

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number One – Don’t Get Shook, God Has the Controls – 1 Peter 1:1-12

Key Verses 1:3-5

Peter is writing and he writes two books—First and Second Peter—but he’s writing to a group of persecuted people. These people have been scattered into various parts of what we would call Asia. And he writes specifically to 5 different sections of Asia—people who have probably left the Jerusalem area because of the persecution that took place in the early church.

Before you start looking at a letter though, you need to appreciate the man who wrote it.

Probably one of my very, very favorite characters in the New Testament is Peter. I guess we all like him. We've all been around long enough that we've heard the statement:

“If God could do it for Peter, he can do it for me.”

And we kind of smile when we say that.

If Peter were here tonight he would have already made his presence known. Peter is Sanguine-Choleric in temperament.

The Sanguine-Choleric is always a very enthusiastic person, given to exaggeration. Usually you find them on a used car lot. They are great salesmen. They tell you that the golf shot dropped about an inch from the hole when it was literally 3 or 4 feet. The fish weighed 42 lbs. but that was before anything else happened to it. And probably if you put it on the scale at that particular time, it was a good bit less.

You find men like Peter, the kind of people that wear their feelings on their sleeves. They are loveable. They are extroverts. You know they're in the group before very long. And Peter is that kind of person.

The fact that Peter is a Choleric—which the apostle I believe was probably pure choleric—is the reason why he was looked to for leadership. For instance, when you find someone who is choleric, he's a good administrator and a good organizer.

Peter is known as the president among the Twelve. He's always first on the list. He seems to have everything together and he takes great pride in having that together.

You see him as a leader. You see him listed first. You see him as a common spokesman. Whenever the Lord asks a question, you know like the teacher does, he's always the first one to answer. He's energetic. He's vigorous. He's strong. He's given to words of loyalty and affirmation and dedication. And when it comes to really making a go of it, when the chips are down, sometimes you recognize he's lacking a little bit.

He has a tendency to be impulsive. And that's to say something and then regret that he has said it.

For instance, I am Sanguine-Choleric. And for my birthday a few years ago my wife gave me a card which very graphically describes a Sanguine-Choleric:

“Be sure your brain is in gear before you put your mouth into motion.”

That's the kind of thought that you have when you think of Peter.

Now there are a number of little capsules of him in the New Testament that would make you appreciate the letter that he writes. And I'm a firm believer that once you know the author, you are really impressed with what he writes about. Especially when you know where he's coming from.

Luke 5, I believe we have the experience of Peter's conclusion. At this particular time the Lord borrows his boat as a pulpit because so many people are on the shore. And Peter has been fishing all night and sitting in the back. As soon as the sermon's over, the Lord says "Let's go out and fish." And to Peter that is the most ridiculous thing in the world—he's been fishing all night and they haven't gotten anything—to go out and fish in the middle of the day.

And the Lord does not fool everyone. They get out there, he lets down the nets and they pull in a huge catch of fish. Peter drops on his knees in the boat and says "Depart from me for I'm a sinful man, O God!" I believe that is the point where Peter recognizes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Now when you come to Matthew 8:14-15, the Lord Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law. And it is a time when she is very ill. And it's recorded in Matthew 8. And then the third time you see him, is in Matthew 10 when he's listed first in the choosing of the twelve for the apostolic office.

The next time I am tickled with him is when they're out on the sea in Mark 4 fishing—verses 35-41. They're fishing. They've been out there in the water and they've gotten caught in a storm and the Lord is asleep on a pillow. And I believe it was Peter who said "Lord, don't you care that we're perishing while you lie there asleep?" In other words, the ship's going down and you don't care. The Lord stands up and of course says "Peace be still."

In Matthew 14 you have Peter walking on the water. This is the first water skiing experience in the Bible. The Lord is walking on the water and who's the one who is courageous enough to try it? Peter.

He says "Lord, if that's you. I want to come to you Lord." The Lord says "Come on!" You remember how he came. And as soon as he got his eyes on the wind and waves, he started to sink. He prayed that great prayer: "Lord save me." And he put his eyes back on the Lord and came up out of the water and the rest of the guys in the boat are just busting with laughter.

In Matthew 16 is the time when the Lord says "Who do men say that I am?" And Peter is the first, I mean right away after the Lord says to him "Who is it?" And he says "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" The Lord commends him and blesses him.

But to show us how a sanguine-choleric can be, he moves to the opposite extreme at the end of the chapter. He tells the Lord that's not going to happen and he's not going to go to the cross. And the Lord answers "Get thee behind me Satan!" In other words, you don't mind the things of the Spirit of God.

So in one chapter, within just a few brief verses, you've got just the opposite as far as his life is concerned.

Probably one of the most touching passages in the whole New Testament for Peter is John 6:68, 69. It's after the Bread of

Life discourse and several people are leaving. And it's like the Lord has given a message and the people are really not impressed and they're starting to leave. And the Lord turns to His disciples and says "Are you going too?"

