

1Peter 11-05-06a

This is Friday, the 6th of May, 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1 Peter. We resume in chapter 3, verse 18, and moving forward into the spirits in prison and the baptism that saves us and so on, a bunch of interesting terms and phrases and statements made by Peter here.

We hope to gain an understanding of exactly what that all entails and why he includes it at this point in his letter. We'll begin, as we always do, by taking a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer. It's an opportunity to focus our concentration, lay aside the distractions and issues that might have piggybacked in on the back of our brains.

That includes me, of course. So let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, what a privilege it is for us to be sustained by your grace, to be held by your hands, to be forever united with the Lord Jesus Christ and to have the security and the confidence of knowing that we are your children, that you have a plan and purpose for us that extends not only into and through the present and the immediate future but into the vast reaches of eternity.

We thank you for this passage of Scripture and the opportunity to spend time looking at it together. We ask that God the Holy Spirit will give us enlightenment and understanding so that we can not only understand what is being said but remember it and see its applicability to our circumstances and to the things that you have woven into your perfect plan for us in the days and weeks ahead. We pray that as a result we will be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, that we will reflect his glory and be found good and faithful servants at the day of his return.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. If you will remember, Peter is writing this letter to people who, much like us, have been placed in geographical circumstances that they did not necessarily anticipate, it wasn't their first choice.

These are the Jews of the diaspora, the dispersion. They are in the midst of the heathern, as we like to call them, the unwashed, the hoi poloi, the Gentile acrobustia, the uncircumcised, and this wasn't their goal, it wasn't their intention, but that's where they ended up. And Peter begins the letter by saying, hello there, you people whom God foreknew and specifically called to this fate.

And since then, what has he been doing? He has been explaining to them that their stress, their suffering, their experience is twofold. First of all, it requires something of them personally, which is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he summed that up in chapter 2, verses 21 through 24. Take a quick look at that by way of review.

To this you were called. Same thing he said in the first two verses. They're not called saints, they're not elect according to the foreknowledge of God unto salvation as the whole reformed crowd would like us to believe.

They are called pilgrims. They are chosen pilgrims. They were chosen to be where they are.

They were chosen as the point of the spear for God's incursion of the gospel into these new areas. That's what they are called to. And then in 221, he revisits that and he says, for to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in his steps.

Jesus' first choice of duty stations was not Jerusalem, first century AD. He came because it was a part of the plan and purpose of God. He could see through it and beyond it to the glory that was set before him.

He endured the cross. He despised the shame. Now he is seated at the right hand of the Father.

So Peter reminds the crowd of this, reminds his audience of this. To this you have been called. Christ has left us the example of how to do it.

And this is in the middle of that section on humility and submission that we have already covered in great detail. These are just examples. This is not all of the submission.

This is not all of the catechists that God has put into the human race. There's all kinds of areas where we look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. So that was the first part.

Your challenges, your experiences as you are out there in the dispersion, in a different culture, you're sort of in the world but not of it, is very illustrative of our experience, where we are, what we face. We are in this world but not of it. We are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in an increasingly hostile culture.

You kind of get used to the hostility yourself, and then when you start seeing it through the eyes of your children and watching them being exposed to it and that inability to maintain a germ-free bubble around them, and they're inevitably exposed, you think, well, to what extent should I encourage this and make sure they can stand it before they leave? But it's hostile. It is not conducive. The elements of the founding of our nation and all that are well and good historically, but you look around today and you don't see much of it, and it's ever more in decline.

So like these Jews of the Diaspora, we listen, as Peter says, this has a purpose. It's not a happenstance. You didn't get born and get located in these circumstances kind of at random.

God had a big plan, and, you know, he just kind of put people in big groups hither and thither without any thought. We are individually, uniquely, and especially assigned exactly where we are to face exactly what we face. To this you have been called.

Look at the example of the Lord Jesus. It was certainly no happenstance, his mission, and Peter would not give us that example if it were not also true of us, that we are uniquely designated, uniquely commissioned, uniquely equipped, and uniquely called to a unique place. Nobody else

in the history of the universe, in the history of the human race, in the history of this planet has faced the situations that you face.

Nobody. It's like fingerprints. It's unique to each one of us, and there is a part of God's plan.

There is a demonstration. There is a purpose. Most of the time we have no idea what it is.

