1 PETER

1 PETER
Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER

Peter was the shepherd of God's flock. Jesus called him "Rock" and helped him grow to be the spiritual leader of his church. His final words to Peter were, "Feed my sheep" and "Follow me." Paul calls him the apostle to the Jews, and so he was, for the earliest Christians were Jews. But Peter was the one through whom God opened a door to the Gentile world (Ac 10, 11,15). After Stephen's martyrdom, Peter stayed in Jerusalem, and from there, traveled about in Judea and Samaria shepherding God's flock (Ac 8-12). At the time of James' death at the hands of Herod, Peter was also imprisoned. His life was spared because of the prayers of the church and God's miraculous intervention. He traveled more widely after this. Peter was not an organization man or a church politician; he was a shepherd. His spiritual leadership in the church was unquestioned.

This first letter was written from "Babylon" (possibly Rome, probably not) (1Pe 5: 13). He writes to believers scattered throughout Asia Minor by persecution. He wrote to encourage people suffering for Jesus' sake and the gospel's. He reminds us that Jesus suffered for us. He tells us that those who challenge the non-Christian world with their obedient lifestyle and with the gospel can expect to suffer too.

TO GOD'S SCATTERED PEOPLE

1 Peter 1:1-2 (Wed.) Feb. 1

Key Verse: 1:1-2

1. God's elect (1)

God's people were scattered by persecution throughout the world. God turned the suffering of his people into victory, for he used his scattered people as missionaries to evangelize the world. Peter called them strangers in the world--not only because they had to live as aliens in foreign countries, but also because their true citizenship was in heaven. They and we are strangers and aliens in the world.

2. Chosen for obedience (2)

God calls us for obedience to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit applies the blood of Christ to our sinful hearts and lives and we are sanctified--forgiven, cleansed and molded into Christ's image by God's grace.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for choosing me for obedience to Jesus Christ, and for cleansing and forgiving me through his blood, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Help me not to run from suffering, but to live as a stranger in the world.

One Word: Strangers in the world

BLESSED PEOPLE

1 Peter 1:3-9 (Thur.) Feb. 2

Key Verse: 1:3

1. New birth through Jesus' resurrection

Once we put our hope in worldly things or in people, and we were slaves of fear and of our own feelings. But our merciful God gave us a new birth into a living hope. We are born again, not by human effort, but by the power of God who raised Jesus from the dead. Once we trusted things that perish, spoil or fade. Now we have an inheritance that will be ours forever. God not only keeps it for us, he also protects us by his power until we can claim it fully.

2. In this you rejoice

Only a loving heart can know real joy and real sorrow. Even though we have not seen Jesus, we love him. He is our source of joy. Even though we suffer painful and difficult trials, our faith grows brighter and purer because we love Jesus. Even though we do not see him, we believe in him and are confident that he will keep all of his promises.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the living hope you have given me. Thank you for giving me your sure promise to hold in my heart.

One Word: Love Jesus; be filled with joy

THINGS ANGELS LONG TO SEE

1 Peter 1:10-12 (Fri.) Feb. 3

Key Verse: 1:12a

1. More privileged than the prophets

The prophets were the great men of the Old Testament. They knew God and they knew his ways of working. They knew that he would keep his promises to David and Abraham to send the Savior; they knew that the Christ must suffer and be glorified. They longed to see him. We can know the grace of God's forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Jesus. We can know personally the greatness of his power and love. The prophets who looked forward to these days were really serving us when they wrote about him.

2. More privileged than angels

Jesus did not come as an angel. He came as a man, and he lived among men. He came to be our friend and our mediator before the Father. Angels can never really know him or experience his grace and his saving love.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the great privilege of serving these times--my own generation--with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One Word: The greatest privilege--to know

Jesus

PREPARE YOUR MINDS FOR ACTION

1 Peter 1:13-21 (Sat.) Feb. 4

Key Verse: 1:13

1. Be Holy (13-16)

God is holy, so God's people must be holy. We live in a world that is in rebellion against God, so we should always be prepared for action. Most people set their hopes on worldly things, but we are called to set our hope fully on Jesus. Worldly people say, "Do whatever you feel like doing." This is the philosophy of ignorance. God's word tells us to overcome evil desires and obey the Holy God. We are pilgrims and strangers in the world. Our only fear should be reverent fear of God.

