

Blog Devotions On 1 Peter

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Saturday, May 23, 2009

Living The New Life - The New Life Begun

1 Peter 1:1-12

Here we find the beginning of the new life in Christ. Peter explains to the strangers scattered the beginning of spiritual life. Every believer knows about this beginning. He knows that he was once dead and now he is alive. He knows that he has been spiritually resurrected from the dead and that he lives in the Spirit of God.

Peter in these verses gives us some theological insight regarding the beginning of our new life. He speaks, first, of election. The word election means chosen. We who are saved have been chosen. Notice Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:* This election, or God's choosing us before the world began, has to do with his foreknowledge, knowing his people intimately beforehand.

The Spirit of God has been sanctified, or set apart, for the purpose of bringing us to conviction and faith in Jesus Christ: John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* . This was not done, however, without the obedience of Christ in sprinkling his blood from the cross, washing our sins in that precious blood so that he could bring us to God (See Rev. 1:5; 1 Peter 2:18-19).

He has begotten us again (verse 3) unto a lively, or living, hope by his resurrection from the dead. Because Jesus Christ is no longer dead, neither are we dead but have been resurrected unto new life to an inheritance, one that does not corrupt, is not defiled, and that does not fade away. However, that inheritance is reserved in heaven for we who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and it will be revealed in due time, 4..

Because of all that God has done for us, we are to rejoice greatly even though we have many temptations. If the preamble to this book does not ring loud and true in your ears, then you will not be prepared for the trials that will most certainly come your way; because the trial of our faith is more precious than gold. These trials must be tried; otherwise, they are not trials. These trials are to bring glory and praise to God at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Though we have not seen Jesus, yet we love him: we believe in him, for salvation is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Now, even though we have trials, we rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable but is full of glory to God.

The prophets inquired into this salvation and searched diligently to know more about it, but the mysteries of this salvation were for us, not them. The Spirit of God was in those prophets (See Numbers 27:8 and Nehemiah 9:30), and they prophesied about the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow those sufferings.

The angels desire to look into the mysteries of salvation, but salvation does not pertain to them; it pertains only to God's chosen. This should make us, his chosen, very grateful and humble.

The new life has begun; now we must live it. It is to God that we live it, not to ourselves. We shall see many ways in which we can live this new life taught to us by the apostle Peter.

Monday, May 25, 2009
Living The New Life As Obedient Children
1 Peter 1:13-21

In living the new life as obedient children, we are not to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance (when we were lost in our sins). Paul said in the book to the Romans in Rom. 6:12 *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. We are living a new life, not the old life under the law and under sin, whereby sin reigned in our flesh.*

Living Hopefully

1 Peter 1:13 tells us that we are to be sober (sober-minded) so that we can hope to the end of grace. That end is our deliverance from this world at the return of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Many believers do not live hopefully; they live as though they are burdened down with yesterday's and today's burdens and problems. If we were to look to the future at the grace that will be ours in our great deliverance, we would not be so anxious about the things that come to us every day of our lives.

Living Holily

1 Peter 1:15 tells us that we should be holy in all manner of conversation (practices of life). We should consider everything that we do whether it is holy or whether it will bring shame to our Savior or bring disgrace to our own witness. Peter alludes to a scripture in the Old Testament to call us to holy living: Lev. 20:26 *And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

Living Fearfully

Notice 1 Peter 1:17 says that we are to pass the time here on earth with fear; that is, if we call on the Father, who judges without respect of persons. Everyone wants God to be his Father, but we must all remember that he is the Great Judge of all. He will not count us guiltless who claim him as our Father and then disregard the judgment of God, for one believer is no greater than another in God's

judgment. We are to fear this judgment, for he will judge every man's work--my work and your work. He will not allow one work to go unjudged. We should live in the fear that we might disobey him in his commandments; therefore, we should study his commandments, meditate in them day and night, and obey every one without slackness.

Living Redeemed

Part of living this new life is to know that we were redeemed, but not with corruptible things such as silver and gold or from the religious practices from the tradition from our fathers. We were, however, redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who is without spot. Notice 1 Peter 2:22 *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*: This Redeemer was foreordained to be our Redeemer, and he was manifested (shown) unto us in these last days for us to love and appreciate and obey.