And Peter speaks as a spokesman. You can feel it almost. It just cuts the air. He says "Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God!" In other words, "Where are we going to go? You're it! We're totally devoted to You! We're sold out! So some people are flicking it in and leaving—we're not! You can always count on us."

In Matthew 17 he gets to go along—he's part of the executive committee—he's the president. James and John the sons of Zebedee are the other two. They get to do some special things in Matthew 17. They get to go up to the Mount of Transfiguration.

We also see Him doing this as He goes into the garden. He chooses those three again to go and to be with Him on this special occasion.

Now, the one time that is probably classic in illustrating the problem that Peter has and that's basically his pride.

In John 13 when the Lord comes walking into the room for His final supper with the men, there's a bunch of proud hearts arguing over who's going to be Secretary of State in the Kingdom and everybody's got dirty feet. And the Lord, you'll

remember, took the towel and the bucket and He starts washing feet. But when He comes to Peter, Peter says “You ain’t washing mine.”

You see, he had two problems:

1. He had the problem that he should have taken care of that as the administrator and
2. He was too proud to let the Lord serve him.

So it should have been reversed. So he says “You aren’t washing my feet.” And the Lord looks at him with a great deal of love and compassion and he says “If I don’t wash your feet I won’t have any part with you.”

When you see these kind of little snapshots, it makes you really appreciate the man. They go from the Upper Room down to the Garden of Gethsemane and who are the three that He takes with Him? Peter, James and John into the inner part of the garden. And while they’re there, what do they do?

“Now I lay me down to sleep.” And sure enough, they sacked out like some of you already. You just set down and you’re gone. Good to have you back! Alright, just don’t fall out of the chair. I don’t think insurance will cover falling out of the chair in Bible at camp. We’ll do the best we can!

In that garden experience, that happened three times. And no wonder Peter, when it comes time to liberate Christ, he wants

to prove the fact the Lord is wrong. Because the Lord said: “Before tomorrow morning comes, you’re going to deny that you ever knew me.” And he’s going to prove Him wrong. So he grabs a sword—and he’s been used to having a fishing pole—and he whacks this guy. He’s going to split his personality, he misses and he hits his ear.

The Lord touches the guy’s ear and he says, “Put up your sword.”

The record tells us that he follows at a distance. But the next graphic picture is in Matthew 26 when he’s standing around with all the people while Christ is inside. Three times—before a little maid twice and once before the men who could recognize his Galilean accent—he denied that he even knew Christ. And he turned and went away and he wept bitterly.

I don’t know where he went, but his whole world came caving in that night because he was responsible. He blew it at the table by not taking care of the washing of the feet. And now he denied the one person he really loved and he was dedicated and devoted to. He totally wiped out.

I tell you, do you want to see somebody really hurt, you watch a Sanguine get hurt. When a Sanguine does something wrong, they feel it way down in the gut. I mean it hurts, hurts, hurts, hurts bad. And for Peter this is an excruciating painful experience because of his failure. And Saturday he probably had to be horrendous because on Friday they actually crucified Him. We don’t know where he was during that time.

I wonder what happened to him? But the glorious thing on resurrection morning is that they are told to tell Peter that Christ is alive. And he comes running to the tomb, you remember?

And 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that there was a private meeting between Peter and the Lord. We don't know where that was. I wish I could have been a fly on the wall. I would have loved to have heard the Lord restore him and tell him "Peter, the best is yet to be! Forget those things which are behind! We're getting on with it! Don't cry over spilt milk! So you failed Me, forget it! It's gone. Let's get on with it."

And we're just 50 days away from that glorious turn-around in that guy's life.

The last time we see him in the gospel is before this, however, is in John 21. They've been fishing all night. It's a bunch of exes. It's the guys among the twelve who'd done all the fishing. And they're out there, seven of them with Peter, fishing all night and catching nothing. And the next morning they hear a voice on the shore and it's Jesus.

"You haven't caught anything have you?"

"No, we haven't."

"Well throw your net on the other side."

He does. One-hundred and fifty-three fish.

You think that there's any significance to the fact that this time is the boat's fault as it was the last time when first he came to know Him when he loaned Him his boat at the beginning of his encounter with Jesus? A lot of times the Lord takes you back to a place where He can really talk to you.

Some of you remember back in your childhood when you made a decision and a commitment to God at a camp. And here you are parents now. God brought you back here. And God on this mountain, in this sacred spot wants to do something in your life. I hope you're all ears! And I hope you're listening up and expecting the Spirit of God to really do something significant in your life.

Don't let this be a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. Let God work.

And there as they're eating breakfast—you know Peter has to be embarrassed—the Lord turns to him after they have breakfast and He says "Do you love me?" You know it's hard for a Sanguine to express it too. You know, say it out loud—verbally. "Lord You know all things!" But he changes the Greek word. He says "I *phileo* you." And Jesus said "*Agape*." That means self-sacrificing—put aside your own interests because you really care. So the Lord does it one more time. "Do you *agape* me?"

"I *phileo* you."

Third time. Heart breaker. Busts him to pieces. Come loose.

