

Friday: “Believers in...”

Read: 1 Peter 1:20-21 ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the 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.

<p>Reflect: These verses take us back to 1:10-12. Their thought process is “on one hand...but on the other hand”. In other words, ‘On one hand Jesus was always part of the plan...but on the other hand this wasn’t revealed until lately’. So much of what Peter is focusing upon has to do with the Christ Event – the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.</p> <p>The beginning of v21 is interesting. How many people have not even heard of God until they have heard of Jesus? Does this make Jesus more important than God? No. God raised Jesus from the dead. Peter is basically saying that Jesus and God are a package deal.</p> <p>A person can’t say, ‘just give me Jesus’ – because God raised Him from the dead. A person can’t say, ‘I’m not sure about Jesus...but I believe in God’ – because Jesus gives us access to the Father. Of course we can’t leave out the Holy Spirit. He empowers us to live a Christian life.</p>	<p>Respond: Have you responded to the good news of the Christ Event? What impact has it made on your life?</p> <p>Do you focus more on God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Why?</p> <p>Pray for someone you know who needs to come to God through Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern how to help in that process.</p>
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Pray: Thank God that He raised Jesus from the dead...thereby authenticating His message and life. Pray for the Christian Education seminar that will be taking place tomorrow. Pray for your strength to resist sinning when you face a test.

Saturday: That’s It?!

Read: 1 Peter 1:22-2:10

<p>Reflect: Today many of you will be heading (or have been) to the building for some training in the area of Christian Education. Praise God for that! This is one of the many things that can be done in response to the salvation we have. Note, I don’t mean simply showing up at the building because the doors are open...but seeking to deepen your spiritual life via information with the expectation of that information being put into practice on a daily basis...</p> <p>You know, it’s interesting, but Peter has just led us through some heavy and deep theological stuff (1:1-21). He follows that up with “love one another”. I mean, is that the best he can do? He basically overwhelms us with these deep truths of God and then says “be nice”!?</p> <p>Sort of. But there is more to it than that. All of that overwhelming stuff leading up to this is truth and we need to know that truth in order to live it out in our lives. In other words, the Bible doesn’t tell us things simply so we know answers to trivia questions. The Bible tells us things so we’ll do them. When I think about loving others...often I need the command to do that. Left to myself I often don’t.</p>	<p>Respond: What were the two most useful things from the Christian Education seminar for you today? (I realize picking only two will likely be difficult.)</p> <p>How obedient are you to the truths of Scripture? With what areas do you struggle? How can you get help?</p> <p>Have you been preparing yourself throughout this week for tomorrow’s worship service?</p>
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Pray: Pray for those God is prompting to come to New Life tomorrow to be obedient and come. Pray that what we do tomorrow is pleasing to God and that lives will be positively impacted by the interactions we have, the singing, preaching, and teaching...pray for a God-honoring day. Thank God for His love.

Nothing But What?!?!

October 19 – 25

I, like many of you I’m sure, have gotten blood on my clothes in the past. An interesting thing about blood is that it doesn’t come out of clothes all that easily. In fact, if there is a lot of it, it can leave a stain – permanently.

Revelation 7:13-14

- ¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. **They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

Excuse me? Robes made “white” by “red” blood? No wonder so much of the non-Christian world doesn’t get Christianity. Perhaps we could simply blot out that reference. However...

Acts 20:28

- ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Romans 5:6-9

- ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Revelation 5:6-10

- ⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Those are just a few references to the blood of Jesus. The seeming misnomer of blood cleansing us and making once stained robes (our lives and deeds) white runs throughout the Bible. It is the image of our redemption... Perhaps one of the reasons we struggle so much with the idea of redemption is because we don’t think properly about it. WWPS (What Would Peter Say)? “Therefore prepare your minds...”

Monday: “Therefore”

Read: 1 Peter 1:13a¹³ Therefore... **Read:** 1 Peter 1:1-12

Reflect:

Verse 13 begins with “therefore”. As I’m sure you’ve heard in the past, whenever you come across the word “therefore” in the Bible you need to find out what it is “there for”. I.e., what is the basis for the action/command (or whatever follows) that is about to be made?

This word for “therefore” (i.e., *dio*) introduces a conclusion. A conclusion toward the beginning of a letter you ask? Yep. Peter has already told them the basis of what they need to know in the first twelve verses. Starting here in v13 he’s giving them the implications of those first 12 verses. He knew that his audience needed concrete examples of how to have their lives shaped by the facts of the first 12 verses. We’re no different...

A focus of the previous verses is the implications of Jesus’ resurrection. This is why we have a “living hope” (v3), an “inheritance” (v4), why our trials are worth enduring (vs6-7), how we are guaranteed the (ultimate) salvation of our souls if we remain faithful (v9), and what was kept secret for ages (vs10-12). In light of that, how now ought we live? In other words, “Therefore...”