Living Faithfully

We believe in God by Jesus Christ, his election and calling, and his mercy and grace. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). God raised him from the dead, which is the crux of the Gospel, the living value of the life and work of Jesus Christ, that in which we have our justification. Our faith and hope are in God through Jesus Christ; therefore, it is important that we live this new life by faith. Remember, the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

This is an awesome new life that we are living, but we are not living it for our own benefit but for the glory of God. Jesus is the reason for our faith, the awesome object of our faith, and the finishing of our faith. Through faith in Jesus Christ we have abounding grace and sustaining faith that will lead us into a bright future. We cannot lose, because Rom. 8:31 says, *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Tuesday, May 26, 2009

Living The New Life In Loving One Another

1 Peter 1:22-25 - (C) 2009

Loving one another is the basic theme of these few verse of scripture. This is one of the strongest subjects of the New Testament--that of loving one another. The phrase "love one another" is mentioned 35 times in the New Testament, so it must be an important subject.

This subject is surrounded with some circumstances that make loving one another one of the most vibrant doctrines of the scriptures. In order to love one another properly we must understand some basic doctrines that give us strength to be able to accomplish this commandment.

First, we have the fact that we (those who love one another) have purified our souls by obeying the truth. Obeying the truth is the same as obeying the gospel. Obeying the gospel means that we have

believed it (See Rom. 10:16 *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*). When we believed the gospel, we obeyed the gospel (the truth), and our souls were purified, or sanctified, John 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*. This purification has given us a new life so that we can in a real way love one another.

We obeyed the truth through the Spirit of God, for without the Spirit we can do nothing. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22. The Spirit of God indwells us, for the Bible says in Rom. 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; and if any man does not have the Spirit of God, he cannot love his neighbor in the true sense of the word.

Second, we have been born again, not by corruptible seed but by the word of God, that is the word of the gospel (See 1 Peter 1:25). This word lives and abides forever: it will never change or become corrupt as seed in the ground corrupts before it brings forth its stalk and fruit. Jesus died on the cross and came forth in his glory, but the gospel is the same in time and eternity. If we are born again with this incorruptible seed, then we can love one another truly.

Third, we find a comparison between the grass of the field and the word of the Lord. The grass "falleth away," but the word of the Lord (the gospel) never fades. It endures forever. The same word (gospel) that sustains our love one for another in this life will continue to sustain that love in timeless eternity future.

This love is an unfeigned love, one that is true and not deceiving. Having this kind of love is an evidence of our true salvation from above: 1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death*.

Saturday, May 30, 2009
Living The New Life - Coming To The Living Stone
1 Peter 2:1-8

Instead of having malice (hate), guile (deceit), hypocricies, envies, and evil speakings, we are to desire the sincere milk of the word so that we might grow. This is the nature of the new life. We desire the milk of the word of God as a new-born babe desires its mother's milk.

We can do this only if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and he has been gracious to every one of us who has trusted in him as personal Savior. His amazing grace has both surprised us and has blessed us with spiritual blessings.

We came to him (verse 4) as to a living stone. Peter is not the rock, Jesus is. He is both Petra and Lithos (rock and stone). He is the stone that was chosen of God to be our propitiation, our substitute, our Savior. He is precious. Peter uses the word "precious" seven times in his writings. The word precious tells us that he is greater than anything that has been created, and he has a name that is

above every name (Phil. 2:9).

We, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house. This house is the kingdom of God, the household of faith. We are also a holy priesthood, the priesthood of the believers. Every believer is a priest of God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Therefore, we are to send up spiritual sacrifices to him: the sacrifice of ourselves, our talents, our minds, our prayer and praise. These will be acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. God has laid in Zion a chief cornerstone, and those who believe on him will not be confounded or ashamed.

To us who believe, he is precious, but to those who do not believe, he is disallowed; but Jesus has been made the head of the corner (the Cornerstone) of his kingdom. To the unbelievers, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. These unbelievers, rather than desiring the sincere milk of the word, stumble at the word of God. They think the word of God is less than precious.