“Peter, do you *phileo* me?”

“You know all things. I *phileo* you. Yes.”

“Then feed My sheep.”

Fifty days later it's Pentecost. And when you read the book of Acts you really appreciate some of the fantastic things that have happened in his life.

In Acts 2, Acts 3, and chapter 4. Acts 2 he preaches at Pentecost. Acts 3 he heals the lame man. Acts 4 he's rejoicing that he has the privilege of suffering for Christ. In Acts 11 he gets hung up on legalism. He has to have a sheet dropped out of heaven to show him that the Gentiles are going to be part of this program. In Acts 12 he's wonderfully delivered from prison in answer to the prayers of the early church. And then he just walks off the page of scripture and that's it. The guy's gone but what a story.

The only other little capsule you have of him is somewhere along the way he had a conflict with Paul over the difference between legalism and grace. Because he ate with the legalists when he was used to eating with those who were not legalists. And Paul had to rebuke him publically. And that's recorded in Galatians 2. We don't have the actual historical record of that.

All right, why did I say all that? Not to bore you but simply to

tell you this is the man who writes this book. And you can't believe some of the fantastic statements that are made in this book.

W. B. Riley was the president and founder of Northwestern College where Pearl and I graduated from back in the dark ages. And he wrote a little book on the life of Peter. And this is what he says:

Christ had called him a stone, he in turn speaks of his fellow-saints as living stones, 2:5.

Christ has reproved him for drawing his sword and striking the high priest's servant, and he reminds his readers, "If when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

To the little maids question he had answered with confusion and denial, and in the memory of it, he urges upon his brethren to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. 3:15

Suddenly overtaken by temptation himself, he urges, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you. 4:12

And having been the subject of Satan's successful attacks, he pleads, "be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil is a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour." 5:8

Having once been a man of boasting, only to be humbled by his own conduct, he urges upon his brethren to "be

clothed with humility.” 5:5

Our Lord had three times said to him, “Feed my sheep.” Consequently he writes in 5:1, 2 “the elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder. Feed the flock of God.”

So it’s written out of some sad experiences. Now the one thing you do in your life, the further you go along with the Lord, is you turn around the things that are failures and the things you do wrong and you make it right. You seek His face and you go on and you have a more effective ministry as a result of it. God uses those times for His glory and honor. And for Peter that’s the case.

It’s believed that the letter was probably written in 63 A.D.

There are those who feel that it was written from Rome and that might possibly be the case. I don’t know whether Peter ever got there. We do know that he was crucified upside down. He was a martyr for the cause of Christ before it was actually all over. So it is interesting that he writes to persecuted people and then he seals his commitment as a martyr. And so it’s the spilling of his own blood.

Now in writing the letter then, I have taken it and outlined it in a different way than any outline you’ve ever seen. Which is the way I like to do things.

I put it on a big chart and tear it apart and mark it all up. There are numerous outlines.

There are 3 key words in Peter:

1. salvation,
2. submission, and
3. suffering.

One of them you like and two of them you don't. Right?

You like the word SALVATION. SUBMISSION and SUFFERING is something else.

See what I did? I took that key verse at the top of your study guide—chapter 5, verse 10—and I put it all in there.

Now, let's read it with it in there like it should be.

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, [there's SALVATION] after you have suffered a little while, [that's your SUFFERING] shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation [that is SUBMISSION to the eternal plan of God and what He wants to do].”

Salvation, suffering and submission. Now if you took that basic outline—let's say that was what you wanted to use as a standard outline—salvation is treated in chapter 1:1-2:12.

Submission is seen in 2:13-3:12. Suffering is seen in 3:13-5:14. And that would give you the whole book.

But you see, I have called it “Patterns to Practice from Peter’s Playbook.”

We’re sending them to Thousand Oaks to get ready for another season. They’re getting ready to study the playbooks. I’m convinced the believers have a playbook too. And if we’ll play by the principles of a man who really knows what he’s talking about, it’s going to make a lot of difference in our lives.

You see, Peter went through it all and he was eventually crucified upside down. So a martyr for Jesus was all that needs to be known about salvation, submission and suffering since that was his lot too.

Now I took principle #1 and we’re going to look at these first verses together just briefly in our study. Now that we’ve had an introduction, let’s dig into the text and see what we can gain for ourselves.

Don’t get shook. God has the controls. Chapter 1, verses 1-12.

It’s Peter’s desire, as he writes, that you—if you’re having a rough time as a believer—you wouldn’t panic because it’s rough. You’d seek His face and allow Him to demonstrate what He’s about to do in your life.

Now we can take those 3 words again.

Salvation—Luke 5—when he dropped on his knees in the boat. When did Peter learn submission? I think he finally learned it in the Upper Room when the Lord says “If I don’t wash your feet you’re not having a part with me.”

I think he learned it then and then he was ready for what God was going to do in the book of Acts. He was ready, finally, to do it God’s way.

