

1 Peter 1 – Chapter Study

CHAPTER 1

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . .

I am greatly encouraged by Peter.

The reason I say that is because if there was hope for Peter, then there's hope for me.

You see, I find numerous similarities between us.

For instance, Peter tended to be *impetuous*.

He's the guy, when the Lord would ask a question, was typically the first one to be heard.

When Jesus would say something, Peter was quick to reply – often without thinking!

So when Jesus said he was going to Jerusalem to be crucified, Peter said, "Oh Lord, don't talk like that!"

When Jesus said they would all be offended because of Him and would turn away, Peter was quick to say that come hell or high water, he would never forsake the Lord!

In Gethsemane, when the mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter whipped out his sword and started swinging!

It was Peter who jumped out of the boat and went to Jesus walking on the water. And when Peter and John ran to the tomb early on Easter Morning it was Peter who went crashing in to see what was going on.

Peter was impetuous – he tended to be hot-headed and brash and all too often I find myself in the same place.

Peter also suffered from the dreaded disease called "foot-in-mouth."

This was another part of his impetuousness – he was over-quick to blurt out some comment, to make some remark, which he later kicked himself for.

How often I say something, wanting to be thought of as smart or witty, only to realize that I've made a fool of myself!

Peter also started out very unstable – not mentally, but in terms of moral fiber.

He was weak.

As we read the gospels we find Peter to be a man who could see what was true and right and would make some personal resolution and commitment.

But when that commitment was challenged or put to the test, he would wimp-out.

Take for instance his walking on the water

He was quick to get started, but then took his eyes off Christ and started floundering – and crying like a baby to be rescued.

He was making vows of faithfulness unto death on minute, then cursing in a vow of denial a few hours later.

After the resurrection, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem, but Peter was willing to cash it all in and went fishing back at his old haunt in Galilee far to the north.

One minute he's pledging his eternal loyalty to Jesus as Lord and Master, then when Jesus tells him to drop his nets on the other side of the boat, he pretends to inform the Lord of the Seas about fishing!

What so encourages me about Peter is that his halting, stumbling, imperfect attachment and devotion to Christ was turned into something dramatic and dynamic on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon him and the other followers of Christ.

So dramatic was the change that the Spirit of God made in him that he begins his letter with these words . . .

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

Peter we know – his story is given us in Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

But here he adds the label – “an apostle of Jesus Christ.”

We can be confident that as he penned those words, the tears started to his eyes – because no one knew Peter better than Peter.

And those words - “an apostle of Jesus Christ” were all about the grace and the mercy of God.

Peter *knew* what he deserved.

That night he stood warming himself by the fire in the yard of the high priest while Jesus was interrogated was fresh in his memory.

He remembered well the challenge of the serving girl and the others as they said they recognized him as one of Jesus’ followers, and the way he’d protested and told them they had it all wrong.

The curses he’d uttered and oaths he’d taken to verify his distance from the Lord.

And that look that Jesus gave him from across the yard following the third denial.

Peter knew the sick feeling of dread he’d had when he realized just how weak he’d been.

To feel like such a fake and fraud.

To turn his back on the best friend he’d every had when he needed him the most!

It tore his heart out.

And Peter remembered the glimmer of hope that had been rekindled in his heart when word came from Mary that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Then how Jesus had appeared to Him, and with the tenderest of words, had forgiven him and restored him to fellowship.

So as he writes his name, whereas he could have gone on to write, “loser, fake, fraud, denier, impetuous and fickle,” he instead identifies himself by what Jesus had made him - “an apostle of Jesus Christ.”

If you were to write your name and identify yourself – what would you write?

“Lance, sinner, impetuous, weak, undisciplined, arrogant, buffoon.”

But that is not the way God wants us to identify ourselves.

He wants us to see ourselves through who we are in Christ because that’s the way He relates to us.

“Lance, child of God, beloved of the Heavenly Father, adopted according to grace, brother of Christ, soon to be wed bride of Jesus, temple of the Holy Spirit, dwelling place of God, object of God’s attention, saint.”

