

## 1st and 2nd Peter - The Series

1 of 8 | Introduction and 1st Peter Chapter 1

### SLIDE 1 Introduction

Through October and November we are going to turn our attention to the letters of 1st and 2nd Peter. There will be eight parts to this series, covering one chapter each week up until November 24th. There are five chapters in 1st Peter and three in 2nd Peter, making eight sessions on these two letters.

There may be other comments along the way, but our focus will be on how to live in an ungodly society. As we will read in the beginning of 1st Peter, he says he is writing from Babylon. Most commentators agree that Peter is actually writing from Rome, not actually the country of ancient Babylon. As John did in the book of Revelation.

This will take us through the election and will show us that no matter what the outcome, our lives do not have to change based on what the people of this world do in their politics and lifestyles.

### SLIDE 2 Our Response to Persecution

Peter is addressing believers who are beginning to suffer the signs of persecution in their countries and communities through the Roman Empire. He gives them pointers and perspective on how to live a godly life when all around them things seems to be going from bad to worse.

If Peter wrote this letter from Rome, he probably did so about 60 to 63 AD, just before the terrible bloodbath of persecution unleashed by Caesar Claudius in 64 AD. An ancient commentator, Papias, said that Peter was in Rome when he wrote to the scattered churches with the help of Silas. 1st Peter and other biblical accounts place Peter, Silas, and Mark in Rome at this time. Peter was later crucified at Rome.

So let's get into Peter's council on how to live in an ungodly society, what our focus should be, and how we should respond to the things transpiring around us. I will be using the New King James Version of the Bible throughout this series.

**SLIDE 3 1st Peter 1:1-25 (NKJV)** *"<sup>1</sup> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied."*

Peter could be speaking about two dispersions which happened during his time. The

one in Jerusalem because of the stoning of Stephen. Saul, who was later referred to as Paul, began this persecution with the authority of the Sanhedrin. Also, it could be the dispersion of all Jews from Rome, which Paul mentions in Acts 18:1 through 4. This is where Paul met Priscilla and Aquila, who were tentmakers and had fled from Rome to Corinth.

Peter then lists all the areas where his letter was sent. He closes his brief salutation by mentioning several deep Christian concepts and theologies: Predestination, Sanctification, and Obedience by Faith.

**SLIDE 4** *“<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His **abundant mercy** has begotten us again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an **inheritance** incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven** for you, <sup>5</sup> who are **kept by the power of God through faith** for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

Peter then mentions our new birth in Christ—being born-again. Along with the “living hope” Peter mentions, he shares that we have an incorruptible inheritance. It cannot be changed. It is a sealed covenant before God, sealed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Although works are by faith, an inheritance is a birthright given to us by the new birth.

#### **SLIDE 5 Empowered to Receive**

Along with our inheritance, we also have been empowered by the Spirit of God to live in a way that pleases God. Peter mentions this early, so that we know that God is able to preserve us no matter what persecution or tribulation we may go through in this life.

**SLIDE 6** *“<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the **genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love.”*

We ought always to rejoice, because by faith we understand that our salvation is a work of God for us and in us. We are not left to produce the lifestyle that God demands. He is working it in us through a gift of righteousness given to us through forgiveness.

Peter states that the result of suffering under persecution and tribulation works in us an important fact we need to know to have peace. The overcoming nature in us that results proves our faith is genuine.

As we see this more and more through our lives, our love for the Lord grows deeper and deeper. It's not the good times that require faith, but the hard times are what display God's glory through us.

I just have to interject a passage from Paul here:

**SLIDE 7 Romans 8:18-21 (NKJV)** *"<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are **not worthy to be compared with the glory** which shall be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; <sup>21</sup> because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."*

God is earnestly awaiting the fruit of the earth, a people who he can call his every own. Everything we are subjected to here prepares us to embrace our true purpose in the coming kingdom. Suffering is training—in ALL areas of life. It's not what you go through, it's how you respond to it that matters. Only through suffering can we truly enjoy our blessings.

Now back to 1st Peter:

**SLIDE 8** *"Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,** <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."*

In God's way of looking at things, having a good life is not nearly as important as the saving of our souls. Luke 21:19 states, *"By your patience possess your souls."* This means you gain more and more real control over your life as you learn obedience to the ways of the Lord. You have got to first get a hold of yourself, before you can truly possess anything else in life. Then Peter tells us more about this salvation we share:

**SLIDE 9** *"<sup>10</sup> Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, <sup>11</sup> searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."*

Peter tells us that even those before Christ came looked forward to the day of salvation and the revealing of the chosen one. Most of the New Testament actually sheds light on what the Old Testament said about Jesus.

**SLIDE 10** *"<sup>12</sup> To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but **to us they were ministering** the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into."*

Peter actually tells us that those things in the Old Testament were written to reveal God's plan of salvation to us.

### **SLIDE 11 Now Here's My Advice**

Now, here's Peter's advice for us, if we take these things to heart:

**SLIDE 12** *"<sup>13</sup> Therefore **gird up the loins** of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>14</sup> as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; <sup>15</sup> but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.""*

We need to build our minds up to the things that have been preached to us. This means that through knowledge of God's Word we can develop more fully obedient lives and free ourselves from the lusts that war in our flesh. Ignorance of God's salvation is bondage to the ups and down of life and all the things we chase. A sober mind frees us to pursue the things of the life to come—mercy, love, forgiveness, hope, peace, and the like.

**SLIDE 13** *"<sup>17</sup> And if you call on the Father, who without partiality **judges according to each one's work**, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

The Bible clearly teaches us that everything we say and do will be judged impartially by the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This needs to overshadow everything we do in this life. We need the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to guide us into God's forgiveness through repentance.

**SLIDE 14** *"<sup>20</sup> He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was*

*manifest in these last times for you <sup>21</sup> who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, **so that your faith and hope are in God.***"

We must always focus our hope and faith upon what God is doing in our lives and not on what the world is up to. It is destined for destruction, we are destined for eternal life.

**SLIDE 15** *"<sup>22</sup> Since you have **purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, <sup>24</sup> because..."*

Then Peter quotes the Prophet Isaiah:

**SLIDE 16** *"All flesh is as grass,  
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.  
The grass withers,  
And its flower falls away,  
<sup>25</sup> But the word of the Lord endures forever."*

(Isaiah 40:6-8)

*Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."*

The Word of the Lord is the only thing we possess now that is eternal. It will not only last for a lifetime, it will outlast everything we now see and do.

Again, consider God's viewpoint. Our lives are a short fleeting vapor that only last for a moment. Yet, we place such value on what we can never maintain and neglect the inheritance that will last for all eternity.

We have got to quit preaching this "life enhancement" gospel and once again promote the sacrificial service God has called us to.

### **SLIDE 17 Altar Time**

Are you going through a difficult time right now? Let us pray with you. Not so much for God to remove your trials, but that you may see the kind of person he is producing in you through the issues of life.