Suffering—when did Peter suffer? He had to suffer with everybody else in the early church. He was thrown into prison. Herod was going to kill him the next morning. Because the church prayed, he was liberated, delivered and walks off of the page of scripture and we don’t know. And finally his life was taken in martyrdom.

You know, Peter had to learn that only way victory is won is by submission to God’s plan of doing things.

There’s a parallel between the children of Israel, by the way, in these 3 words:

Salvation for the children of Israel came when they came out of the land of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea.

Suffering for them came through 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Submission finally came when they were willing to go

under Joshua's leadership and cross over into the land.

But what's the first thing God said before they crossed into the land? God came in an angel to Joshua and he says "I didn't come to bless your plans. I came to take over. And it's going to be from victory unto victory that I am going to lead."

And one of the hardest lessons in our lives is to learn that God wants to do it His way. And when we're bucking against it, we can plan on a lot of problems, a lot of heartache and a lot of hurt because God loves you too much to allow it to continue. And so He will work until He accomplishes His purpose.

Now what a tremendous comfort it is when we come to a study like this and maybe you've come to this retreat this week and your world is really falling apart. I know a lot of you and as you sit on these chairs I know your history. You've shared some things with me. You really hurt but you've put on a big smile. You've been good. But you're having some really tough times. Maybe it's been in your vocation. Maybe it's been in your marriage and your family. Can we begin tonight by accepting the fact that we all hurt and we all need each other.

Maybe you feel lost already in this group like you're the only one with a problem. Would you take it by faith as the teacher of this group, knowing many of you personally, that there are a lot of needs. You just have to sensitize yourself to it.

And there are needs that can be met by individuals who are sitting in this room. I can tell you to take it by faith. I hope

you just won't sit in your own little families at mealtimes. But that you will really mix up and get to know people on the list and you'll start praying for individuals. It will really make the week, a goal for the week is to know every single person here and to really be able to talk to them about where they come from.

You know, Peter is only victorious because he has a big God and because he's trusting Him to do all things well.

The other morning I was sitting in the study and my devotional reading was Job 1. I never saw this before. I guess the Spirit of God just really impacted me with it.

Job had wave upon wave upon wave. Everything happened as you know in chapter 1. And what does verse 20 say?

Job 1:20-21 (paraphrased)

Job worshipped the Lord. [What does he say?] "The Lord gave it and the Lord took it. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Naked I came. Naked I'm going. So it's no big deal. I still have the Lord."

He worshipped the Lord his God.

I think Peter had been reading some of that stuff.

Oh these first verses are great! Let's get into them.

v. 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

All of those provinces are north of Paul's missionary activity. He did hit Galatia but it was southern Galatia. These are northern sectors. He tried to go north into Bithynia, which was 250 miles north of Troas but the Lord restrained.

He never did get up in these areas. The only explanation for these people getting up there and for Peter writing to them is that they came out of Jerusalem and the persecution and they headed away—the scattered—in order to keep from having their lives taken.

And so here is a man who, although he walked on water, he would never forsake the Lord even though he was one who denied Him at a critical time.

He calls himself an “apostle of Jesus Christ.” And he is indeed that.

And he also points up the fact that he was “chosen” for this purpose. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.”

Now I look at that and I say to myself “How can a hard, crusty, macho, independent fisherman become someone so

tender and so kind? And you know I've come up with TWO THINGS:

1. AGE and
2. SUFFERING does that to everybody.

You know it really does. Some of the people you love the most are people who've gotten older and life has really softened them. I've become convinced that age and suffering does the same thing in everybody's life. And you can tell it.

AGE and SUFFERING will either:

HARDEN or SOFTEN.

It will either make you:

BITTER or BETTER.

It will either make you:

SWEET or SOUR.

It will make you either:

RESISTING or RESTING.

You'll either be:

BRASH or BROKEN.

You'll either be:

STUBBORN or SUBMISSIVE.

They both do the same thing.

And Peter through the crucible is not the same man that we knew back there earlier when he is so proud and braggadocious about what he's going to do and what he is trying to handle. He's self-relying has now turned to a clinging rest. And he says:

“to the chosen exiles”—he loves that word chosen.

That God had “chosen” these to be his followers. And they are those who are in the dispersion and then scattered.

They don't have any place to stay. They're pilgrims just passing through looking for a city.

v. 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in setting apart of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: May grace and peace be yours in ever greater measure.

“According to the foreknowledge of God”—do you understand that? God just knows ahead of time what's going to happen.

He loves to talk about “chosen” and “foreknowledge” and I don’t care to talk about it. “We’re chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.” So what? It’s simply because He knew what you were going to do with Him. If you’re not a Christian and you’re sitting here, He knows what you’re going to do with Him this week. He already knew that. He knew that before His Son ever died on the cross.

Someone said it’s like walking through the door. “Whosoever will may come.” You turn around and look back and it says “Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.” God says “I knew you were going to do it.” That’s all it is. Don’t try to make it something more that so you can run around and look for the chosen and the unchosen.

I love Dwight L. Moody. He has the best way of doing it. He’s just so simple but he really buzzes me every time. He says: “the whosoever wills are the elect and the whosoever won’ts are the non-elect.” I mean, that’s it! It’s just as simple as all that!

