

1 PETER - WHO? WHY? WHEN?

There are some names that really fit... such as the shop in Alameda, California that sells maternity clothes. It's called, "Fashion After Passion". Or the Indian fast food restaurant in New York... "Curry In A Hurry". These names are apropos!

But the name "Peter" was one name that just didn't seem to fit.

The word "petros" means "rock" - yet the man, Peter, was more like *shifting sand*. Peter was impulsive, inconsistent, and insensitive - not very rock-like.

Yet Jesus named Peter, not after what he was at the time, but for what he would become once he had been transformed by the Savior and the Spirit.

Two events transformed *Shifty Simon* into *Powerhouse Pete*... He received power on the Day of Pentecost, and perspective at the Cross of Calvary.

At Pentecost... the power of the Holy Spirit came upon Peter, and he was made a bold witness for Jesus. At the cross... he saw Jesus suffer, and realized that God works through suffering and persecution and hardship. Peter became a champion of hope even in the midst of difficult and stressful circumstances.

In fact, that becomes the theme of his letter - hope in the midst of hardship.

In 5:13 Peter offers greetings from Babylon. It could be that he was writing from the literal city of Babylon, but it's more likely that he was referring to the spiritual Babylon - or the city of Rome - the capitol of pagan belief and false worship.

I believe Peter penned this letter, while he was prisoner in Rome, awaiting his execution by Cae-

sar Nero. Peter wrote with death looming on the horizon - yet his eyes were fixed just beyond the horizon - to the glories of his home in heaven.

It becomes apparent from his letter... *if Paul was the apostle of faith, and John was the apostle of love, then Peter was the apostle of hope!* Peter became a rock when he looked beyond this temporal world, and anchored his hopes in eternity.

Verse 1 says that Peter is writing "to the pilgrims of the Dispersion".

In the book of Acts we learn the Church was born into a climate of hostility and persecution. From the outset the Church in Jerusalem was hassled and attacked - and many of the believers scattered and *dispersed* into other parts of the world.

Peter is writing to these refugees of persecution...

And Peter is writing to us. We too are dispersed pilgrims. This world is not our home! Our habitat is heaven. We're just pilgrims passing through this life.

It reminds me of the mom on board a ship in the middle of the Atlantic. An angry storm almost sunk the boat, but the woman exuded an unusual calm and strength.

When the ordeal was over the captain asked her the secret of her composure.

She replied, "I've got two daughters. One lives in New York, and the other lives in heaven. I knew I'd see one of my girls in a few hours and it didn't really matter which one." We're all just pilgrims on a journey. Heaven is our ultimate home.

BORN TWICE

Peter addresses these believers in 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again..." If you know Jesus you've been begotten again... or born again.

As humans we are body, soul, spirit. Our problem, though, is we run on only 2 of 3 cylinders. This is why we sputter and misfire. Our body is alive and aware, as is our mind and emotions (our soul), but our spirit is dead. Yet when Jesus enters a life, He infuses our dead spirit with the spark of His life. Remember the old saying, "Born once, die twice; but born twice, die once."

Devotion Box - In The Father's Pocket

We're born again "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you," Earthly treasures lose their luster and value - whereas, God's blessings are permanent and priceless. There is an inheritance in heaven under lock and key, with your name on it!

And 1:5 says that you yourself, "are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

My kids are always asking me, "Dad, will you hold this for me?" Sometimes it's their money, or their jacket, or their Bible - but it's an item they don't want to lose, so they entrust it to dad. You are an item God doesn't want to lose - so much so, that He promises to keep you - to hold on to you! Believe in Jesus and God keeps you in His pocket!

Devotion Box - Tested By Fire

In 1:6-7 Peter explains why God allows us to be persecuted... "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..." It's the fiery trial that purifies our faith.

God is like the goldsmith. He heats up the gold, and causes the impurities to rise to the surface. This is why God turns up the heat of hardship in our lives. He purifies our faith, and exposes our pride and self-sufficiency. Adversity creates humility and reminds us just how much we need the Lord.

PHASES OF SALVATION

And 1:9, "receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls." The New Testament speaks of salvation in different phases.

When you embrace Jesus as Lord you are saved from the *penalty of sin*; as we grow in Christ, we are saved from the *power of sin*, and one day, when we enter the glories of heaven, we'll be saved from this wicked world and the *predicament of sin*.

But at each stage of salvation we are saved by grace through faith! And this is why it's so essential to continue in our faith. Faith is not a one time proposition. Faith is a mindset we need to cultivate and grow and develop.

SPIRITUAL SEED

And we've been born again, 1:23, "not of corruptible seed but incorruptible." From the moment we're born we begin to die... We're born of corruptible seed.

Scientists and researchers have grown normal human cells in tissue cultures - and they've watched the cells reproduce for generations - then suddenly begin to degenerate and die. It's as if the cell had been preprogrammed to die - as if death were written into the genetic code. It's as if human seeds - or cells - possess a built-in *'time-clock'* which causes them to shut down at a predetermined point. Human seed is corruptible, it deteriorates and degenerates. Physically, you were born to die - but spiritually, you were born again to live forever.