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Peter addressed this letter to Christians scattered throughout five Roman provinces of the Asia Minor which today is northern Turkey. (show map)

The churches in those provinces were made up of *both* Jews & Gentiles.

The word “Dispersion” was a *technical term* used for Jews living *outside* the borders of Israel.

You may have heard the word “Diaspora” – it’s the same word – and even today refers to Jews who live in other nations.

But here Peter uses it as referring, not just to Jews, but to *all believers* in Christ, including Gentiles, who are scattered abroad.

This is remarkable when you realize how far Peter has come in his understanding of the grace and purposes of God if he is willing to lump Jews and Gentiles together in this way.

Peter, as a classic Jew of his time, would have nothing to do with Gentiles.

It took a miraculous vision, given three times to make sure he wouldn’t miss the point, for him to realize that God was opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

The story of Paul and how God was moving so dramatically among the Gentiles had deeply impacted him and he had come to understand who constitutes *the people of God* in a broader sense than just the descendants of Abraham.

Jewish and Gentile distinctions no longer matter – the only distinction God recognizes as having any validity and determination is the issue of faith!

So in addressing Jewish & Gentile followers of Christ, he simply calls them – “pilgrims.”

The word is rendered differently in differing translations:

Stranger

Alien

Sojourner

The word is literally a *resident alien* – one whose citizenship and home-culture is someplace else, but who is living in a different country.

Peter understood the Christian to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God before he/she is a citizen of any earthly realm.

And their native-culture is heaven.

The Christian may live *in* this world, but not *by* this world.

Our life here is like a pilgrimage.

Heaven is our home and destination and each day we live here brings us one step closer to our destination.

Philippians 3:20 says that our citizenship is in heaven.

Like Abraham, we have their eyes of faith centered on the future city of God (Heb. 11:8-16).

We are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:16).

There are many American missionaries on the field today.

I think of David Speights and his family in Thailand.

They have children ranging in ages from young to late teens.

Several of them were *raised* on the mission field and are far better acquainted with the culture and language of Thailand than the USA,

But David and his wife have sought to teach their family that they are American citizens and that they possess certain rights as a result of that citizenship.

They regularly make their home and family life a reflection of life in the States, just so that their children will not lose their heritage as Americans.

There are many people living here in the US who do the same thing with their

heritage in another country; they seek to pass it on to their children and remind them of their cultural roots.

As Christians –we ought to do this regarding our citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

Far above being a Democrat or a Republican – we’re monarchists who swear an oath of fealty to King Jesus.

Far above even being Americans, we are Christians!

Whenever we take a team on a missions trip, we always end up gathering in someone’s room, usually at the end of a long day, just before retiring for the night.

We bring out our stash of junk food we’ve brought from home, and then sit around and tell stories and jokes and have a great time laughing and sharing with one another.

It’s like a little slice of home.

I guess being immersed in a different culture all day, with such radically different sights, smells, and sounds combines to create an ache in our hearts for home.

So we recreate America in our hotel room.

It’s been a kick to do this in Russia and to invite a handful of Russians to join us.

I love to watch the way they watch us with such interest.

Americans love to laugh and the Russians tend to be very reserved and quiet.

At first the boisterousness of Americans puts them off, then when they see the fun we are having, you can see the walls start to come down and after just a couple nights, they ask if they can please come and join us for our “Little slice of America.”

Isn’t this what church should be like – a little slice of heaven?

When we gather here or in our homes for a small group, shouldn’t it be the gathering of the citizens of heaven, where the words of our mouths and the actions of our lives speak of the culture of the Kingdom?

And shouldn’t the lost see the joy and significance of God’s people and respond with a hunger for more?

Being a stranger to this world means that the world will at times find us “strange.”

And since the world likes everything to fit in, that means we will often run contrary to the world, and so face it’s antagonism.

As we read on, we discover this antagonism is what had prompted this letter.

The believers in Asia Minor were suffering some severe trials and Peter could see things heating up in the form of official persecution at the hands of the State.

He refers to the fiery trial that was about to come on the church – no doubt referring to the persecution that broke out under Nero.

You see, up till that time, Christianity was considered a *sect* of Judaism.