And we try to spend so much time blowing smoke on that stuff and we don’t need to do that.

We have been **SELECTED** by the Father. We have been **SAVED** by the Son. And it’s the Spirit who does the **SEALING**.

The **TRINITY** is involved in this great, great salvation program for mankind. And he just hits it kind of lightly here

but I think he revels in it. Recognizing the fact that's taken place.

And he uses the word "obedience and sprinkling of the blood." Why? Because he comes from the law, remember? Under the law in order for it to get the blessing you had to be obedient. Before you could be blessed, the sprinkling of blood had to take place.

Remember what they did with the blood of the lamb on the Day of Atonement? They took the blood of that lamb and they sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat. Why? It was for the sin. Jesus Christ the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world came and shed His own blood. And He took that blood back to heaven and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat in heaven.

Remember he said "Don't touch me! I haven't been there yet!" Then He sprinkled His own blood on the Mercy Seat, between the Cherubim. At that point salvation was provided for mankind.

God in His marvelous grace allowed His Son to provide eternal redemption for us. So he uses two very important words here.

Now, he points up the fact that he wishes for them TWO THINGS:

"may grace and peace be yours in ever greater measure."

You're going to have "grace" in **THREE TENSES**:

1. "grace" in the **PAST**,
2. "grace" in the **PRESENT**, and
3. "grace" in the **FUTURE**.

Do you understand that?

"Grace" in the **PAST** is when you receive God's unmerited favor in His Son. That was so you could have salvation.

"Grace" in the **PRESENT** is so you don't get shook. God's got the controls. He'll handle it. His grace is adequate right now.

2 Corinthians 12—He has grace right now for you to be triumphant and victorious in whatever you brought this week. I don't care what it is. His grace is adequate.

And there's "grace" for the **FUTURE** because, I've got to tell you, His grace is going to be manifested when He splits the skies and He comes back to take His children home. That's the fantastic future manifestation of grace.

J. Allen Blair talks about the whole business of peace and he uses the illustration of a fellow who was in a contest of trying to paint the perfect picture of peace. And he painted this beautiful, beautiful serene scene with everything in peace. Do you think that one won? No. The one that won was the picture

of a bird in a nest, hanging over a rocky crag in the midst of a horrendous storm with the waves breaking on the shore. That's real peace.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

Do you know that?

Philippians 4:6-8

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Oh man! I could preach on that. There's some tall stuff here.

Alright, let's get on to it—verse 3. In verse 3 we're going to see salvation PAST. In verse 4 we're going to see salvation FUTURE. In verse 5, salvation PRESENT.

Ok, let's look at it. Here are your **THREE KEY VERSES** for the study. If you'll sit up and listen to this, then you can kind of put it in neutral for the finish.

v. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Peter, in the midst of persecution does what? He jumps into the arena by starting to sing. That word “Blessed” means he’s got a song.

“Oh the joys!”—that’s the word that starts the Psalter you know.

“Blessed is the man”—that’s the word that Jesus uses to start His public ministry. (Matthew chapter 5)

Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed in the Beatitudes.

The mark of the believer is he never loses his song. He always has a song to sing no matter how tough it gets.

And remember last fall I was teaching 2 Corinthians and in that first study I had to teach that passage: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.”

And I missed a plane. I missed by class in Austin that night and I was so discouraged with the Lord and everything because it was the first week out. And everybody’s coming to class and they’re thinking that I’m in a light plane crash somewhere between Dallas because they sent a light plane up

to get me from Austin and I didn't get there until 9:00 to pronounce the benediction. So I'm laying in the sack and I'm saying "Lord, why did that happen?"

It's like the Lord just came right into the room and He said "You still got your song?"

I said "No, I lost it somewhere back there in the DFW airport."

He says "Well get your song. You ain't talking about this no more until you've got your song."

I've got my song. You got yours?

And see Peter does. It doesn't matter how rough it is. You've got the real peace. You've got your song too. You never lose your song. Your song is the mark of your joy and the joy is the evidence of the Spirit of God in your life.

You never have an excuse for being depressed. Really.

The only reason you're depressed is because you've got your focus on the wrong place. And like Peter, you're going down in the waves and you need to say "Lord, save me!" Get your eyes back on Him and get on top of the water again.

Fantastic! "Blessed!"

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy”—boy we didn’t deserve it! What did He do?—“he caused us to be born again.”

Have you? Have you come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way?

Isn’t that interesting? He picks that up. Where did he learn that term? When Jesus was talking in that private interview that night with Nicodemus and saying the divine imperative “you must be born again.”

So he says we’ve been “born again”—WHAT?—“to a living hope”—WHY?—“by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

He takes it all and he puts it together. Salvation past—that’s the foundation for everything else he’s going to talk about.

v. 4 unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you,

We’ve been born again to a living hope but we’ve also got something else. We’ve got salvation—FUTURE.

