

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson # “1 Born of Imperishable Seed”

1 Peter Chapter 1

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Introduction:

Today I would like to get started in 1st Peter in a series titled “Standing Firm in the Grace of God”. I have been excited about this study over the last month as I have been making preparations. And as usual we need to take a little time to make some introductory comments.

First, the date of writing with 1st Peter is 64-68 AD...Usually this is where we begin to doze off, wondering what relevance the date really has to do with anything. But, this date is really important in regards to the subject of suffering because its during this time that Nero starts persecuting Christians and before his death in 68 AD the persecution gets much worse. Also within 2 years (70 AD) Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans. So Christians are beginning to suffer greatly during this time.

Then, its really wonderful to consider who God choose to write this wonderful text. The Apostle Peter is the author. Now Peter was in Jesus’ close circle of disciples, he was one of only three to witness the transfiguration and Peter with his own eyes witnessed the personal sufferings of Christ.

Peter, like many of us, had many personal struggles. Jesus rebuked him and said to him “get behind me Satan”. He denied Christ three times after promising complete loyalty to the end Matt. 26:35,69-75. And in a rash move cut off the servant of the high priests ear. The Apostle Paul also had to rebuke him for playing the hypocrite in Gal. 2:11-13.

The exciting thing to note from the life of Peter is the great example of how to recover from failure and how to handle humiliation. Time and time again he fell down spiritually but he never gave up. Many times when people are struggling they blame others or the church, but Peter was rather quick I think to examine himself.

Also one of Peters most impressive traits was his sincere repentance when he sinned. And all this reminds me of the faith it must have taken to be the only disciple to get out of the boat when he saw Jesus walking on the water.

Well, Peter is also an Elder (1 Pet. 5:1) dedicated to helping fellow Christians. A family man married with believing children. Serving the Lord with his life and chosen here by God to write this text.

Tradition, for what it is worth states that Peter was executed during the reign of Nero. Upside down because he did not feel worthy to be crucified in the same manner as our Lord. (Foxes Book of Martyrs pg 4)

Transitional Statement:

I was watching TV the other day and saw an entire program about pumpkins. There is a whole society of pumpkin growers who try very hard to raise the biggest pumpkins. They sing to them, rub them down daily with milk and other such things, one person even let his pumpkin grow on a trampoline so the bottom wouldn't get flat. The worlds record is 1689#'s.

Then there is the seed part of this whole thing. People trade seeds and spend great amounts of time tracking seed lines and trying to find the best overall seed. Needless to say the worlds record pumpkin seeds fetch a fair price indeed.

But, when all is said and done the gigantic pumpkins simply rot away. 1689#s of rotten yuke...!

QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF SEED HAVE YOU COME FROM?

Lesson:

I. Let's look at the Recipients of this Letter

READ 1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

A. These folks were:

1. Living as Aliens...

*Sojourners

-Pilgrims just passing through

-Hebrews 11:13 "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

-Not putting down permanent roots

-Or establishing permanent residence here

-But, foreigners with their citizenship in heaven

-Philippians 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus"

2. Well Peter says they were Scattered

-After Stephen was stoned to death in Acts 7 great persecution broke out against the church and they were scattered abroad to surrounding regions among the Gentiles (Acts 8:1)

-Also referred to as the dispersion (John 7:35).

3. Also, they were Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God to obey Christ

-Chosen means picked out or desired of God

-Some folks buy into the idea that since God foreknew their choices regarding Him, we really had no choice at all. This false idea is called unconditional election as established by (Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin) and basically promotes the idea that we really have nothing to do with our salvation at all.

-This is the farthest thing from biblical truth I can imagine...

-Why even have the bible or any direction from God at all if we don't have any choice in the matter.

4. These people were Christians picked out according to their faithful obedient decisions concerning godliness.

B. May Grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure

*Peter knows that they need some peace of heart

II. So to help them in this, Peter turns their attention to God

READ 1 Peter 1:3-6a

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6a In this you greatly rejoice,

A. Through the Mercy of God

-We are born again.....

-We had the chance to start over

-With newness

-Born again to:

-Verse 3 A living hope

-Empty, meaningless is not our end

-Death doesn't have the final say

-Verse 4 Imperishable inheritance

-Verse 5 Protected by the power of God through faith

-Faith is our victory 1 John 5:4

B. So, Rejoice Verse 6a

III. Here are the circumstances at hand

READ 1 Peter 1:6b-9

6b even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

A. They are now under trials Verse 6b

-Distress and heaviness of heart...is weighing them down

B. These trials have come so as to prove their faith

-A spoken faith is just words right

-But trials help faith to grow

-And this will result in praise, glory and honor of God at Christ's coming.

-Faith here has to do with a firm persuasion or conviction

*And this leads to the praise, honor and glory of our God

James confirms the idea by saying in James 1:2-4

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

C. And this faith leads to:

1. Inexpressible joy

-Even though unseen

2. And the salvation of our souls

-Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

IV. Then Peter reminds them that many people have yearned for the very moment in time where they are.

READ 1 Peter 1:10-12

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they

were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

- A. This great salvation that you are participating in has been goal and direction of all people, prophets and even angels.
 - The grass isn't greener on the other side!
- B. Maybe the idea here is that these folks should feel good under any physical circumstance to stand at this point in history in Christ.

V. Therefore Peter gives some instructions regarding this Salvation

READ 1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

- A. Verse 13a tells them to prepare their mind for action
 - Mind here is your deep conscience
 - Be sober or self controlled
- B. Verse 13b tells them to set their hope on the grace brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ
- C. Verse 14 tells them not to turn back to your Old Ways
 - Remain obedient
 - Your born into newness Romans 6:4
- D. Verse 15-16 says "Be Holy"
 - * i.e. Keep your focus
 - A pretty good recipe for success by anyone's count, I think

VI. The core of salvation is redemption from sin which came through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus the Christ

READ 1 Peter 1:17-21

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times

for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

A. First of all when we talk about redemption we are talking about being purchased out of slavery to sin.

B. And as we think about redemption it's important to note that God is impartial!

-He doesn't prefer one person over another....or....one group over another

*Each person is valued equally in the eyes of our God and is instructed to live in fear (Respect) for God who deals directly with each person according to their deeds.

*His redemption is fair to the core

C. Redemption does not come from:

-Gold or silver

-Or some tradition passed along by your fathers

*It is not found in perishable things

D. Redemption comes from:

-The perfect, unblemished, imperishable blood of God's very own son
Jesus Christ

-And its through Jesus that we find our faith in God John 14:6

VII. Purification comes through obedience to the Word

READ 1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For,

"ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,

AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.

THE GRASS WITHERS,

AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER."

And this is the word which was preached to you."

A. Continual cleansing comes through obedience to the truth

-Not by any measure of their own

-But, by belief coupled with action (James 2:24)

-And results in loving each other

B. Born again of imperishable seed through the word of God

-Matthew 10:28

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Conclusion:

-Christians we too are chosen by God:

-We are not born of perishable seeds.....we are not pumpkins, but Christians

Maybe we should:

-Prepare our minds for action

-Set our hope on the grace brought to us at the revelation Christ

-Be careful not to turn back to your Old Ways

-Focus on Being Holy