And since Judaism was an officially sanctioned religion of the Roman Empire, as long as Christians were seen as a part of Judaism, they were pretty much left alone.

But when Roman officials realized the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem and other Jewish centers utterly condemned and rejected the Christian faith, they took an altogether different posture toward Christianity.

Religion, the Romans felt, was only valid if it was ancient. Any religious innovation was immediately suspect and considered a threat to the Empire – so it was banned – brutally!

Nero is the emperor who began an official persecution of Christians – finding in

them a ready scapegoat for the disastrous fire that destroyed a good portion of the City of Rome.

It was well known that the Christians believed the end of the world would come by fire, so Nero blamed the Fire of Rome on zealous Christians who were trying to bring about the end of the world.

In any case, when Peter wrote, Nero's persecution had not yet begun.

But Peter knew by the Spirit that a time of severe testing was coming and penned this letter as a way to encourage and strengthen the saints for the impending trial.

Notice how Peter identifies these pilgrims in v. 2 . . .

2elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Election is a precious doctrine of the Bible.

It speaks of the fact that our salvation is based on God, not ourselves.

But election has become a bone of contention as well as people divide into camps and start throwing theological missiles at one another.

I will not get into it tonight but only look at what Peter says here –

He says that election is “according to the foreknowledge of God.”

Meaning that God knows ahead of time what it to occur, and elects the saved on the basis of that foreknowledge.

Does that mean God knows ahead of time who will chose Him or whom he will chose?

Both!

Let's not get hung up on this, which came first, the chicken or egg –and simply rejoice in the reality that our salvation is a settled issue because it is based in God and not ourselves!

Now, the next two phrases “in sanctification of the Spirit, for the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” relate to the word “elect”.

- 1) We are elect *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*
- 2) We are elect *in sanctification of the Spirit,*
- 3) We are elect *for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:*

Notice the TRINITY

In other words, our election is based on God the Father, is realized in a practical and daily way through the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit, and for the goal of the glory of God the Son.

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

Peter uses the same greeting Paul used in *his* letters, which means this was very likely the *standard* Christian greeting of that day where ever the gospel had made inroads into the Gentile world.

For “grace” was the Greek greeting while “shalom” or “peace” was the Jewish greeting.

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter seems to have picked up something else from Paul – and that was the tendency to pen long, run-on sentences!

Here Peter gives a word of praise to God.

It was the typical format for letters to begin with a greeting, which included a “from and to.” And then for the author to pen a few words of *blessing or thanksgiving* to the recipient.

Peter follows that format here, but extends the thanksgiving and blessing to *God Himself* as the Source of all that is good in our lives.

It’s in v. 3 that we discover the central theme of 1 Peter –

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

According to God’s overflowing mercy, He has caused us to be *born again*.

And this *new life* that we now possess is energized by a *new hope*.

This new hope is made possible because Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Until Jesus came, death ruled because the penalty for breaking the law of God was death.

But Jesus fulfilled the law, not just in the letter but in the spirit and intent of the law.

When He died on the cross, He took on Himself the collective guilt of all mankind and satisfied the just demands of the broken law for judgment.

His resurrection from the dead is proof that His death was MORE THAN ENOUGH to atone for the guilt of the human race.

Death could not hold Christ because His righteousness exceeds the demands of the law, and His life cannot be quenched by the state of death.

All men and women have a choice.

They can retain the life given them as sons and daughters of Adam and live by the demands of the law, and so come short and end up losing that life to the righteous judgment of the law.

Or they can surrender the life Adam bequeathed to them and embrace the gift of *new life* Jesus offers to those who will believe in Him.

Paul puts it this way in Romans 5 -

14Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

15But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

Adam-life ends with death; eternal separation from God.

Thus, there is no hope in Adam-life because there’s the realization this life is as good as it gets and it is short and filled with much pain and sorrow.

Christ-life never ends!

His resurrection is the down payment and promise of our own.

So life has an unshakeable hope because there’s the realization that this life is as bad as it ever gets and it is short!

4to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

The eternal life we will ultimately enjoy is like entering in to some kind of wild, over the top, mind-blowing inheritance.

Imagine that you're at work or home one day and you get a call.

