

We conclude our study in 1 Peter today. I trust that you have learned as much in our study, as I did in preparation. And if you missed any sermons, remember that they are available on-line. Before we look at the concluding words of the letter, I would like to give a brief review of what we have seen in our study.

Remember that Peter is writing to the pilgrims of the dispersion – that is those who had to leave their homes because of their faith in Christ. One of the upsides of the dispersion is that it brought the gospel to different parts of the world.

The purpose of the letter is to encourage these pilgrims, to remind them of what God has given them, how to live as Christians in the world and the fact that because of all that God has given them, they can still have joy despite being persecuted.

He first tells them that have been elect by the foreknowledge of God the Father and that they have been made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ. He then tells them that they have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As of result of the resurrection of Christ, they have a place reserved in heaven for them – a place that is incorruptible and that does not fade away ... a place that is reserved for them by God Himself.

It is because of what awaits them that he tells them and us, that they can rejoice even while undergoing trials and persecution. A number of times in this short letter he addresses the subject of persecution and suffering for being a Christian. He tells them that in this suffering they were identified with Christ, who suffered also. It is their response to this suffering that is a witness to the unbelieving world around them.

One of the important things that he tells them is that the salvation they have is something that was written about in the prophets, in what he describes as God's enduring Word. Listen to what he says at the end of Chapter 1. 1 Peter 1:23-25: *"...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "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, But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."*

As he goes on, he then describes them in terms that I repeated many times in this series: 1 Peter 2:9-10: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."*

They had been chosen by God Himself, they were a royal priesthood in the sense that they now had direct access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, they were a holy nation, that is, a people that were set apart by God and for God and that they were God's own special people. The purpose of this is so that they could be a witnesses of the grace of God to the world around them.

In fact, as we saw several times in this short letter, there were exhortations to live a certain way as witnesses to the world around them – there were things that they were to do and things that they were not to do. As Peter says in 1 Peter 2:11,12: *"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as*

evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Part of this honorable conduct was their relationship to king and governors ... slaves submission to their masters ... wives submission to her husband and a husbands relationship to his wife.

As it relates to the government, remember that Peter is talking about Nero who was devising more and more ways to kill Christians. Remember, and we need to continually remind ourselves of this, especially after January 20, that whoever is in charge is sent their by God. God is still on the throne, and that is why we pray *“thy will be done.”*

A wife’s conduct and her submission to him was to be a witness to her husband, and a husband’s relationship to his wife was to be a witness to the world around them.

Again, remember that all this has to do with our Christian lives before an unbelieving world, that we as Christians will be a blessing to others and that we are to serve others. Consider what he says in 1 Peter 4:7-11: *“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

Remember that our time here on earth is temporary – we are just passing through. Peter tells them that judgement is coming, on the church first, but then the rest of the unbelieving world. But our ultimate purpose is to bring glory to God and to be witnesses so that others too would bring glory to Him.

He begins to conclude his letter by giving a word to the pastors – those shepherds of the flock and how we should lead those whom God has given us – that we should serve as overseers, that we are not to do it for the money and that we are to be examples to the flock.

He concludes, as we saw last week that we are to submit to God and resist the devil. He reminds us that the devil is alive and well on planet earth and that is why he says these words in 1 Peter 5:8,9: *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”*

That is the Clift notes version of 1 Peter, but then we come to those concluding words: 1 Peter 5:12-14 (READ). Just as we would conclude a letter that we write, so does Peter.

So we ask the question, who is Silvanus. Bible scholars believe that it was Silas who accompanied the Apostle Paul on his 2nd missionary journey. What we don’t know is what he did with this letter that Peter wrote. He could have simply been the carrier of the letter – remember, they didn’t have a post office back then to mail things.

Or he could have a secretary to Peter, writing down what Peter told him to or even helping Peter to draft the letter. Whoever he is, Peter considers him a faithful brother in Christ ... one who stood along side of him in faith.

He then summarizes why he has written the letter: *“I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.”* Throughout the letter Peter has reminded them of the grace of God in their lives — all that God had done for them – their election, their place reserved in heaven, the fact that they have direct access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and all the other things that we have looked at in our study.

And the thing that we must remember, is that everything that Peter wrote to and about the pilgrims of the dispersion is true of us. We stand in the same grace of those 1st Century Christians – we have been called by God ... we have a place reserved in heaven for us ... we are just passing through this world ... we have direct access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and all the other blessings of our salvation.

As we live our Christian lives, we are a witness to the world around us ... a world that is in desperate need of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Just consider what happened in India this past week. Simply put, the world needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And it is only the Christian that can spread the Gospel, and one of the ways that we do that is by living our lives in accord with God’s revealed Word.

As he concludes his letter he brings greetings from Babylon, which is probably Rome. What he is saying is that the elect, those who also have been chosen by God, in Rome greet the pilgrims of the dispersion.

Peter lets us know the Mark – John Mark – the author of the Gospel of Mark is also with him in Rome. Remember that John Mark was not an Apostle, and yet he was one of the Gospel writers. Historians tell us that he worked closely with Peter, and that is how he got some his information for the Gospel. Gospel writers were either Apostles – Matthew and John, or they had direct access to eyewitnesses, such as we have with John Mark and Peter.

He then tells them to greet each other with a kiss of love, which was a common greeting in the time, similar to today’s handshake.

And then, as he did at the beginning of the letter, he pronounces a blessing on them – *“Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”* We note again that true peace only comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.