God has determined to save certain people in the earth, and he will save them according to his own will and purpose (Eph. 1:4), but some he has determined to leave in their sinful state. We cannot regard this as an easy doctrine, but it is one that is borne out in scripture time and time again.

The central message of these verses is that we have come to the living stone, and we are to give praise and glory as well as our lives and minds to send up spiritual sacrifices to our God, who saved us by his grace. We should, then, be grateful and thankful that we are the children of God. Let us read our Bibles and desire to know God's word so that we can work for him and send praise to him our whole lives.

Monday, June 15, 2009
The New Life Manifested In The World
1 Peter 2:11-25

The first thing we must understand is that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world. We do not belong here in mind and soul, though we are here in body. As pilgrims and strangers, we are to abstain from fleshly lusts. Lusts are those things that stimulate our bodies to satisfy the flesh. From this we are to abstain. The body may want to do one thing, but God may want us to do another.

We are to have a good conversation (way of life) in the world so that people in the world may see our good works and glorify God in the day of visitation (examination).

We, though we live above the world, are by the same token to submit ourselves to the laws of the land, because God has put the magistrates in their positions for our peace and safety.

We are to live as free people, because we have been made free from sin by our Savior, Jesus Christ. But we are not to take that liberty too far and use it as a "cloak of maliciousness," but we are to use that liberty to serve God.

We are to honor all men as they are due that honor, love the brotherhood (saved people), and honor the king. As servants we are to be obedient to our masters (perhaps employers) no matter what kind of master he might be.

If we suffer wrong for doing the right thing, we are to endure that suffering. We should never be guilty of wrong. In this we shall be accepted of God. Christ left us an example that we should suffer even as he has suffered. He did not sin, but he suffered nonetheless; but he committed himself to God, who judges righteously.

This section closes with the supreme example of suffering: that Jesus carried our sins up on the tree so that we, being dead to sin, may live unto righteousness. By his stripes (suffering) we are healed. We have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Therefore, we have a supreme Master who is above the world, and we can live above the world with his leadership.

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Living The New Life - Wives and Husbands

1 Peter 3:1-7

The word *likewise* in verse one refers back to 2:13, which instructs those living the new life to submit to every ordinance of man, etc. Peter here deals with the wives and then the husbands.

He speaks, first, of women in general, telling them that they should be in subjection to their own husbands. This should be a thing that is simply assumed, but evidently it is not, since God reminds us here through Peter about it. Ladies, set it in your mind to do what these verses instruct you to do. Both women and men have a responsibility to God to keep his commandments.

One of the reasons that God wants women to be in subjection to their husbands is so that, if the husband (a saved man) disobeys God's word, he can be won back to a good walk in the Lord by simply seeing the obedience of his wife. This obedience, then, is an object lesson to a woman's husband, and this passage does not say how long this will take. The husband will see the wife's conversation (way of life) along with the object of that life, which is the fear of God, verse 2.

As the husband beholds the wife, she should be adorned, not with the lustful dress of the world, but with the hidden "man" of the heart, which is a meek and quiet spirit, not a spirit of disdain and constant nagging, verses 3-4.

Peter then gives an example of "the old time," using Sarah, the wife of Abraham, as an example of this meek and quiet spirit. These women in "the old time" trusted in God and were not afraid to obey God, verse 6. Sarah called Abraham "lord." This was out of respect to him as her head. This is God's way (1 Cor. 11:3).

In verse seven Peter turns to talk to husbands concerning their wives. He says to "dwell with them."

This means that the husband should not quickly leave a woman but understand his position as husband and father. He is to give honor to his wife. This Greek word for "honor" is the basic word for "precious." So, the husband should consider his wife to be precious to him. He is to consider her the "weaker vessel," refusing to use his bodily strength against her but to consider her precious, not precocious.

The husband is to consider his wife "heirs together of the grace of life" so that their prayers not be hindered. Too many times either husband or wife will think himself better than the other in one way or another; but God says they are equal spiritually in regard to the grace of life. The Bible is very clear in teaching the place of both man and woman in service of the local church, but in regard to grace, they are equal in the presence of God.