It's a lawyer, informing you that some ultra-wealthy relative has passed on and made you the heir of their entire estate - \$15 billion!

So you hope on a plane and fly to where ever the estate is located and go to the lawyer's office.

You sit down and she shows you the will and proper papers and forms, which you sign.

Then she buzzes her secretary and tells her that the agents can come in.

The door to her office opens and in walk two IRS agents.

They are there to assess an inheritance tax bill of 60%.

You have 30 days to pay!

Next, a general contractor comes in who tells you that the lawyer had contracted him to inspect the estate and he has bad news.

The place has not been repaired or maintained and the harsh winters have caused great damage.

It is going to cost at least \$50 million to do the needed repairs.

So, after punching the numbers into your calculator you realize you're still doing okay with nearly \$6 billion!

You fly back home and start making plans for moving into the mansion when the repairs are done.

But you get a call a week later from the financial manager whose overseeing your investments and he tells you the stock market has gone through a "correction" and many of your stocks have collapsed.

Your net worth has plummeted to \$2 billion.

A week after that there's a tornado and the factories that are the heart of your wealth are leveled.

Without the factories bringing in revenue, you can't afford to keep the mansion and are forced to sell it, just to pay your current bills.

In 2 weeks, you've gone from a billionaire to being a debt!

Such is the wealth and the inheritances of this world.

But our spiritual inheritance is incorruptible and will not fade or be frittered away.

Heaven is not subject to age and decay.

There are no street sweepers in Heaven!

There are no gardeners, leaf blowers, hoses, brooms, screwdrivers, dusters, or cobweb removers!

Things do not yellow or tarnish - They do not fray or get threadbare.

I've been to Rome once and was blown away by the beauty of the architecture and art.

But it is almost all some 500 to 2000 years old.

The fountains of Rome are *incredible*.

You can sit in front of the Trevi Fountain at night for hours!

But everywhere you go, you see the signs of age and decay.

The fountains are stained and worn.

The Coliseum is a ruin and distant shadow of its former glory.

The Forum is just a handful of broken columns.

You can't help but have a deep sense of disappointment that these glorious buildings were allowed to fall into decay and ruin.

Heaven has lost none of its glory and grandeur!

Death, decay and ruin are not allowed there.

And our inheritance is secure and sure – awaiting the day we lay aside this body and enter our mansion in heaven.

And just as our inheritance is sure and reserved for us, God is keeping *us* for our inheritance!

As it says in v. 5 . . .

you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

It's the power of God that keeps us and secures us to our faith.

⁶In this

In what? In the living hope that is ours through faith in Christ and which will be consummated when Christ comes again.

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that 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, ⁸whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

The believers Peter wrote this to were having a rough go.

Persecution of the church had already come to some degree.

Most of this persecution was generated by the local Jewish community who found the Christians to be heretics to Judaism and who wanted to distance themselves from them.

As the Roman officials in different cities became more and more away of the growing rift between Christians and Jews, they tended to side with the Jews since Judaism was a well known and established faith, while Christianity increasingly came to be seen as a novelty.

And religious novelty was immediately suspect!

The idea was that in the religious realm, if something was new, it couldn't be true, and if it was true, it wasn't new, since sages and philosophers would have thought of it long ago.

So the churches of these 5 regions were beginning to feel the heat of persecution.

Peter wrote to remind them of the abiding hope they have through faith in Christ.

They may indeed be pressed on earth, but God would sustain and keep them.

They could even go so far as to see trial as a way to determine the genuineness of their faith.

If the pressure of trial led to *cracks* in their faith – they could diagnose that their faith was misplaced and not on the right object.

Peter uses an unusual construction in vs. 8 & 9 that bears closer inspection.

Speaking of Jesus he says -

⁸whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet

believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹receiving the end of your faith—

Now, in light of what he's written about *not seeing but believing*, what we expect to see as the reward of faith is to *see Jesus!*

But Peter says the reward is -

the salvation of *your* souls.

What we need to understand is that seeing God and salvation are the same thing!

To be saved mean to be made whole.

And to be whole as a human being means to be in intimate, face to face fellowship with God.