The new birth results not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible...through the word of God which lives and abides forever, Spiritual life occurs in the human heart when the Word of God fertilizes a repentant faith. And since God's Word abides forever the life that it produces in us is forever life, eternal life!

1:24-25 put it boldly, "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." Like cut roses a week after you bring them home the human glory withers and fades... but the Word of God is always in full bloom.

Devotion Box - Loving Without Seeing

Peter continues in verse 8, "whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

Helen Keller said, "The best and most beautiful things in life cannot be seen or even touched... they must be felt with the heart." This is true of spiritual realities. Peter says we have not seen Jesus, but we love Him. And by faith we sense His presence. Jesus has filled us "with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

THE PURSUIT OF THE ANGELS

And the "salvation of our souls" - that we have received in Jesus - is the same salvation that was foretold by the prophets, and that intrigues the angels.

Verse 12 speaks of the Gospel "which angels desire to look into." I'm sure for the last 2000 years, the angels have tried to understand the depth of God's love for the little mud-daubers called "*people*". I imagine the angels like a Mr. Spock - an emotionless Vulcan - trying to fathom the divine emotion called "*love*".

God's messengers - the angels - make it their pasttime to try and grasp why God would reach so low for rebellious humans. They "desire to look into" the kindness of God. We would grow in grace if we adopted the same pursuit!

Devotion Box - Living Stones

In 2:4 Jesus is referred to as "a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.." There was a legend associated with Solomon's Temple, that during its construction the cornerstone was quarried first, but when it arrived on site the builders didn't recognize its importance, and tossed it aside.

It wasn't until the structure was nearly complete and the builders needed the cornerstone that they realized their mistake, and retrieved the forsaken stone.

This is how the builders of Judaism treated Jesus. At His first coming they didn't realize He was the chief cornerstone. They rejected Him. But one day they'll realize their mistake, repent of their sin, and receive Jesus as God's chosen.

Jesus is a living stone, but so are we. 2:5 says, "you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house..." The Jewish Temple stood in Jerusalem, but the New Testament Temple is a spiritual house made of living stones. The Church, you and me, are being fitted together as a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

Guys, the power of Jesus has sobered us. We've gone from being stoned to becoming stones. The Jewish Temple had *limestone walls*, but Christ's Temple has *livestone walls*. Each of us has a role to play in the Church. *Don't be off the wall, find your place on the wall!* Be a part of the house that Jesus is building!

Devotion Box - When To Rejoice And When To Repent

2:20 says, "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God." I know Christians who act like a jerk – receive the ridicule of the world – then claim to be suffering for Jesus' sake. This is sad. Rejoice if you're suffering for Jesus. Repent if you're just being a jerk!

Devotion Box - Shock Absorbers

And when we're persecuted for God, Jesus is the example of how we should respond. 2:22, "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously..."

Jesus was a shock absorber. He absorbed the blows and retaliated in love.

Our world is good at swapping insult for insult. You get slapped at work, so you come home and slap the kids, then they go out and slap the neighbor's kids – and the whole world is just plain slap-happy. Hatred passes from person to person...

Until, it comes to the Christian. We've been called to imitate Jesus. When He was slapped, He didn't slap back. He returned love for hate! Weak people are the folks who have to retaliate. It takes real strength to absorb a blow, and transform its impact into the opposite reaction. Jesus wants us *to retaliate in love*.

Peter begins by addressing wives. He provides them with instruction in three areas: their *boundaries*, their *behavior*, and their *beauty*...

A WORD TO WIVES

Christianity change your life, then he'll pay attention to what it can do for him.

Verse 1, "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands..." God's plan for the home calls for an ordered equality. Both partners are equal in value, but different in roles. God has appointed that in the home and church the man is to lead, and the woman is to follow. It's all a picture of Christ and the Church... The word "submissive" means "*to arrange around*". A wife can have a life of her own... but she's the one who should arrange her life around her husband, not vice-versa. A wife should live a full and happy life, but her **boundaries** are her husband.

Ruth Graham wrote, "The best advice I can give to unmarried girls is to marry someone you don't mind adjusting to. God tailors the wife to fit the husband, not the husband to fit the wife." Wives need to submit to their husbands...

"..That even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives," If you have a spouse who doesn't know Jesus the way to win them is not by nagging or meddling, but by modeling. Let your **behavior** testify to the change Jesus has made in your life.

In 1805 a missionary from the Boston Missionary Society preached to the Indians of upstate New York. After his message Chief Red Jacket told him, "We will wait awhile and see what effect your preaching has upon your own people. If we find it does them good, makes them honest, and less inclined to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you have said." Ladies, this might be what Chief Stubborn Heart - the man you live with - is saying about you... When he sees

Peter has spoken about boundaries, now he defines real **beauty** in

verse 3... "Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." Let me caution against taking Peter's instructions to an extreme...

There are Christians who believe it to be a sin for a woman to style her hair, or wear jewelry, or fashionable clothes. That's not what Peter is saying. Ladies can look nice - dress *mod*, but *modest* - just as long as they don't stress their outward attractiveness over their inward beauty. *Ladies, do you spend more time in the mirror than you do in the Word?* Beauty of the heart is what's pleasing to God.