We try to define things in terms of our future experience. Well, God is preparing me now for something I will do later, and my guess is that that's occasionally true, but most of the time there is something bigger and grander, and we're not in a position to understand it right now, but that's what faith is for, substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. But that's the first half.

Peter says, look, remember your calling. You have been called to this. You've been commissioned to it.

You've been sent into it. Look at the example of Jesus. He was submissive to the will of the Father.

He was a servant to his disciples. That's the illustration you have of the slave, the wife, and the husband. Then in the middle of chapter three, we had kind of a break in subject, and we moved into a new area.

He says, finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brothers. Be tenderhearted.

Be courteous. Now, this is leading up to something. This is preparatory, and I don't know if I'm going to be able to contain myself and discipline myself to wait until we get there.

Probably not. So I tell you now, we may just skip the spirits in prison. You think that's the interesting part.

It's not. The interesting part comes after the souls in chains and Noah and waiting in the water and so on. But he begins it here in verse eight.

Be of one mind. Have compassion. Love as brothers.

Be tenderhearted. Be courteous. Now, I thought all of this was circumstantial.

I thought these Jews were in the diaspora, and they're facing the Gentiles, and their children are growing up not speaking Aramaic, and they're learning Greek, and they're getting these customs, and they don't dress Jewish anymore, and they're losing their respect for the traditions, and how can I maintain that when it's all flaked away, and we can't go to Jerusalem? I can't explain the feasts and the rituals and the heritage and the tradition and the promises and the covenants, and oh, dear, what am I going to do? And it's all about the circumstances. And Peter says, all of you

called people who are in that situation, he doesn't say, here's what you do. You get an extra phylactery.

You get an extra thing to tap on the doorpost. You spend extra time explaining the feasts and your heritage, and get your own copy of the Law of Moses and read it on Saturdays. You would expect that if he was trying to allay their concerns, that he would say, here's the way you can keep the culture alive.

Keep your ethnicity or whatever. Maintain your diversity. But he doesn't.

What does he say? Here's the point. Finally, be of one mind. Your unity as a community, your brotherhood in Christ is cemented together with love, with compassion, with tender-hearted, forgiving attitudes.

You still have fellowship. You are still linked to your fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are of that body.

Don't lose those connections. It's the same thing when in other places it says, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. And we tend to think, well, especially some of us tend to think or were led to think or led ourselves to think, as long as I've got good solid teaching of the Word of God, I can just plow on.

There may be somebody at my right hand or my left, but I'm going to narrow road through the straight gate up to the mountain. I'm going to take the high ground, and so on. And if there's other people, that's great.

But as long as I can get good teaching, I am there. The emphatic, repeated testimony of Scripture is that we need each other. We need community.

We need fellowship. You can't fulfill all of the 65 or so one another commands of the New Testament if there's no other to do them to. It implies, it assumes, it demands fellowship.

And it may be a small fellowship at times, it may be a larger fellowship at times, but we have a responsibility to maintain contact and maintain connection with the rest of the body of Christ. This is why that, in whom in, that we studied a week or two ago, is among you. Christ among you is the hope of glory.

Not just Christ in me. As long as I stagger and fall across the line with Christ in me, I've got the hope of glory. It is Christ in your midst.

Christ in your community. It's your corporate testimony as much as your individual testimony. And Peter is saying, look, you may be scattered, but you can find some other people.

Get with them. Love one another. Who are you going to be of one mind with if you're the only one

mind around? That makes it pretty easy.

I can be of one mind when nobody's arguing with me. But to be of one mind, I didn't mean anything by that. But we need one another.

And so that's why you have these commands. Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling. And now he's looking at those who are outside, the hostile community.

When you get feedback, when you get directed animosity and antagonism, it dies. It comes one way and stops. It isn't reflected.

It isn't returned. It isn't bounced back. And this ought to be somewhat startling to these people because they're used to giving as good as they get and getting as good as they give.

And they give, reviling, and it doesn't come back. And they say, what's up with that? Anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, the hope that is among you, and whom in. It's a, you're not the only Christian they know.

They've seen this elsewhere. And hopefully there's enough of a Christian testimony that it raises questions. And people say, I need to look into this.

They might think one guy is an anomaly or just a quirk. But if there's a bunch of us living that life of hope, looking forward, not overly invested in the things of this life, that's going to start raising questions, asking you a reason for the hope that is among you. So that's, that brings us up to where we are now at verse 18, having a good conscience.