We will not know what salvation really is until we stand before God and gaze on His glorious brightness.

That vision will be the essence of our salvation and that light will be what drives away the last of our brokenness.

John puts it this way in 1 John 3:2-3

²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

As Peter has been writing about our salvation and the hope it brings, he moves to speak of it's grandeur and how, contrary to the misunderstanding of the Jewish people and the Gentile officials, it was no new innovation but was part of God's plan from the beginning.

¹⁰Of this salvation –

Meaning the salvation by grace through faith in Christ -

¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

The OT prophets were inspired by the Spirit of God to foretell the sufferings of the Messiah and that though His death He would provide atonement for sin.

Though they prophesied about these things, they didn't fully understand them and labored diligently to try to grasp their meaning – but understanding eluded them.

All they could figure out was that a time would come when the Messiah would fulfill the requirements of the Law of God and grant the *gift of righteousness* by grace to those who believed in Him.

Not only did the holy prophets knock themselves out trying to figure out how and when the things they were foretelling would come to pass, the *angels themselves* made this the subject of their most intense interest.

The words Peter uses here speak of *intense desire* and when he says they “look into”

these things, he draws the picture of someone *bending over* to give the closest kind of attention to something.

This is the engineering architect who going over plans drawn by a master architect, looking with skill and intense interest in what the Master Architect has planned for constructing a glorious Cathedral.

Make no mistake friend – the angles are watching YOU!

They are busy observing our lives to learn what God is doing.

This world is the schoolhouse of angels and you and I are the board God's lessons are being written on.

In Ephesians 3:10, Paul wrote -

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

Part of God's plan is to show His wisdom to the angelic beings through His work with the church.

God *wants* the angels to look in on what He does in the church.

Right now, the holy angels are present with us.

They now what is going on in our lives and are well acquainted with us.

In fact, there are likely to be angels, one or two, that know us better than any human being knows us because they are present with us when no one else is.

And they witness what we read and hear and what the Spirit of God is convicting us about.

They see the direction of God's Spirit prompting us to grow in Christ, and how we respond.

They see how God's truth and grace shapes and molds us.

They daily see the mercy of God covering our lives.

And every moment of every day is telling them about how good God is - moving them to offer continual praise and honor to Him.

¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"

Notice Peter's emphasis on the mind here –

1) Therefore gird up the loins of your mind,

2) be sober,

3) and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you

All of these speak of the attitude and posture of our thinking!

1) First he says – prepare and strengthen the loins of your mind.

Loins were idiomatic for the seat or reproduction.

Children were said to come from the loins, for obvious reasons!

The loins of the mind refers to the fact that our thoughts are *spiritual seed* that produce a harvest of fruit – for good or ill.

By girding up the loins of the mind, Peter means we need to rein in our thoughts and not allow them to run amuck into whatever lust or desire tries to claim our thought processes.

2) Then he says, “be sober” – meaning we need to make sure our minds aren’t seduced and filled with that which is impure and would muddle our thinking and distort reality.

There are many more things than alcohol or drugs that can muddle our minds.

Lust, pride, hatred, anger, depression – all of these can cloud our minds so that we don’t see things for the way they really are.

3) Third, Peter calls us to rest our hope totally on the day when the fullness of grace’s gift will be realized and we will stand before the throne of God beholding His glory with unveiled faces.

Once the mind is square and working correctly, we will realize there is only one pasture to adopt toward God and that is immediate, cheerful obedience, just like we expect and desire from our children.

When our minds are clear and not deceived or influenced by the world, we’ll realize there is only one reasonable and safe course through life – to obey God and follow His will with the utmost care.

Let me spell it out by asking some questions.

1) Does God love you with a perfect love?

2) Does He *know* what is best for you?

3) Does He *want* what is best for you?

4) Has He given pretty clear direction for your life in His Word?

Okay, now let me turn the tables and ask . . .

5) Whose behind the course of the world – who pulls it’s strings?

6) Is the devil a liar or truth-teller?

7) Does the world love you?

8) Does the world want what’s best for you or does it merely seek to *use* you?

So – if we are thinking clearly – who will we follow?