Friday, July 31, 2009

Living The New Life - Giving An Answer

1 Peter 3:8-15

In this section of scripture Peter is setting up the believer to be able to give an answer to everyone who might ask the reason of the hope that lies within us. How do we prepare to give this answer? These verses will give some insight.

First, we are to be of one mind, not disagreeing with our fellow believers on the foundation of truth that is revealed by God through prophets and apostles. We must all agree with truth; if not, we will not give a right answer.

Second, we are to show compassion toward one another. This shows that we are in agreement with the truth and that there is a love between believers in Christ that transcends the love of the world. Peter details this love further when he mentions being pitiful and courteous toward people in general. We are not to seek revenge but show a blessing to all people with our love and pity, because we are called unto this, verse 9.

Third, we are to be very careful about what we say and how we say it, not speaking any evil or guile (deceit). People actually listen, not only to what we say, but how we say it; and this speaks volumes as to our witness of the truth, verse 10.

Fourth, we are to turn away from (eschew) evil and do good. These two things go hand in hand. We cannot do one without doing the other. We are to seek peace and follow after (ensue) it. In other words, we are not to be confrontational. This we do, because God is always watching us, and his ears are listening to our prayers, but the face of the Lord is against (turned away from) them that do evil, verses 11-12.

Fifth, we need to understand that no one wants to harm a person who identifies with the aforementioned qualities. It should be very hard, according to this, to pick a fight with a believer who

is giving an answer to the hope that is in him. However, there are some who desire to harm all believers, and nothing will stop them; but we need to realize that we are appointed to this (See Phil. 1:29). We are not to be afraid of their terror or to be troubled by them (See Gal. 2:6), verses 13-14.

Sixth, we are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts: be aware that God is with us wherever we go (Psalm 23:4). Be in constant awareness of God's presence, because he said "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5), verse 15.

Then, when all of these qualities have been obtained in our new life, we shall be in a position to give an answer to everyone who asks about the hope that is in us, and we can do it with meekness and fear: meekness, because these qualities give us self-confidence and bring us to our knees in the presence of our God; and fear, because we know that, when we answer the truth, we are answering the very words of God from his word. What an awesome challenge for every believer!

Saturday, August 1, 2009

Living The New Life With A Good Conscience

1 Peter 3:16-22

Some people speak evil of Christians, and this is seemingly getting worse as time goes on. But we need to understand that, in the midst of the world's calling us evil, we are to have a good conscience, assured that we are God's children, saved by his grace and kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5). When men speak lies about us, we should show our good conscience and assurance in Christ, therefore making them ashamed. They will also be ashamed when they stand before Almighty God in judgment. If we are to suffer, it is better to suffer for good instead of evil. Never should it be said that a Christian suffers for wrongdoing, because we are to *be ye therefore perfect, even as my Father in heaven is perfect* (Matt. 5:48). If we are to suffer, it should be for Christ's sake, verses 16-17.

Christ, our great Example, suffered for sins, but not for his own but for ours, the just (Christ) for the unjust (the sinner). He was obedient unto death, because it was his Father's will and plan (Phil 2:8). He did this that he might bring us to God, his Father, where he is and where we shall be later (See John 17:24). He died in the flesh, but he was alive in the Spirit. When the body dies, the spirit is still alive. When Jesus died, Jesus' Spirit went to be with his Father (Luke 23:46).

By this same Spirit Jesus, through Noah, went and preached to the spirits "in prison," the prison of sin and captivity of the lost soul. These were the people who lived during the life of Noah and during the time the ark was being prepared. Jesus spoke to these sinners by his Spirit through Noah the precious message of the Gospel. They were warned of pending doom for every soul who did not trust God's divine word. In that time only eight souls were saved: Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. These were saved "by water," which does not, of course, indicate that they were saved by means of the water, for the water was for the destruction of those sinners who rejected the message of Noah. They were saved by water in that the water was a testimony of their earnest trust in God. Many may have said they believed what Noah preached or what God was going to do; but until they

were willing to step into the ark, their faith was vain. Many believe in that same way today. Water did not save Noah's family; the ark did.