Respond:

How have you felt like an “exile/alien” over the last three weeks due to your faith?

How has your life changed as a result of your salvation?

If you’ve never submitted to the Lordship of Jesus via immersion – why?

Pray: Pray for Brent as he seeks to be truthful to the text of 1 Peter in a world that may not want to hear what It has to say. Pray for your heart (and the hearts of others) to be open to and willing to be shaped by the implications of our salvation. Continue to pray for more workers for God’s Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).

Tuesday: “Hope”

Read: 1 Peter 1:13¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Reflect:

“I sure hope the sun shines today.” “I hope the Chiefs win at least three more games this year...or should I hope they don’t so they get better draft picks?” It seems we use “hope” in the sense of “wish”. What impact does that have on our faith? Is our faith something that is simply ‘nice if it were true’?

Biblically, “hope” is an expectation that something will come to pass. It isn’t wishful thinking, but a confidence in God; a confidence in His promises based on His faultless track record (i.e., faithfulness).

Based on God’s faultless track record Peter says, ‘Roll up your sleeves and get to work’. The imagery of “preparing your minds” is that of a person tucking their long robe into their belt so they can work. It’s purposefully getting things out of the way that may impede action. Being “sober-minded” isn’t just abstaining from alcohol. It also means ‘don’t let your mind wander and be intoxicated by the things of this world’. Our “mind” is for loving God (cf. Mt22:37; Mk12:30; Lk10:27).

Respond:

If somehow Christianity was proven to be a farce, how devastated would you be? Would it matter?

Are you more apt to “hope” in the things you can tangibly touch and influence (e.g., a job, friends) or salvation?

Are you prone to daydreaming? What about ‘wishing’ for a better life? Are these (and other similar mindsets) akin to being “sober-minded”?

Pray: Pray for your entire being, even your imagination, to be subject to Jesus as Lord. Thank God for His faithfulness. Pray for this Saturday’s Christian Education seminar at the building; pray for Shawn Lindsay as he prepares to minister to us. Continue to pray for God’s people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).

Wednesday: “Conduct”

Read: 1 Peter 1:14-15¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Reflect:

It’s the last part of v15 and all of v16 that so many people seem to focus upon when they think of Christianity...a bunch of ‘holier than thous’. It is true, we are commanded to be “holy” – but don’t miss the Indicative underlying the Imperative (i.e., we’re to be “holy” because God is “holy”).

A person’s “conduct” is how they are described. The word (“conduct”) is used in negative (e.g., Gal1:13; Eph4:22; 1Pet1:18; 2Pet2:7) as well as positive ways (Heb13:7; Jas3:13; 1Pet1:15; 2:12; 3:1,2). Similarly, “passions” is a neutral word – we can have good or bad passions.

The reason Christians are to have good conduct is because we are God’s children. Both Roman and Jewish law required obedience of minors to their parents. Fortunately God doesn’t have to coerce our obedience. His love is so powerful that it transforms us so that we desire to be more like Him. That was commonplace for ancient families; the character of the family was set forth by the father. God is our Father, hence the call for us to be “holy”.

Respond:

Who do you know that’s “ignorant” about God? What can you do about it?

What would a co-worker say of your conduct? How does that reflect on God?

Do you feel coerced into being Holy, or do you long for it?

Pray: Pray for the Youth Group as they meet tonight at the building. Pray for your desire to be obedient to God to continue to grow. Pray for the Unity and Purity of New Life. Continue to pray for God’s Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).

Thursday: “Ransomed”

Read: 1 Peter 1:17-19¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Reflect:

Redemption was a common idea in the ancient world. Slaves could buy their freedom, or be bought out of slavery by someone else. Granted it could take a long time for a slave to personally earn enough money (most never would make enough), but it happened. The process was quicker if a ‘benefactor’ came along...

We’ve heard about redemption...but perhaps we struggle with the idea because it doesn’t sound as good to us as it really is. In other words, we’re blind to that from which we need redeemed...

Keep in mind, Peter was writing to people, some of whom were Roman citizens; people living in “the greatest empire of the world” at the time – Rome. He calls what they’ve inherited from their forefathers a bunch of junk. Well, he called it “futile” – meaning it was useless, powerless, lacking in truth, etc. That sounds rather offensive doesn’t it? But how freeing is it when our eyes are opened to the unfathomable nature of our inheritance (1Pet1:4)?

Respond:

Is “fear” of God a good thing (cf. Acts9:31; 2Cor7:1; Rom3:18)?

What traditions do you have that are really “futile” in light of eternity? Should anything change as a result of this insight?

Recall some words we sang from Sunday, “What can wash away my sin...” Thank God for the blood of Jesus.

Pray: Thank God His Word gives us a standard by which we can measure our lives. Pray for the upcoming Christian Education seminar at New Life on 10/25. Continue to pray for open doors to share God’s Word (Col4:2-6) and the boldness to do so.