing to listen, both young and old, heeding the exhortations of Peter can ensure that we will..
 - a. Receive the grace we need to withstand and overcome the devil
 - b. In due time be exalted by God Himself!

Be Hopeful!

1 Peter 5:10-14

INTRODUCTION

1. In an epistle written to Christians undergoing severe persecution, Peter chooses to close on a positive note - **1 Pe 5:10-14**
2. For no matter how terrible the “fiery trials” may become, Christians can always have “hope”!
3. In these last few verses of this epistle, Peter offers...
 - a. A benediction (**10**)
 - b. A doxology (**11**)
 - c. A summary (**12**)
 - d. A few words of greeting (**13**)
 - e. A final command to love one another (**14a**)
 - f. A final prayer for peace (**14b**)

[Throughout this “collage” of concluding remarks, we find several reasons why Christians can always “**Be Hopeful**”, even in the midst of terrible trials. For example, we are reminded of the fact that...]

I. WE HAVE GOD’S GRACE

A. GOD IS “THE GOD OF ALL GRACE”... (10)

1. Indeed, His grace is “manifold” - **1 Pe 4:10**
2. Just as His gifts are varied, so He provides whatever we need in any circumstance - cf. **He 4:16**

B. WE STAND IN “THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD”... (12)

1. Our salvation is because of His grace - cf. **1 Pe 1:10**
2. Those who are saved have “tasted that the Lord is gracious” - **1 Pe 2:3**

[With the knowledge that by remaining faithful to Christ we “stand in the true grace of God”, we can take comfort knowing that the “God of all grace” will be with us all the way. Which leads to another comforting thought...]

II. WE ARE GOING TO GLORY

A. GOD HAS “CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY”... (10)

1. This is the purpose of our calling, to receive the glory that awaits us
2. That glory involves the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” - **1 Pe 1:4**

B. THE ROAD TO GLORY MAY INVOLVE SUFFERING, BUT...

1. It is no different than what Jesus experienced - cf. **Lk 24:26**
2. And we can look forward to participating in His glory, if we are willing to suffer with Him - cf. **1 Pe 4:13-14**

[Knowing what lies ahead for those persevere can help us remain steadfast in the faith. So can knowing that...]

III. OUR SUFFERING IS TEMPORARY

A. IT IS ONLY FOR “A WHILE”... (10)

1. Earlier, Peter had said “a little while” - **1 Pe 1:6**
2. By their very nature, physical sufferings cannot last forever

B. NOTE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN SUFFERING AND GLORY...

1. Suffering is for “a while”, glory is “eternal”
2. Is not the “glory” worth the “suffering”?
3. The apostle Paul thought so - cf. **2 Co 4:16-18**

[But not only can we remain hopeful knowing that suffering is temporary, to be replaced by glory that is eternal, in the meantime we can take consolation in knowing that...]

IV. WITH SUFFERING COMES BLESSINGS (10)

A. GOD WILL “PERFECT”...

1. The word used by Peter means “to equip, to adjust, to fit together”
2. God “perfects” His people using several tools...
 - a. One is the Word of God - cf. **2 Ti 3:16-17**
 - b. Gifts were given to the church toward the same end - cf. **Ep 4:11-16**
3. And suffering is certainly another tool - cf. **Ro 5:3-4; Ja 1:2-4**

B. GOD WILL “ESTABLISH”...

1. This means “to fix firmly, to set fast”
2. Christians need to be steadfast in the faith - cf. **1 Pe 5:9; 2 Pe 3:17**
3. Through persecution often comes steadfastness, for the one who has endured suffering for the cause of Christ is not likely to be led away from the truth

C. GOD WILL “STRENGTHEN”...

1. Make one stronger
2. Which is a normal consequence of enduring trial

D. GOD WILL “SETTLE”...

1. That is, “to lay a foundation”
2. The Lord would have us to be solid, like that house built on a rock - cf. **Mt 7:24-27**

CONCLUSION

1. Peter is confident that for those who remain faithful in suffering, God will bless them in the four ways listed in **vs. 10**
2. We too can have confidence, knowing that...
 - a. We have God’s grace
 - b. We are going to glory

- c. Our suffering is only temporary
 - d. With suffering comes blessing
3. It is with such confidence that Peter closes with:
- a. A collection of greetings, from...
 - 1) **Silvanus** - Silas, a traveling companion of Paul
 - 2) **She who is in Babylon, elect together with you** - likely a congregation...
 - a) Either in literal Babylon, located in modern day Iraq
 - b) Or in figurative Babylon, which could be a reference to either Rome or Jerusalem
 - 3) **Mark my son** - John Mark, nephew of Barnabas, and author of the gospel of Mark
 - b. An exhortation to love: **“Greet one another with a kiss of love”**
 - c. And a prayer for peace: **“Peace to all who are in Christ Jesus”**

May the example of Peter’s confidence and hope, as well as his actual teaching found throughout this epistle, serve to help us remain full of hope during our sojourn as pilgrims of God!

“To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Pe 5:11)