Now this is a figure, a shadow, a type of baptism and how it saves us today. Baptism does not literally save us, but it is a testimony of our salvation, thus giving us a good conscience toward God. We are answering to God's demand, his will, and his plan. We are committing ourselves to his service in being baptized in water. Verse 21 is broken by a parenthesis. By excluding it from the reading one can understand the basic sentence, which is *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Just as the water lifted up the ark to be a testimony of God's grace to Noah, so our baptism lifts up the resurrection of Jesus Christ as that which actually saves us, verse 21.

Now this is the same Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven by ascension (Acts 1:11). He is now at the right hand of the Father (Acts 7:56) where he is making intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). Angels and authorities and powers kneel at his presence and serve him as King of kings and Lord of lords, verse 22.

There is nothing greater than to serve Jesus unless it is having a good conscience toward God. As believers we are to "have a good conscience." If we know that we are doing right, we need not be ashamed whether we are at peace or whether we suffer for Christ's sake. May God help us to have a good conscience.

Saturday, August 8, 2009
Living The New Life With A New Mind
1 Peter 4:1-3

The most magnanimous event in history is that Jesus suffered for us, the just for the unjust. He suffered the penalty of Hell in the place of the sinner who comes to know Jesus Christ as Savior. What an adventure of suffering was this! He suffered Hell for us. Of all the theological discussions people can have, this one brings the greatest discussion, difference of opinion, and the greatest joy to those who understand it biblically.

Because Jesus has done this for us, we must arm ourselves with that same mind, the mind of surrender to God's will, even if it is unto death (See Phil. 2:5-8). This same mind, because the one who has suffered in the flesh (while still alive) has ceased from sin. When faith came to each individual believer, he suffered with Christ "in the flesh" through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he has ceased from sin; that is, he has a part of himself that does not sin, yea, cannot sin (1 John 3:9). The spirit of a man who has faith in Christ does not and cannot sin. It is regenerated and secured by the grace and the Spirit of God, verse 1.

Therefore, that believer who has ceased from sin should no longer live in this life to the lusts of men, lost men who do not know Jesus Christ as their Master; but he should live his life to the will of God, following the scriptural mandates for the believer and developing the character of a true

Christian, verse 2.

The past life, which we lived among the Gentiles when we were lost in our sins, is not to command our lives, but the grace of God is to be recognized, embraced, and pursued for growth and understanding (2 Peter 3:18).

The ways we walked in those days in our lost condition are listed in order to remind us of our old mind, our old attitude, in comparison to our new one in Christ. (1) lasciviousness, which is unbridled lust and excess of sin; (2) lust, which is the strong desire to sin--which was our nature under the law; (3) excess of wine, which, of course, intimates drunkenness; (4) revelings, which indicates half-drunken men and women who have late-night parties of excessive revelry; (5) banquetings, which indicates, again, drunken parties and feasts; and (6) abominable idolatries, which, of course, indicates the worship of false gods.

Notice the progression of these sins. Not only does the first lead to the second and the third, etc., but each sin gets deeper into the character of the sinner, thus pulling him down to habitual lust and sin; but also the root and ground of the matter is mentioned last. Idolatry is at the root and base of sin. Remember that every man *is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed* (James 1:14), verse 3.

This should be our mind:

- (1) The mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16)
- (2) The mind of humility (Phil. 2:5; Acts 20:19; Rom. 12:16; Col 3:12)
- (3) The renewed mind (Rom. 12:2)
- (4) The mind of service (Rom. 7:25)
- (5) One mind to the glory of God (Rom. 15:6)
- (6) A willing mind (2 Cor. 8:12)
- (7) A ready mind (2 Cor. 8:19; 1 Peter 5:2)
- (8) A sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7)

Saturday, August 15, 2009
Living The New Life Judged By God
1 Peter 4:4-7

The Wicked's Attitude

The wicked think it is strange that we who are God's children do not follow them to their drunken party, why we do not enjoy their excess of riot and their sin in general. They wonder why we do not enjoy their music, their jokes, and their language. Since we have been changed by God's grace, our interests are different now. *Old things are passed away, and all things are become new* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Sometimes the lost will try to encourage us to be involved in things that Christians should not do, and that is when we must say "No." They, then, speak evil of us as though we are the ones who are in the wrong. Their lost mind cannot understand why we turn away from these evil things.

