



St James Bowraville : Holy Trinity Macksville : St John's Nambucca Heads : All Saints Stuarts Point

NAMBUCCA VALLEY ANGLICANS Bible Study: I PETER

APRIL/MAY
2023



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If you knew you were about to enter a difficult set of circumstances that would test your faith, how would you prepare yourself?

Read vs 1-12

1. Study Peter's description of the people who were about to receive his letter (vv. 1-2). How does his description of them help explain why they were "strangers in the world"?

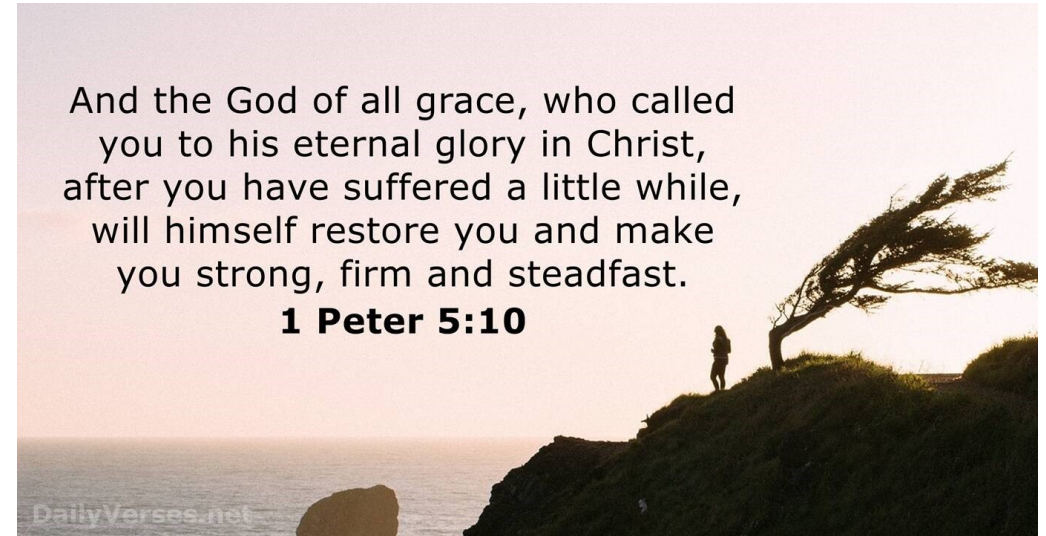
2. How does Peter describe the work of God in the lives of Christians?

3. In verses 3-5, Peter speaks about God giving us 'new birth into a living hope'. What does 'living hope' mean to you?

4. What do verses 6-9 reveal about the situation faced by the Christians hearing this letter? Rather than seeing their situations negatively, what opportunities (there are least 2) does Peter say arise out of hardship and suffering?

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:10



Front cover picture:

Saint Pierre

Michael Pacher (1435–1498)

Belvedere Museum of Vienna

Back cover picture:

The Crucifixion of St Peter

by Caravaggio 1601

Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome

Bibliography:

Stibbs, Alan M: The First Epistle General of Peter, a Commentary Tyndale NT Commentary Series.

Nystrom, Carolyn: Peter & Jude, A Lifeguide Bible Study

Lucardo, Max: Books of 1 & 2 Peter, Inspirational Bible Study Series

Lambeth Conference: Bible Studies, the First Letter of Peter

Prayer relating to I Peter

O God of all grace,
who has called us into your
eternal glory by Jesus Christ;
mercifully hear the prayers, which with
heartly desires we make to you;
and grant that we, being clothed with humility,
and casting all our care on you,
may be sober and vigilant,
and continuing steadfast in the faith,
may resist all the temptations of the devil,
and at length obtain the crown of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity, BCP)

Like living stones, precious in God's sight,
go in peace to proclaim the mighty acts of God.

Read vs 10-12

5. What does Peter say here in relation to the gospel as part of God's big story for humankind?
How does this change the way you experience and live life as someone in but not of the world?

Read vs 13-21

6. In this passage, Peter encourages us to live today in light of Jesus' return. What things does Peter encourage us to do?
Taking them one at a time, what impact does each description of our identity have on being self-controlled?
Which of these commands do you most need to put into practice?
7. In 1:17 Peter refers to the Father judging each person's work impartially. How do you feel about this? What encouragement can we draw from it? How does this knowledge spur you on to live today in light of Jesus coming?
8. Would you describe yourself as someone who lives with great hope and joy? Why/why not?
How does I Peter I help re-frame hope and joy in light of our eternal relationship with God?

**What has been one of your most valuable relationships.
What made it valuable?**

1. What is your understanding of a shepherd? How should a shepherd lead, according to I Peter? What does it mean to imitate Jesus as the 'chief shepherd'?

2. What does it mean to clothe yourself with humility? How are humility and the 'casting of your anxiety' on God connected?

3. Who or what are the roaring lions in our context? How do we resist these lions? How do we keep steadfast in our faith?

4. Peter comes back to addressing the impact of increasing persecution on the church. In addition to humility, what responses does he call for from the believers? What reasons does he give for doing so?