Paul said:

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered

into the heart of man, the things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

We got something fantastic to look forward to. What's it say about it? It's:

1. "imperishable,"
2. "undefiled," and
3. "unfading."

I was doing that this morning in the motel before we drove over here for the conference. And I became aware of something. Just the opposite of these three words is everything you've got in the world.

Have you ever stopped to think about it? It's perishable, it's defiled and it will fade away. That's exactly the characteristic

What God has got in store for you is the direct opposite of everything you experience and I experience in the world.

His is "imperishable." It won't be defiled and it won't fade away. It'll just keep getting better and better. But when you're messing with the world, it's always perishable. It's defiled and it's going to fade.

You'll never find true satisfaction in what the world has to offer. Isn't that great that we've got that? That God has

provided this wonderful, wonderful inheritance for us? That's SALVATION FUTURE.

Now let's look at SALVATION PRESENT in verse 5.

v. 5 you who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

“you who are being protected by the power of God”—HOW—
“through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

What are our phrases?

Verse 3:

We've been born again to a living hope.

Verse 4:

We have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

Verse 5:

We're “protected by the power of God.”

Wow! That's enough for a Baptist Amen! Stop and think about it! Your salvation PAST, it's been born again. Your salvation FUTURE, you've got an inheritance that God has got reserved

for you. And no matter what happens now, you're "protected by the power of God!" WOW!! That blows your socks off!

I got so excited this morning and couldn't stand it when I got ahold of that. That's your KEY VERSE. Don't get shook, God's got the controls.

In the PAST He provided your SALVATION. In the FUTURE He's got an INHERITANCE reserved for you. He's got that all taken care of. In the PRESENT it doesn't make any difference. You're protected by the power of God. Everything is going to be alright. Just hang on and allow Him to work.

Now that comes really strong, doesn't it? Because it comes from somebody who's in the crucible and who ultimately is going to seal it by being crucified upside here in a little bit as a martyr. But he's guarded. He's kept. He's protected.

Do you know what that word "kept" means? That's the same word that we use in Philippians 4:7: "We are garrisoned about the peace of God." That's a fortress! It's like you live inside of a fortress. And this fortress is what keeps you. And you're protected there. Do you remember when Jesus was telling about that deal in John 10 about the Good Shepherd? He says "I have given unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither"—WHAT?—"shall anyone take them out of My Father's hand."

You're in the Father's hand. That's the same thought here. You're in a place of total security! You're kept "by the power of

God”!

1. We don't get shook because salvation has been provided. You've experienced the new birth.
2. We've got an inheritance. We've got a stake up there.
3. No matter what happens, we're “protected by [His] power.”

Would you notice one thing about those three things? That is all God's doing. Maybe I'm very much aware of this right now because we're writing a book called *God Wants a Relationship Not a Performance*. It is an incredible book on Romans 5-8 and we've been grappling with it. This last week my assignment was to go through all 66 books of the Bible and demonstrate that God wants a relationship not a performance. So I had to make a quick survey of all 66 books and demonstrate through characters and through people, in the opening chapter of the book, that God is interested in a relationship not a performance from us. And to demonstrate that both to Christian and to non-Christian

You see, Christians are just as guilty. Because after they become a Christian they get on a performance kick and they think they're spiritual by the fact that they perform after they become a Christian.

So I had to demonstrate it on both levels. Demonstrate the fact that it's all God's doing.

Do you see anything a man's doing in these 3 verses?

Salvation past—born again by what He did. Did you have anything to do with reserving that inheritance that's got your name on it up there? You did not have anything to do with it.

And if you had to keep yourself tonight, friend that might be why you're depressed. If you're kept by the power of God, nothing's going to touch you but what touches Him first.

God is at work in your life. All His doing.

That's what Ephesians 2:8, 9 says isn't it?

Ephesians 2:8-9

By grace are you saved, through faith—and that not of yourself, is a gift of God—not of works, lest any man should boast.

v. 6 In this you are rejoicing, though now for a little while, if it must be (if there is need for it), you have been distressed in the midst of various kinds of testings,

What he's saying is that nothing life can do will affect the rejoicing! One of the things that you and I must learn is that the minute we become Christians, God starts to work to make us like His Son.

And friends, that takes work. And some of the things that we're going through together tonight as we sit here, in our lives are there because God is making us like His Son. And that's why a Christian rejoices. It's not "Oh! I'm excited! I've got cancer!" Some people really believe that, that you're just supposed to act weird. That you're supposed to act like you're really on top of it and you've got this big grin on your face all the time. That's not it.

James 1 on the crucible:

James 1:2-3

Deem it pure joy my brethren, whenever you experience diverse testing, knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance

God is at work and so I allow Him to do His good work as I submit to those things which He allows in my life.

You know what this text says? It says here that it is MANIFOLD TRIALS. Do you know what that word means? That word means "many colored." It's like the rainbow—its many different colors—its various colors of trials. And I got so tickled this morning when I was meditating on this, I could just hear some of you when I said that "I am here in full and living color!" Right? However you know it! Some of the things that you bring to the conference, you can say "I am in full and living color because I have got variegated trials of all sorts and

colors in my life.”