The Wicked's Judgment

These wicked ones must give an account to God, but they do not think that they will ever meet him. One day they will understand that our trust in Christ's second coming is not to no avail. Every evil person will stand before the Judge of all.

But not only will God judge the wicked; he will also judge the righteous (Eccl. 3:17; Rom. 14:12). Our text says that he will judge the quick (living) and the dead.

Judgment In The Flesh

The Gospel was preached to those who are dead, literally dead, those who have died in the past who are in Christ. The world judged them in the flesh, but they lived according to God in the spirit. This is how we live today: toward God in our spirit, because his Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are the children of God. Therefore, we are to be sober and to watch in prayer, watch for the judgment of God upon both the lost and the saved.

Judgment At His Coming

The end of all things is at hand. Anyone who will trust in Jesus Christ, his death, burial, resurrection, and his precious blood will be judged according to God's mercy. Let's live in this world knowing that we are his children and that God's judgment is just with mercy through the death of Jesus Christ.

Thursday, August 20, 2009
Living The New Life With Love
1 Peter 4:8-11

See also the blog from May 26, 2009

What these verses say is "above all things." That means that it is a serious priority for our consideration. The subject of this section of scripture, love, is incumbent upon each and every one of us to love one another, and not only to love one another, but to love one another fervently. I see that the Greek word for *fervent* literally means "stretched out." This means that the love wherewith we are to love one another is one that is to be stretched out, or one that lingers long, even to the end of life.

The reason for the fervent love (charity) is in order to cover a multitude of sins: each one of us has a multitude of sins. There is not a one of us who does not have enough sins to stretch over the entire

earth and back again, enough to reach through space almost endlessly. The only thing that will cover sins is love. John 3:16 expresses God's love toward his people in that he forgave us our sins so that we shall never perish. We should reflect this divine love one to another so that we, also, may have our sins covered, covered that they may not be brought up and reminded and rebuked continually. This fervent love between believers will make our co-existence not only easier but formidable.

The Greek word for "hospitality" means literally "the love of strangers." If we would just learn to love one another as believers, we would not need to worry about strangers. No Christian should be a stranger to another Christian. We have a communion together that makes every new believer we meet a common fellow.

Now this love and hospitality is a gift, as shown in verse 10. God has given believers many gifts, and this is a primary one, one that we should use on a daily basis to live the new life with love, thus being good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Now when we speak to one another, we should speak the truths of the "oracles of God," the word of God that is always pure and perfect. No believer should ever be offended at another believer when he hears the truth from God's word. It is the word of God which brings us to repentance and conversion in our daily lives. We should read the word often and listen to it in conversation and in teaching and preaching, verse 11.

All this living with love and listening and preaching the word of God is done to the glorification of Jesus Christ, for it is to him that we owe our praise, and to him belongs dominion forever and forever. Jesus Christ is our Savior, and he has brought us together as believers to be one in Christ through his blood. With love we can have a divine communion one with another, and no believer will be a stranger to us.

Monday, September 7, 2009
Living The New Life With Suffering
1 Peter 4:12-19

The Fiery Trial, 12

There is a trial of which Peter warns these believers. John Gill suggests that it may be the trial of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, but this does not seem to be the sense of verse 12. There is a common trial that comes upon Christians daily or at least from time to time. This is the same as the tribulations referred to in Acts 14:22 . . . *and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God..* It is also the same as the divers temptations of James 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;* We all as believers should expect the trial of our faith.

The Joy, 13-14

We can rejoice in our trial, because we are partaking of Christ's sufferings. We will one day be glad

when Jesus comes again in his revelation. The two words "rejoice" and "be glad" are the same Greek word. The word "happy" in verse 14 is the same Greek word used in Matthew Chapter five that is translated "blessed." We are to have this happiness when we are reproached for Christ's name. When we are reproached, the spirit of glory and of God is resting upon us. In other words, we cannot be happy unless we have the spirit of glory and of God. Even though others speak evil of God, we glorify his name in our speech. God through his Son, Jesus Christ, is our only Savior and Lord. How can we do else but glorify his name?