5. What encouragements does Peter provide for the hearers of this letter?

4. How does belief or unbelief influence the way a person understands Jesus "the living Stone"?

5. What reasons do people here have to praise God (vv 9-10)?

6. What inner and outer battles do you see in verses 11 to 12?

7. How does this passage reaffirm your sense of worth and value in God's eyes?

If you were to rate your natural inclination for being submissive on a scale of one to ten, where would you place yourself and why? (One is a mud-covered doormat; ten is a banner-waving firebrand.)

Read I Peter 2:13-3:7

1. Find several examples of submission in this passage. What is difficult about each?

2. According to Peter, why should Christians treat their governing leaders with respect (2:13-15)?

3. How could the teachings of 2:16-17 keep you from becoming a muddy doormat to your government?

4. How much does being a Christian bring some meaning to the suffering that comes from being a slave? What connections does the text point out between Christ's suffering and a Christian's submission in this trying situation? How does this relate to us?

6. What does it mean to be of a sound judgment? How does a sober spirit help one in his prayer life?

7. What is the general principle that we need to keep in mind as we use our spiritual gift?

8. Whilst apologetic and theological answers have their place, it is our stories that are often most memorable and impacting. Take a few minutes to think through how you might use a snippet of your testimony to answer a person who asks, "So why are you a Christian?"

Read I Peter 4:12-19

9. What does Peter say about the experience of persecution?

10. How does Peter link their experience of persecution with the return of Christ?

11. What encouragement does Peter give the hearers?

Take time to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters. Ask for the courage to keep strong in the faith and to continue speaking about Jesus.

When you hear the word ‘suffering’ what image comes to your mind? What emotion(s) does it stir in you?

Read I Peter 4:1-6

1. How does a willingness to persevere in Christian living, even in the face of suffering, show that we have made a decisive break with sin in our life? How does suffering help to purify us?

2. How is a Christian different from a pagan, both in attitudes & in actions?

3. The Apostles preached to people (while they were still alive), in order that even though they would die physically (as all men who were once in Adam die), they might live new resurrection life. How important is it to believe the gospel during this life?

Read I Peter 4:7-11

4. What are the motivational factors to continue in the Christian life in spite of suffering?

5. What does constant love and hospitality in the face of suffering look like? How are we called to give and receive hospitality in our community and wider society, especially with those who are on the margins?

5. In a society where wives rated barely above slaves, what can you find that is “progressive” about Peter’s marriage principles in 3:1-7?

6. What reasons did Peter give for acting according to these principles?

7. Finding a balance between responsible action for healthy change, and submission to authority, is a constant tension for the Christian who wants to obey this passage. How can you draw together both ends of this tension? Consider what you say and do regarding:
 - civil government
 - in your job
 - in your marriage or in other relationships

For self-reflection:

Are there attitudes and words that you bring to relationships that need to change? If so, what will you do?

Is there someone (or some people) who consistently give(s) you a hard time. What response does this passage call for?

If your parents wanted you to stay out of trouble at school, what did they tell you to do or not do? To what extent do you still follow, or not follow, that advice in your life today?

Read verses 8-12

1. Find as many phrases as you can to describe what a Christian ought to be and do. What reasons does Peter give for living this way?
2. Can you give some practical examples of what each of those would look like? Discuss why it is particularly important that this sort of attitude dominates the way Christians treat one another.
3. People have choices about how they will respond to people around them. Christians are called to respond with good regardless of whether people treat you well or not (the godly way). Why is this (v11-12)?

Read verses 13-22

4. In spite of godly living, Peter knew that Christians may encounter hardship. What counsel does Peter offer for coping with suffering (vv. 13-17)?
5. Why might unbelievers be willing to listen to reasons for hope from a person who is living the way Peter describes?
6. In what ways do you think we might be blessed for doing what is right?

7. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord" v.15. If Christ is truly Lord in our hearts how should that impact our public witness of Him?
8. Our persecuted brothers and sisters today ask us not to pray that persecution will stop. For it to stop all they would need to do is be silent about their faith. Instead they ask for the courage to keep speaking. In what ways might this challenge many Christians in Australia?

Read verses 19-22

The meaning of these verses is widely debated by scholars. Quotes from Alan M. Stibbs: *The First Epistle General of Peter* (Tyndale)

"Positive benefits of his accomplished sacrifice followed immediately upon his physical death. Even before his resurrection he was able to move freely in the spiritual world as the victorious man. In his quickened human spirit, before his body was raised from the tomb, he was able to go where evil spirits are imprisoned, awaiting the judgement of the great day, and to announce to them his victory over death, and over the consequences to men of their evil doing. He thus made them aware that their own judgement was finally sealed." p. 142

"Christian baptism indicates the way of entrance, and seals upon our bodies the certain possibility of our full participation. A similar symbolical indication of God's way of salvation from judgement for sinners is found in the story of the ark and the flood. The ark passing safely through the flood provides a figure of God's method of saving men out of inevitable judgement. First, God delayed the day of judgement long enough for an ark to be prepared. Then, the souls that went into the ark did not avoid the judgement. Rather in the ark they were saved through the very water which drowned others, and, because of it, they thus passed out of the old world into a new world. When they emerged from the ark they literally found that old things had passed away, and all things were become new." p. 139

9. Discuss