2. Redeemed from an empty way of life

The sinful human tendencies and ways of life inherited from our forefathers do not have to determine our lives. We have been redeemed from the past by the precious blood of Jesus. We should not be fatalistic about ourselves. Fatalism keeps us from being prepared for action.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for saving me from a meaningless life. Help me to live a holy life, by your grace.

One Word: Redeemed by Jesus' blood

LIKE NEW-BORN BABES

1 Peter 1:22-2:3 (Sun.) Feb. 5

Key Verse: 2:3

1. Born again through the word of God

God commands us in his word to love our brothers deeply from the heart. We can obey his command when we are born again through his living, enduring word. Man's advice is weak and powerless. Kings and rulers perish. The things of the world are transitory, but God's word--the Bible, the word of the gospel--stands forever.

2. Crave pure spiritual milk (2:1-3)

When we are born again into God's family, we are like infants who need to grow. Babies grow by eating and exercise. We grow in faith, in inner peace and in strength when we study God's word and obey it. So we must repent of feelings and actions that come from worldly desires; we must crave the pure spiritual milk of God's word. When we begin to grow spiritually, we can taste the goodness of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse my heart and put your word in me so that I may grow up in my salvation. Help me to keep growing until I graduate into heaven.

One Word: Crave pure spiritual milk

THE LIVING STONE

1 Peter: 2:4-8 (Mon.) Feb. 6

Key Verse: 2:5

1. The Living Stone

Jesus is the Living Stone. He was the rejected stone--rejected by many people, including his own people Israel. But he was chosen by God to be the cornerstone of the new Israel, the capstone of God's redemptive history. This was a fulfillment of the promises of Scripture.

2. Living stones

We who come to him in faith are living stones in a spiritual house which he is building. We are not only a spiritual house, but also a holy priesthood. All Christians are priests who must offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. Spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God are a repentant heart and a thankful heart (Ps 51:17). But the real task of he holy priesthood is to bring the unbelieving world to God in repentance and faith (Ro 15:15,16).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for calling me to be a living stone. Help me to share your gospel with the people of my times.

One Word: Come to the Living Stone

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD AND A HOLY NATION

1 Peter 2:9-12 (Tue.) Feb. 7

Key Verse: 2:9

1. A royal priesthood (9-10)

In Exodus 19:4-6 God taught Moses his purpose in redeeming Israel from slavery in Egypt. He wanted to make the Israelites into a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. A priest stands between God and men. He brings men to God and God to men. God wanted to use his people to bring his lost creation back to himself. As a nation, Israel failed--but God did not fail. He sent Jesus, and he raised up a new people of God, a people belonging to Jesus. We who belong to Jesus have inherited all the promises God made to the former Israel--and their mission as well.

2. A holy nation (11-12)

God's people must be holy. We live in the world, but our citizenship is in heaven, so we are aliens and strangers in the world. We do not need to yield to the pressures of our own sinful desires nor to the worldliness around us.

Prayer: Lord, help me live as a royal priest and a holy nation and proclaim your wonderful works.

One Word: A royal priesthood

LIVE AS FREE MEN

1 Peter 2:13-17 (Wed.) Feb. 8

Key Verse: 2:16

1. Submit to authority (13-16)

It seems to some people that submission to authority is an abridgment of freedom. But this is not so. God established governments to bring order and maintain peace in a world of sinful people. It is God's will for his people to humbly submit to every authority instituted among men. He does not want us to yield to our rebellious spirits, for this is not the way of freedom but the way to slavery.

2. Live as free men (16-17)

When we live as servants of God we can be truly free, for freedom comes from creation order in our hearts. When we live as servants of God, we can love the brotherhood of believers--and others as well. We can respect all people and honor those in positions deserving honor.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to use my freedom in Christ as a cover-up for selfishness or thoughtlessness. Help me to obey you from the heart and live as your servant.

One Word: Live as free men

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

1 Peter 2:18-25 (Thur.) Feb. 9

Key Verse: 2:24

1. Suffer for doing good (18-20)

Slavery is an evil institution; even so, God seeks to change men, not social structures. Peter does not tell Christians who are slaves to demonstrate for their human rights. Christians should follow Christ, and bear up under the pain of unjust suffering with God in our hearts. If we suffer because of wrongdoing, we are no different from worldly people, but if we suffer for doing good and endure it, God is glorified.