The Suffering, 15-19

We as believers are never to suffer for our sins, being punished by the law or by God for the sins mentioned in verse 15; we should be ashamed of committing any of these sins. But if we suffer as Christians, we need not be ashamed, for we glorify God in doing so.

Judgment begins at the house of God, which is the church of the Lord, Jesus Christ; and if it begins here and God is the judge of the righteous, then what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel? The righteous are "scarcely saved," meaning that they cannot come to righteousness except by the grace of God. If this is true, then what about the ungodly sinner?

We should as believers commit the keeping of our souls to God, who is the faithful Creator.

Sunday, October 4, 2009
The New Life In Service As An Elder
1 Peter 5:1-4

The Position

Each elder of a church, or pastor of a church, is exhorted or encouraged by Peter. He is mentioning their position before the church, a position that should not be taken for granted or one that should be boasted about or allowed to swell up the preacher's ego. The position is a good work (1 Timothy 3:1), and it is one that should be respected; but it is not one that is to be allowed to make a man arrogant or proud. It is a position of service. Paul told the Colossians that *ye serve the Lord Christ*, Col. 3:24.

The Purpose

The purpose of the elder is to "feed the flock of God." This feeding comes from the word of God, Jeremiah says in 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts*. Each believer in a church who hears the word of God will rejoice in the truth; and those who have been in error and who have found the truth are thrilled at how the word of God itself transforms their minds and gives them contentment and consolation in God's word alone.

Another purpose of the elder or pastor of a church is "taking the oversight." This is the leadership of the pastor, and it is a tender vocation; for we as pastors are not to oversee the Lord's flock as furious lords over God's heritage but as tender nurses who take care of little babies. Paul told the Thessalonians that he was *gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children* (1 Thess. 2:7). Being a nurse is neither an easy nor a pleasant job, but it is a needed job. Rather than being proud, then, as elders, we should be as nurses cherishing the Lord's flock.

This job is not to be taken by constraint (by the pressure of another pastor or of mother or father) but willingly, as God would lead by his Holy Spirit, who will both prepare the heart and place the man into this ministry as he sees fit. It is not to be taken for greedy gain (filthy lucre) but of a ready mind, a mind that is intent upon doing the job and willing to study to show oneself a workman that needs not be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Problem

The problem with being an elder is that ego can very easily get in the way of service. Rather than being lords over God's heritage, we are to be examples of believers. Paul told Timothy in 1Ti 4:12 *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. This is the duty of an elder. The problem is that our own ego and arrogance sometimes hinders us from doing this very thing.

The Prize

If we serve the Lord Jesus Christ as elders in a way that pleases God, then we shall receive a prize, which is a "crown of glory that fadeth not away." No one knows what this crown looks like or actually what it is, but we know that whatever it is, its glory will shine in our behalf because of our surrender to the service of God. It is not that we deserve this crown, but it is that God desires to reward us with this prize. We are to work for this prize, for Paul said in Phil. 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*.

Why would God give a church elder a prize for simply surrendering to his service? It is because that is God's will for us. Notice what Paul said to the Philippians in 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*; Part of this surrender is to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake. If we do not suffer for him, then we will not pursue the prize of the high calling of God. Let us be true to God and make ourselves of no reputation, as Jesus did (Phil. 2:7).

Thursday, October 8, 2009
Humility Among Church Members
1 Peter 5:5-11

Humility In The Church, 5

The younger are the common members of the church, since in Biblical days pastors were usually the "elder" of the membership. These younger are to submit unto the elder, or the pastor(s) of the church. This humility is a genuine character of a true believer. It is warranted among the young of any church. The elders, or pastors, are to be respected highly. The younger are also to submit themselves to other elder ones who are not pastors. In this they can learn the true Christian graces and the practical work of serving in the Lord's church.