That means you've got to have more than a, than a hopeful attitude and more than a, than an optimistic outlook, a good conscience. And he talks again later on about baptism being the answer down in verse 21. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God, which we'll get to here momentarily.

But twice now in this context, having a good conscience, you need a good conscience that is able to give the right answer. Where does the good conscience come from? Well, now we are back to our individual pursuit of understanding of God's will and God's plan and God's purpose and God's person himself. We can't have a good conscience if it isn't looking at the truth and energized and informed and empowered by God's truth.

And that's why we together study the word of God. It's so much better. And all of us know the advantage of pooling people in a location as often as we can, because everybody's gift gets to function.

God the Holy Spirit operates in ways obvious and not so obvious. And every, every gift, every conversation, every spirit filled believer can be a blessing as well as receive a blessing. And it is much more than Bible class, which we could all stay home and listen to a tape.

But to commune and fellowship with believers of like mind, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And scripture is replete with that testimony. God could have exported the Israelites one by one to the promised land, but he took them out as a group.

Jesus could have taken one disciple at a time and done them seriatim. Well, I'll work with Peter for three months and I'll turn him loose, get John, work with him, turn him loose. He got them all together as a group and kept them together as a group and commissioned them as a group.

So we have these community commands. It is better if it is the will of God, remember that's our, our wonderful fifth class condition, which is a Greek point of my own making, but it's not a first class. It's not a second class, not a third class, not a fourth class.

It's a fifth class. You remember your, you remember your classes? What's first class? If, and it's true. Second class, if, and it's not true.

If you were faithful, but you're not, I could bring you the kingdom. You know, Jesus told the Jews of his day. If third class condition, maybe yes, maybe no.

The outcome is future and uncertain. Fourth class condition, if I wish it were true, but it's not. If you were faithful, I could bring you the kingdom.

You could look at that as a, as a fourth class. But this fifth class condition is if in the unlikely event that this actually happens, which it probably won't. If and it's probably not true.

If you were faithful, I could bring you the kingdom. But if in the unlikely event that you actually have to suffer for doing good, it's better to do that than suffer for doing evil. Well, that brings us to verse 18.

Let's read this next section. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the spirit. By whom he also, he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient when once the divine long-suffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared in which a few, that is eight souls were saved through water.

There is also an anti-type, which now saves us baptism, not the removal of filth from the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him. And that finishes the chapter. Well, this isn't, after laboring over it for a couple of weeks now, I've decided that it's not as hard as it looks.

I thought, oh boy, how am I ever going to figure out spirits in prison? And surprisingly, that's not where time really has to be spent. Christ also suffered once for us. You remember, we just reviewed back in chapter two.

After Peter laid out, he said, I know what your situation is. You scattered Jews of the Diaspora. I know that you are sojourners and pilgrims and you're trying to abstain from fleshly lusts and so on.

And then we had that beautiful section, that praise of Jesus Christ in 21 through 24 of chapter two. Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example. And then he goes on.

He bore our sins in his own body that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed. You are like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Beautiful Christological section there.

Now, once again, what is he covered in between? Because he's returning to Christ and he says for Christ also. Well, what new point is he illustrating by going back to the Lord Jesus? What have we covered between 225 and 318? Wives, be submissive. Husbands, honor your wives like fine porcelain, like fine crystal, like fine china.

Not returning evil for evil. All of you be of one mind. Have this compassion.

You're the energy of the Holy Spirit in the community as well as in the individuals. And even if you do suffer, make sure that you were looking to heaven when you did what you did. And in the unlikely event that you actually take flak for that, just remember that kind of suffering is a whole lot better than the other kind.

And then he says, for Christ also suffered. So it's difficult. Anytime you get an illustration and it goes to the Lord Jesus, it's because something is hard.

Easy stuff. You don't, you know, praise God from whom all blessing flows. Remember the example of Jesus when he praised God.

We don't we don't need an example when things are going good. We need an example when things are tough. And the Lord Jesus was tested to the maximum.

And so when it's time for humanity to rely on the power of God, Jesus is the example. So he says, for Christ also suffered. And this is pathos in Greek where we get, you know, a sense of feeling, you know, isn't that situation full of pathos? Of course, you also have pathological liar and, you know, pathology.