2. Called to follow Christ (21-25)

We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Christ suffered for us. He suffered unjustly. Sinful men could not endure his goodness, so they insulted him and killed him. But he did not become angry and threaten; he entrusted himself to God. He bore our sins in his body on the tree; he died so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. He himself heals our wounds.

Prayer: Lord, I put my burden of sin on Jesus. Forgive me and help me to follow in his footsteps.

One Word: By his wounds you are healed.

BEAUTY WITHIN

1 Peter 3:1-7 (Fri.) Feb. 10

Key Verse: 3:4

1. To win an unbelieving husband

A woman's beauty is not in her outward appearance; she is beautiful if her heart and life are pure and reverent. She is beautiful if she has a gentle and quiet spirit, and if her hope is not in the things of the world, but in God. Women become proud and cantankerous when they put their hope in men or in growing children, or in a new house or a new car or in a job. A woman should strive to maintain spiritual order in her home as Sarah did by obeying Abraham. She should not give in to fear, but do what is right. A woman should not divorce an unbelieving husband if he consents to live with her (1Co 7:12-14). Unbelieving husbands can be won to faith, not by talk but by Christ-like behavior.

2. Husbands, treat your wives with respect

A man should treat his wife with respect and consideration. He should refrain from physical violence, for she is weaker than he is, and she is also an heir of God and joint heir with Christ (Ro 8:17).

Prayer: Lord, help me to grow in inner beauty.

One Word: Be beautiful on the inside

TO INHERIT A BLESSING

1 Peter 3:8-12 (Sat.) Feb. 11

Key Verse: 3:9

1. Live in harmony with one another (8-9)

God wants his people to be a blessing. So our lives must reflect the compassion and humility of Jesus. We should live in harmony with others and love others, as Jesus commanded. A Christian should not hold a grudge in his heart. The words we say should come from a heart ruled by Christ. We should bless others and make peace with them, not make quick, sarcastic retorts that hurt. We must learn to bless others, so that we may inherit God's blessing.

2. The eyes of the Lord are on us (10-12)

Peter quotes Psalm 34 to explain further why we must repay insults with blessing. If we love life and want to see good days, we should be careful about how we use our tongues. We must keep away from lies and deceit. We must turn from evil and do good. We must seek peace and pursue it. We must live before God, for his eyes are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.

Prayer: Lord, purify my heart. Help me to live in your presence and glorify you with my tongue.

One Word: Bless others; inherit a blessing

ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER

1 Peter 3:13-22 (Sun.) Feb. 12

Key Verse: 3:15

1. In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord

When our faith is challenged, it is easy to freeze up. If in our hearts we set apart Christ as Lord, fear goes away. He shows us what to do, and what to say, and he gives us courage to do it and say it. If we are eager to do good, most likely, no one will harm us; but if we do suffer for doing what is right, then God will bless us.

2. A reason for our hope

We must know what we believe and why we believe it, but we should not become self-righteous or argumentative. We must have a clear conscience and practice good behavior.

3. Christ died for sins once for all

Christ died for the sins of all people of all time. Even the people who lived in ancient times and, like Noah, believed God's promises, are saved because Jesus died for sin and was raised to life. He died to bring us to God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to testify to Jesus in any and every circumstance.

One Word: Christ is Lord of my life.

LIVING FOR GOD

1 Peter 4:1-6 (Mon.) Feb. 13

Key Verse: 4:2

1. It's time to stop sinning (1-3)

Jesus suffered and died for us. So when we suffer physically or emotionally, we can endure and grow if we think of him and come to him. We are called to have the same attitude that Christ had toward suffering. He did not live to satisfy his physical desires; he lived to do the will of God. Before we knew Jesus' grace, we spent time doing what people without God choose to do. We have sinned enough in the past to last us for the rest of our lives.

2. Overcome family and peer pressure

Those closest to us often can't understand our changed lives. They feel threatened. So they try to get us to do the same kinds of things as we did before. They try to draw us away from Jesus--back into the pattern of our old lives. Those who criticize us must themselves stand before Christ the Judge someday.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be afraid of suffering, but rather, to seek to do your will.