There is also to be a general submission or humility among all the members of a church. We are all to be clothed with humility. God gives us the reason we are to be clothed with humility: God resists the proud. This is a quote taken from Proverbs 3:34. In this passage, Solomon puts it this way *Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly*. God scorns the scorers; therefore, we do not need to scorn the scorers. Our job is to be humble, and God will take care of the scorers. He will give grace unto the lowly. James 4:6 tells us that *he giveth more grace*.

Humility To Be Done, 6

We are to humble ourselves. This is not something that God does without our surrender. Our proud hearts and arrogant character must be subdued, and that submission must be done by our own hearts. If our hearts are humbled, God will exalt us in due time but not until that time.

How To Be Humble, 7-9

The first step to humility is to cast all our care upon him (God). We can trust him, because he cares for us.

The second step to humility is to be sober, that is, sober-minded and vigilant (watchful); because the devil is seeking whom he may devour. He would love to ruin our reputation and cause us to fall into temptation.

The third step to humility is to resist the devil and to remember that our brethren who are serving Christ also have the same temptations and the same testings from the devil, who would love to make us a castaway and ruin our testimony for Christ.

What Will God Do? 10-11

Peter prays that God will bring each believer through the sufferings of this life and into that glorious entrance into the eternal heavens where every believer will be perfect, established, strengthened, and

settled. This will be done, and it will be done to the glory of God, who has glory and dominion forever and ever.

This life is a path of genuine suffering and service. It is a path of genuine humility before God, and God will reward each believer in his own good time. We are looking forward to a grand entrance into that eternity that God has promised everyone who loves him and trusts him as Savior.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Peter's Conclusion

1 Peter 5:12-14

Silvanus the Brother, 12

Being, no doubt, delivered by the hands of Silvanus (Silas) to the church or churches to whom Peter is writing, this man is a faithful brother to those written to as well as to Peter. We have many brothers just like this in our day, who are instantly willing to do whatever they are able to do in order that the Kingdom of Christ may be continued and exalted and that the Gospel be preached throughout the world.

Peter sent with his concluding remarks the idea that the true grace of God is existent and confessed among those to whom Peter is writing. The true grace of God is his electing grace (1 Peter 1:2), and it is a grace wherein we are to stand continually and not to forsake, which some have done in our day, becoming lackadaisical and unconcerned about the work of the Lord. We should always stand in the grace of God, always busy about the Father's business. This is our life-long vocation.

The Church At Babylon, 13

This church was, no doubt, made up of pure-blooded Jews who did not return to Judah from Babylon when they were taken away in the captivity. The Gospel had got to them, and they were saved by the true grace of God. Peter is here acknowledging them; otherwise, we would have no knowledge today of their existence. It is believed that this letter was written from Babylon.

It is miraculously by grace that God would find and save people who seem to have been forgotten by God at the time when he was sending Jewish people back into their land after the 70-year captivity. But God has not forgotten his people nor forsaken them. He will save all his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

From Babylon, that deceitfully beautiful city with all of its idolatry, its prostitution, its wantonness and greed has in it a remnant who have been touched by the true grace of God; and these lovely people, who have been saved amidst all of this degradation, are now saluting the people to whom Peter is writing as fellow saints of God with Christian love and generosity.

The Holy Kiss, 14

Peter wishes them cordiality and love among themselves, for without love the grace of God is squandered and misrepresented (See 1 Cor. 13 for the more excellent way). Love among brethren is paramount in our ministries today. We must "love the brethren," for this is a genuine testimony of the grace of God that has been worked in our souls (1 John 3:14).

Peter wishes them peace, not world peace, but the peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7), that peace with God (Rom. 5:1) that is greater than world peace, and the peace of God (Col. 3:15) which rules in our hearts and pushes us on toward the prize of the high calling of God (Phil. 3:14). The only way we can have this peace, Peter explains, is through Christ Jesus. He is the only way, truth and life (John 14:6). Neither is there any other name whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

So ends the book of 1 Peter with many instructions on how to live the new life that we have in Christ Jesus. He has mentioned many things that affect our individual lives and also church life. This book should be read often and heeded. May God be our guide to follow this instruction for the duration of this short life on earth. Amen.

THE END