And so on. But pathos means to experience and often in the intensive sense to suffer, to experience intensely. Christ also suffered once.

And some English translations say for Christ also once suffered. And it sounds like, you know, once upon a time, you know, he suffered. But that really kind of takes the edge off of it.

He suffered once for sins. And we talked last week about why that once is important. The just for

the unjust.

Now, what has just happened when he says just for unjust? What just happened? I am a Jew of the Diaspora. Put yourself in their position. You're out there in Pontus.

Let's all go to Pontus. We're in Pontus. I don't even know where Pontus is.

But let's say we're there somewhere other than Galatia and Cappadocia and Bithynia. We're in Pontus, someplace in Asia Minor, and we're Jews of the Diaspora. Here comes a letter from Peter.

He says, hey, there's a letter from Peter. I'm going to stand up and read it. Come over, you know, Friday night.

I'm going to read it. So he's reading the letter. And Peter says, Christ also suffered after talking about everything we've reviewed once for sins, the just for the unjust.

I'm a Jew in the Diaspora, and I feel like I'm the just and the unjust, unwashed, uncircumcised Philistines of this Greek and Roman culture have been abusing me and making it hard for me to live my life as a as a Christianized, Hellenized Jew. That kind of sounds oxymoronic, doesn't it? Hellenized doesn't mean what it sounds like. It means Greekified.

I'm a Christianized, Hellenized Jew. And I'm suffering out there because I'm not in the land. I'm not with my clan and my tribal roots and so on.

I'm way out here in the weeds. And I feel like that's the unjust out there giving me a hard time, making it hard for me to raise my children. And now, Peter, in a very clever turn of phrase says, you remember that Jesus also suffered.

They say, oh, another Jesus illustration like we had a minute ago. The just for the unjust. Who's the unjust in that picture? Who put Christ on the cross? And I'm not being anti-Semitic.

I'm just saying who put Christ on the cross, the Jews. As in these Jews, the whole nation, he came unto his own the nation and his own the nation received him not. And they can say, well, I wasn't personally there.

But you see what he's done. He's kind of turned it around because all have sinned and fallen short. We are all guilty.

Christ died for the sins of everyone. And now in in the suffering of Christ, the reason Christ had to come and suffer is I am unjust. And so it kind of takes the wind out of somebody's sails if they're saying, well, you know, here I am trying to live a righteous, holy life before God.

And here's all these unwashed people. And I'm suffering. And Peter says, well, you know, when Christ came and suffered, he suffered as truly just for truly unjust.

And we are now the unjust. So if you remember, you know, do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Christ came and suffered on our behalf.

He didn't obliterate us. He didn't judge us. He didn't give us our just desserts as unjust people.

He died for us. And so right away, as soon as he says the just for the unjust, now that example really starts to stand up and walk on you, walk on you, because, well, I may feel like the unjust are giving me a hard time. But what did Jesus do? He died for the unjust.

So can I put up with a little bit of unjustitude for his sake? I think I probably can. Yes, I did make that up. The just for the unjust in order that he might bring us to God, in order that he might bring us to God.

Why would a Jew of the Diaspora, why would a Christian in the 21st century put up with unjust treatment? Because by shining forth hope, by showing that heavenly mind, you can be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. You suffer because this creates opportunity. It creates potential.

When Jesus suffered for the unjust, he did it to bring them to God. So why should you suffer for the unjust or at the hands of the unjust? To bring them to God, follow in his steps. We're back to 221 through 24.

He's left us an example that we should follow in his steps. And our suffering is nothing compared to his. And so when we're in the instant of reaction, when we're in the instance of, you know, I really like that eye for an eye thing.

I like that lex talionis, somebody has given me dirt, I'm going to shovel it right back. But if I step back, if I de-invest a little bit, look what the Lord Jesus Christ did for me to bring me to God. Maybe if I look to him instead of looking at this situation and looking at this person, looking at the unjustness of it all, I can be an instrument to bring this person or someone else to God.

This is what real evangelism is. It is living our lives in the light of the word of God after the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. It isn't how many tracts can I distribute? How many presentations can I make? How many events can I drag the lost to and show them a movie and then do the bait and switch? It is doing what we're supposed to do as good and faithful children of God so that God can use us, especially when we are willing to put up with what ordinary people will not, to bring other people to God.

This is evangelism. And it's great because we should be doing this anyway. It's like you get bonus points.