Peter says “Don’t lose it! Allow God to work in it and know that through it He’s going to make you more like His Son.”

That’s the excitement of it.

v. 7 in order that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold which is perishing, though it is being tested by fire, may be found for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

He says realize it. Why did God take Abrams’ son, Isaac?

What did He say? “Take him and go offer him as a sacrifice!” after he waited 25 years for him to come.

God wanted to see if his faith was real and would he trust God in impossible circumstances.

You see, just maybe some of the things that we face that are the height of frustration are there simply because God is in the business of working significantly in our lives, if we were only in tune with it.

Remember Elijah?

“....It ain’t going to rain for three years!”

The Lord says, “Alright Elijah, you did your public work. Now get in private. Go down to the Brook Cherith and I’m going to send the ravens over there in the morning and the evening and give you bread. You can drink from the brook!”

He goes down to the brook, what happens? Test—this is a test! The brook starts to dry up. Doesn’t matter to the guy. He stays there.

Boy when brooks start drying up around me, I start looking for brooks. Don’t you?

God helps those who help themselves. You go look for the brooks.

What do you think? Fine Don, I’ll remind you.

He says “God, the birds are coming but there’s no water! Why?”

God looked down and says “I’m just answering your prayers Elijah. You told me to bring these people around. Ain’t going to rain. We were going to get them. So it ain’t going to rain. Because it ain’t raining, your brook dried up.”

You see, something ladies and gentleman, some of the very things you prayed for in your pious, broken moments are the things that God is doing now to mold into your life. Don’t ever pray for patience. The only way God can teach it is to give you

something to suffer.

Don't ever pray for more love because he breaks you. God has to hurt someone deeply before He uses them greatly. He's got to break your heart and stomp the sucker flat for that fragrance of love begins to exude out of it.

You see, some of the things that you might be bitter about today are the very answers to your prayers. God is saying "I am answering it if you would just recognize it."

It's designed to demonstrate the genuineness of your faith and the fact that you're being made like Him.

What are the two things you must do in every trial?

1. You must TRUST and
2. You must SUBMIT.

As long as you're saying "Why" you never submit. You only submit when you change your WHY into WHAT!

Not WHY is this happening but WHAT am I to learn in the midst of this—you've finally begun to get to that place.

If you're mad at God tonight and you're saying "Why, why, why?!" You're all alone on the hill.

Saying: "What is it God? I'm ready. You and me together—I

want to do what You want me to do.”

And I know what has happened is consistent with your love. I don't fully understand the ramifications of it but I'm going to trust You in the midst of it!

v. 8 whom having not seen, you are loving, in whom now not seeing, yet believing, you are rejoicing with inexpressible and glorified joy,

“whom having not seen, you are loving, in whom now not seeing, yet believing, you are rejoicing with inexpressible and glorified joy,”

What do you begin to discover that's in these first 12 verses? There's blessedness. There's rejoicing. There's joy. And it's difficult but over and over and over again he says “You've never seen Him but you love Him.”

Why do you think he used that little phrase “whom having not seen, yet you love him” You know what I think he's thinking about? He's thinking about the night that Thomas said “Oh you guys can say he's alive but I don't believe he is! If I don't put my finger in the prints in the nails of his hand and my hand in his side, forget it!”

And next Sunday night, Thomas is there. The Lord walks in and goes right straight to him. Object lesson #1: “Here's my hands. Here's my side.”

Thomas says: “My Lord and my God!”

And Jesus said: “You had to see me to believe but blessed are all those who have not seen and yet believe.”

Do you believe him? He’s really there?

I had so much fun with a very godly person the other night. We’re sitting at his bedside. He had angina very, very badly. He could have died at any moment—77 years of age—a saint. Just love the guy. I was sitting there, everything had failed. He’s going to have open heart surgery. As 90% blockage in the one that he’s got left. It’s going to be a miracle at 77—it’s a redo. He’s had one before. So all the complications.

We’re sitting there, we’re talking about heaven. We’re talking about God’s plan in all of this.

“What is God doing to make you more Christlike?”

Finally we read all these verses together. You know what he said? I love the guy. He is so funny. And to have him say this right before he’s going to go to surgery. He says: “Do you really believe that stuff?”

I believe it man! I’d stake my life on it!

He says “That’s all I needed to know.” A big twinkle in his eye. He just wanted to be sure I wasn’t going to change the story now we really needed to get down to where it was.

Surgery was successful. Last we heard he's still making progress.

You see, that's where it is.

“whom having not seen, yet you love.”

And he's telling them here, “yet believing, you are rejoicing with inexpressible and glorified joy.”

Now let's look at the last verses for just a second.

v. 9 obtaining as an outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

That's the ultimate.

v.10 Concerning which salvation prophets searched and inquired carefully, those who prophesied concerning the grace intended for you,

“Concerning which salvation”—now Peter turns to the prophets for just a second in these last 3 verses.