In verse 6 Peter points to Sarah as an example... She submitted to her husband, Abraham, even to the point of "calling him lord." Ladies, don't worry, I don't believe God requires you to call your husband "*lord*"... but He does want you to treat him as the head of your household.

Guys, if little green Martians landed a space ship in your back yard, and said to your kids, "Take me to your leader", would the kids take them to Mom or Dad?

There was little doubt that in Abraham's tent *the buck stopped with the buck*. But it was not because Abraham always deserved that leadership - it was because Sarah learned the importance and power of a submissive wife.

Devotion Box - Think First

He says in 3:10, "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit." Guys, *think* before you talk. Here's an acrostic, T-H-I-N-K... "T", is it true?, "H", is it helpful?, "I", does it inspire or encourage?, "N", is it necessary?, "K", is it kind? If what you're about to say is not true, helpful, inspiring, necessary, and kind... then keep it to yourself.

A FLOOD FLOODED WITH MEANING

The flood of Noah is of tremendous historical relevance, but it's also relevant typologically. 3:21-22 explain that the flood was to Noah what the Spirit's cleansing is to the believer. The flood purged the earth and provided Noah a new life - in Christ we've been cleansed and given new life.

Peter isn't talking about a literal washing, or *water baptism* - but of our spiritual baptism at conversion. Lest we misconstrue, he adds a parenthesis, "not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God". It takes the Holy Spirit to cleanse a dirty conscience.

Bible Scan - 1 Peter 1-5

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Monday, January 6th @ 10:30 am, Bowling & Pizza for 3rd-5th grade...January 10-12, High School Winter Retreat...Saturday, January 11th @ 10 am, Ladies' Prayer Meeting...Wednesday, January 15th @ 7 pm, Praying Parents of Teens...Friday, January 17th @ 9:30 am, Fabulous Friday—ages 2-4...January 22-24, Pastors' and Church Leaders Conference.

Next Bible Scan - January 19, 2003 - 2 Peter 1-3

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” - 1 Peter 4:12-13

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Verse

Now Peter provides husbands three commands for how to treat a wife - **dwelt with your wife - understand your wife - honor your wife.**

Verse 7 says, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them...” Men, your home is more than a hotel you check into at night. God wants you involved in its inner workings. He wants you engaged in the routine and activities of your family.

Dwell with your wife, but dwell “with understanding.” Get to know your wife. I've read that most couples with kids converse with each other just 37 minutes per week. We need to do better... “Every husband needs to know what makes his wife tick, what tickles her, and what ticks her off.”

And, 3:7 tells us “giving honor to the wife,” Guys, respect your wife. Treat her special around the house, brag on her in public, compliment her on the job she's doing with the kids. “Treat her like a thoroughbred, and she'll won't be a nag.”

As Peter says, honor her as to the weaker vessel, Women are certainly not weaker in terms of mental capacities, but despite what the feminist says, on the whole they are more gentle and fragile physically and emotionally than men.

Women are weaker than men - as a crystal goblet is

A WORD TO HUSBANDS

weaker than a plastic coffee mug. The mug is heavier, more durable, easier to knock around. But the finery and fragileness of the crystal

make it more valuable. Husband, your wife brings a tenderness to the family you lack. Honor her for her sensitivity.

When a female china-back crab molts and sheds her shell it takes days for a new shell to harden. It leaves her vulnerable. Yet for those days the male crab covers her with his body. She attaches herself to his belly and he will carry her until she's able to protect herself. Men, there'll be times when your wife gets crabby, and she becomes vulnerable. You need to *cover her* and *carry her*.

And treat her “as being heirs together of the grace of life,” Your wife is not just your wife she's *God's girl*. Treat her not as your *servant*, but as a *sister* in Christ.

And for a very good reason, “that your prayers may not be hindered.” Have you ever tried to pray after you've gotten into a fight with your wife? The only prayer that seems to get beyond the ceiling is a prayer of confession and repentance. If you want to keep the line open between you and God... love your wife.

Devotion Box - Love Covers

4:8, “above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

We had a kid on our baseball team in High School who was a bumbling, stumbling outfielder - a defensive liability. But he was in the line-up because he could crush a baseball. The fact he could hit covered a multitude of errors!

I'll let you in on a little secret. If you want to be in God's line-up every night - year-in, year-out - then learn to love as Jesus loves. It doesn't matter if you aren't the most skilled person in the church - or if you make more than your share of mistakes - if you can love like Jesus loves you can play for God. God always packs his line-up with heavy-hitting lovers...

A WORD TO ELDERS

5:1, “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder,” Notice, Peter classifies himself as “*a fellow elder*” - not “*the pope*” - or even “*chief elder*”. He was just a big brother.

And he says to his peers, 5:2, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers...” Good shepherds *tend and mend - feed and lead*. A shepherd looks out for his vulnerable flock. But “not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;” An elder or pastor should never be pushy or manipulative - he should never throw his weight around - rather, he should lead by example.

“...and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” Human leaders are under-shepherds, Jesus is the Chief Shepherd - and He promises a crown to those who serve Him faithfully.