It's like you get, I don't know if anybody knows what green stamps are anymore or not, but you get extra. You just do what you're supposed to do. It's like frequent flyer miles.

You know, you fly enough. You had to fly anyway. But they say, hey, guess what? You've got enough points for a trip to California or someplace even better.

And you get it because you did what you had to do, but you did it right and you get bonus. And here's a great opportunity. We should be doing this anyway.

We should be looking at the Lord's example, but God is going to use it to bring people to God, bring people to himself just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. Now we get into the interesting part, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the spirit. And without belaboring this too much, the put to death in the flesh is exactly what it sounds like.

He was slain. It is the cross. It is the death of the cross.

Put to death in the flesh, made alive in the spirit. And you notice your new King James has a capital S there. And that's it ought to be.

It ought to not be a capital S, but it ought to also not be a small s. In the truest sense, this is small s made alive in his human spirit. However, when your human spirit is made alive, so is your body. I will say this again.

No disembodied spirits. The word that is used here, and I'll give you the word in Greek and all that after the break. But I will tell you now, when you are made alive.

You have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. You still have a body, right? When what's the great thing about the resurrection? If Jesus never died, if he was floating around for the three days between the, you know, Wednesday night and Sunday morning, if he was traveling around, you know, finding groups of long lost demons and preaching to them and, you know, ascending and descending. And if he was doing all that, what's the big deal about the resurrection? He's just kind of, well, you know, here's a, let me just kind of slide into the body.

If he never died, the Lord Jesus Christ was dead. From the time he dismissed his spirit on the cross until he arose early Sunday morning, he was dead. Didn't go anywhere, didn't visit anybody.

He was dead. I'm sorry, but that's what it says. And I can prove it.

I'll show you after the break what this verb is. He was made dead in the flesh. He is made alive in the spirit.

And this, of course, we know he was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit. And we know that his you can't be a human unless you have a human spirit. You can't be alive unless your spirit is alive.

But this is really kind of in the sphere of the spirit. The Lord Jesus work on this earth was

complete at the cross, which is why he said it is finished. And he was crucified in the flesh.

He bore our sins in his. Body. On the tree, when that work was complete, Father, in thy hands, I commit my spirit.

He dismissed his spirit and he was no longer alive. He was placed in the grave. Now, let's just try to imagine that he traveled around and preached to groups of imprisoned spirits.

What did Jesus say would happen between the cross and the resurrection? Because he did say, what did he say? No sign will be given this generation, but what? The sign of Jonah. What is the sign of Jonah? As Jonah was in the belly of the fish, how long? Three days and three nights, even so the son of man will be where? In the heart of the earth, three days and three nights. Not in heaven, not in hell, not in Hades, not in spirit prison, in the heart of the earth.

That's what Jesus said. The son of man will be in the heart of the earth. That is burial.

What does the scripture say? The gospel is. Christ died according to the scriptures. And he was raised the third day.

What did I leave out? And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day. It doesn't say, and he was buried long enough to fool the people that rolled the stone into place. And then he got up and took off and went places and did things.

Heart of the earth. That's the tomb. That's the grave.

That's where he's, that's where his dead self was for three days. And we have a huge 2000 year weight of tradition that separates the spirit from the body that says they float around disembodied that says that the dead in Christ are floating around in the presence of God. There is not one scrap of scripture to support it.

And those that are, that are bent around to try to support it. Don't, I will tell you now they don't. Uh, who is he that ascended? But he, that first descended into the lower parts of the earth, wrongly translated, it means who is he that ascended acts chapter one, but he, that first descended from heaven to earth, babe in the manger, the lower parts are the earth.

There is no lower parts under the earth. The lower parts are the earth compared to heaven. Who is he that ascended? But he, that first descended, you can't ascend unless you first descend to the earth.

He came to this earth, born as a babe, lived here 33 years ascended. That's all that scripture says. Uh, when he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men, what is captivity? It is the grave.

That's death. He conquered death. Oh, death, where's your sting? Oh, death, where's your victory or grave? Either way you put that.

So, uh, we'll pause here and take our break, but when we come back, um, we're going to pick up at the end of verse 18, uh, put to death in the flesh, but made alive in by or with the spirit by whom also, this is not by whom it is in which in Hoyt, in which, so that's what we'll pick up when we come back from the break.