“Concerning which salvation prophets searched and inquired carefully, those who prophesied concerning the grace intended for you,”

v.11 searching what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was making clear when He was testifying beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories along with them.

He is telling them that has always been God's plan. It is suffering now and glory later. And the devil has reversed it, that he wants to give you glory now and you're going to suffer later. That it's always suffering first, then the glory.

And here God's method is that you're going to experience suffering.

v.12 To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but for you they were ministering these things which now have been reported to you through those who have proclaimed the good news to you by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven—which things angels are eagerly desiring to gain a clear glance (to look into).

The angelic realm is totally overwhelmed by what Jesus would do because He loves you and me. That He would leave the ramparts of heaven and He would come and give His life.

Angels are never going to get over that. But great love.

Remember that old hymn?

Holy, holy, holy, is what the angels sing,
And I expect to help them make the courts of Heaven
ring;
But when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their
wings,
For angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.

They can only look into it with total awe and amazement.

Why are you shook today? Have you lost your song? Shame on you.

You've got a salvation past—you've been born again. Have you?

You've got a salvation future—you're inheritance is reserved.

And you've got the promise today that you're protected by the power of God.

John Hunter put it this way:

Some people are not sure about their home in heaven. They have doubts about their future salvation. This is sad because they have no assurance. They miss the point that He, that is Christ, is my salvation. My safety does not depend upon what I keep on doing, but upon what He is.
(source unknown)

And I say, don't get shook. God has the controls.

There are four lessons I lifted from these verses that I would conclude with tonight.

Lesson #1: Being God's child involves taking a gift. Have you done that?

Lesson #2: Your salvation was planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and provided by the Spirit. You and I had nothing to do with it.

Lesson #3: You are protected by the power of God.

Lesson #4: God is refining our faith and making us more like His Son in our tests.

While I was reflecting with my friend Dub, the one who was going to have heart surgery, he told me a story.

He says:

You know Don, my dad was kind of a circuit riding preacher. He preached in 3 churches in the Texas panhandle. He would go from church to church on horseback and preach his messages.

One winter night, one winter day, he was out preaching at one church and he was supposed to go to the next one. And the blizzard had gotten so great that he got lost. And the cowboy that was with him had said "You know sir, you don't need to

be scared. All you have to do in a blizzard is just lay the reigns on the neck of the horse and they know the way to the barn. They know the way home.”

You know, I turned that around in that counseling situation. I said “Dub, all you’ve got to do right now is lay the reigns on the neck of the Father. I know you feel like you’re in a blizzard right now. You might possibly die. But will you lay the reigns on the neck of the Father?”

I don’t know what you brought and what you’re struggling with, just don’t get shook. God’s got the controls. Just lay the reigns on His neck. He knows the way to the house.

Father, we thank you for Peter. We just identify with him at every level. We thank you for these great verses that have caused a chorus of Amens to arise in our hearts. That we’ve got a living hope, we’ve been born again to that. We’ve got an inheritance reserved and no matter what happens, we’re protected by the power of God. Thank You for that. Thank You for teaching us that we, in the midst of it, are going to be refined as gold in the fire. We’re going to be tested so we’re made like Your Son. And thank You too that we’ve been reminded that the prophets wanted to know more about it. And that the angels desire to look into it. May we be captivated in heart. May these days as we study this epistle, rejoice and be blessed in the times we have together. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

PATTERN NUMBER ONE – DON'T GET SHOOK, GOD HAS THE CONTROLS – 1 PETER 1:1-12

KEY VERSES 1:3-5

v. 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, v. 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in setting apart of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: May grace and peace be yours in ever greater measure.

v. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, v. 4 unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you, v. 5 you who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

v. 6 In this you are rejoicing, though now for a little while, if it must be (if there is need for it), you have been distressed in the midst of various kinds of testings,

v. 7 in order that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold which is perishing, though it is being tested by fire, may be found for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

v. 8 whom having not seen, you are loving, in whom now not seeing, yet believing, you are rejoicing with inexpressible and glorified joy,

v. 9 obtaining as an outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

v.10 Concerning which salvation prophets searched and inquired carefully, those who prophesied concerning the grace intended for you,

v.11 searching what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was making clear when He was testifying beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories along with them.

v.12 To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but for you they were ministering these things which now have been reported to you through those who have proclaimed the good news to you by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven—which things angels are eagerly desiring to gain a clear glance (to look into).

NOTES

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 1:1-12 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What has God the Father done for us, according to verse 3?

3. What does the future hold for us who know Christ, according to verse 4?

4. How are we protected in verse 5?

5. Why are we being tested in verses 6 & 7?

6. Who is being spoken about in verse 8?

7. What does Peter tell us in verse 9 will be the result of our faith?

8. Have you ever personally received Jesus Christ by faith? If your answer is yes, describe when and how it happened.

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Being God's child involves taking a gift. Have you done that?

LESSON #2: Your salvation was planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and provided by the Spirit.

LESSON #3: You are protected by the power of God.

LESSON #4: God is refining our faith and making us like his Son in our tests.