One Word: Live for God

LOVE WITH THE STRENGTH GOD PROVIDES

1 Peter 4:7-11 (Tue.) Feb. 14

Key Verse: 4:8

1. Love covers a multitude of sins

Time is running out. How should we use it? First of all, we must be clear-minded and self-controlled so that we can pray. Above all, we must love each other deeply. How can we love others? First, we must pray for them. Then we must serve each other with whatever gift God has given us. God gives us grace to love unlovely people; he loved us when we were so dirty and sinful. Our love has its roots in God's love.

2. In all things God may be praised

Love is practical. It involves showing hospitality to each other without grumbling, and using God's gifts freely to serve others. But unless God is in our hearts and what we say and do is motivated by him, our feelings cannot be real love. What we do for others should not be done to get praise and attention for ourselves, but to glorify God. This is real love--the kind that builds.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love you and glorify you in everything I do and say. Teach me how to love my brothers and sisters.

One Word: Practice God's love

REJOICE TO SHARE IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

1 Pe 4:12-19 (Wed.) Feb. 15

Key Verse: 4:13

1. Rejoice to suffer for Christ (12-14)

Most people seek maximum pleasure and minimum pain. But this is not Christ's way. He suffered for the sins of the world, and he calls all Christians to participate in his suffering, and to share in his glory. It is normal to suffer because of our faith in Jesus. It is better to suffer for Jesus than to suffer for committing a crime or for meddling. So Peter tells us to rejoice that we participate in the sufferings of Christ, for we will be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. Insults borne for the name of Christ turn to blessing.

2. Continue to do good (17-19)

Jesus will come again as he promised, to judge the living and the dead. Even those who are in God's family and who seem to be good people must stand before the throne of judgment. If the righteous are saved only by God's grace, what will happen to the ungodly? So we should not be discouraged by suffering; we must commit ourselves to our faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to rejoice in all circumstances.

One Word: Continue to do good--and rejoice

BE SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S FLOCK

1 Peter 5:1-4 (Thur.) Feb. 16

Key Verse: 5:2

1. Shepherds of God's flock

Peter addressed this charge to the elders, leaders in the church. A leader in the Christian fellowship is a shepherd. A shepherd should not be a hireling. His motives must be pure. He is a shepherd because God wants him to be, not because he receives some material or human benefit. He must accept God's calling and serve God's people willingly . A shepherd should not lord it over others nor should he be full of personal ambition. Rather, he must lead by example. Shepherds must feed God's flock with the word of God; he must protect them.

2. The Chief Shepherd will appear

The Chief Shepherd is Jesus. All shepherds must first be good sheep of Jesus. Shepherds must receive Jesus' grace and forgiveness. Their hope must be in the crown of glory he will give them. They must learn shepherdship from Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow Jesus closely until he enables me to be a shepherd.

One Word: Be shepherds of God's flock

HUMBLE YOURSELVES

1 Peter 5:5-7 (Fri.) Feb. 17

Key Verse: 5:6

1. God opposes the proud

There must be spiritual order in the Christian fellowship. So men who are young in faith should submit to spiritual seniors. God's people--young and old--must be humble toward one another. God does not like proud people, and he has nothing to give them. But he pours out his grace on humble people.

2. Humble yourselves under God's hand

Some people look humble. They are quiet and polite and seem to listen. But spiritually they are very proud and never learn from anyone. We must be humble before God. We must acknowledge his sovereignty and learn from his servants with humble hearts. Then, in due time he will lift us up. And if we are fearful of people or fearful of the future, we must cast our care on God, for he cares for us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for caring for me. Teach me to humble myself under your mighty hand every day.

One Word: Be humble before God; don't fear

people.

BE ALERT

1 Peter 5:8-14 (Sat.) Feb. 18

Key Verse: 5:8

1. The prowling devil

Our real enemy is the devil. He is always sneaking around, looking for a vulnerable spot to attack. So we must be alert--prayerful and clear about our faith and our commitment to Jesus. When the devil attacks, we must not be surprised or discouraged. Our fellow Christians throughout the world also suffer because of his attacks. When we resist the devil, he runs away.

2. God restores

God himself will restore us when we stand fast in faith and depend on his grace. He will make us strong, firm and steadfast. Peter was with Silas, and they were in Babylon. Babylon here may refer to Rome, or it may refer to a small city of that name near the Euphrates River. Mark is the writer of the second Gospel, and the spiritual son of Peter.

Prayer: Lord, I am weak and vulnerable. Protect me from the devil's skillful attacks.

One Word: Be alert and self-controlled.