It’s a no-brainer, it would seem: But really, the no-brainer thing is seen in those who call themselves Christians but whose lifestyle is dictated by the world.

Peter makes it crystal clear – if you call yourself a Christian – there is only one proper lifestyle – holiness!

God is holy – therefore His people must be holy.

Over and over in the book of Leviticus, God premised His commands on the fact that He is holy.

His people are to be *like* Him – they are children who must bear their Father’s likeness.

V. 16 is worthy of a sermon but we must press on.

17And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here in fear*; **18**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like silver or gold*, from your aimless conduct *received by tradition from your fathers*, **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

20He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you **21**who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Peter says – “Stop and think about what it cost God just so you could call him ‘Father.’”

God didn’t weigh out 30 pieces of silver, or even a boatload full of gold.

He gave something far more precious – the blood of His own Son.

This is the price that was demanded because of the righteousness of God – nothing else would suffice!

Our sin was so great, it’s guilt so hideous, that only the blood of an innocent substitute could blot it out.

And Peter calls you and I to live in the light of that sacrifice!

He says –

. . . conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.

By fear, he doesn’t mean *terror* – but *reverence*.

This is the kind of fear that lead to a quiet care that takes great pains to make sure proper honor and respect is being shown.

If you were standing in the hallway just outside the Oval Office, waiting for an appointment with The President – you wouldn’t be terrified, but you would be extremely cautious to observe the forms of protocol for how to walk and talk and show respect.

That’s what Peter is saying here.

God is indeed our Father – but He became our Father through an incredibly difficult and costly act.

CONCLUSION

Let me end with that – and we’ll finish the chapter next week.

But tonight, let’s wrap it up with this –

When we think about the sacrifice of Christ and what it cost, it may be easy for us to think that it was really no big deal for God.

After all, He knew from the beginning how it would all turn out.

He knew He would rise from the dead and that the crucifixion was the means of saving millions upon millions of the lost.

Being eternal, several hours on the cross would be less than an eye-blink to God.

So we might be tempted to denigrate and lessen the seriousness of the cross.

But friends, it wasn’t the physical torture and pain that was so difficult for Jesus!

Indeed, He *did* know that there was limit to that and what it would accomplish.

Jesus’ real struggle was not the prospect of *physical* pain – even though the Roman practice of crucifixion is arguably one of the most diabolical and painful forms of torture and execution man has ever devised.

No – the real agony, the greater trial for Jesus was the prospect of having His communion with the Father broken for a time while He was made the sin of the World and of History!

It was *this* that drove Him to such agony and extremity in Gethsemane that the tiny capillaries in His forehead burst and the blood mingled with the sweat pouring from his face.

Think of it, the cost of our salvation – the cost as **GOD** reckons it – was not the physical pain and torture, but the torment of the Father and Son being *separated* – even for a brief moment - as the sin of the world was being atoned for.

Jesus cried out, “My God! My God – why have You forsaken Me?”

This was not, as some claim, just a quote from Psalm 22 by which Jesus meant to let people know He was fulfilling prophecy.

It's the other way around – the prophecy of Psalm 22 was given to reveal the extent of the Messiah's sacrifice!

And it was this that God reckoned as the real COST of our salvation – that for a moment, fellowship between God the Father and God the Son was broken because of sin.

Oh friends – contrast Jesus' agony over the *prospect* of being separated from the Father because of sin, with our all too often casual attitude toward sin and the separation from God it leads to!

The mature Christian is one who longs to abide in the conscious presence of God without distraction.

And yet, on the best day, he or she might find themselves in that kind of communion with the Lord maybe for a *few brief moments* - and that's on a good day!

It was the other way around for Jesus!

He *lived* in the unbroken, conscious presence of the Father – and the prospect of even a few minutes apart from Him brought Him to His most tremulous moment – so much so that He prayed, “If there's *some other way* to accomplish the redemption of the human race, Father, let's go that route.”

Peter is saying here – think about the cost Jesus paid.

Think about what agony He endured – the torment of being separated from the Father, so that you wouldn't be.

And let your life flow from a relationship of unbroken fellowship with God.