

**For Pete's Sake**  
A Study of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter  
1 Peter 1:1-9  
July 2, 2017

Happy Fourth of July weekend to everyone. Today we're kicking off a brand-new series of teachings that are focused on walking us through two specific books of the Bible written by a guy named Cephas or is it Simon or is it Peter. Well, that's part of the reason we're going to look at these two books, because at some point each year we like to do a more in-depth study of one area of the Bible so that we can increase our overall knowledge of the Bible as a whole. So, we decided to take a close look at these two small but profound books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. Starting today and going through the rest of July and all of August we're going to pull these two books apart and see what's going on here as this guy named Peter writes to a group of new believers

It's exciting to start this on the weekend when we, as a nation, recognize our start. Fourth of July marks the beginning of a whole new world and a new way of life for people who were living over 230 years ago. This idea of independence, bought at a very high price is one that comes through in the Bible and one that Peter was well aware of. The price for us as a nation was war against Great Briton and thousands of lives over a nine-year span of time from 1775 until 1783. The cost that Peter is more than conscious of in his life and the life of everyone who trusts in Jesus is that One life, Jesus, paid the price for all our lives so that we could be free for an eternity with God in heaven. So, let's dive into these two letters and not only learn a bit about Peter and the people he's talking to but, more about Jesus Christ our Lord. Ready? Okay, here we go...verse one.

*Verse 1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*

Who is this guy name Simon Peter?

Background

- Peter is a young Jewish man from the Galilean region of ancient Palestine. We know he's Jewish because: Simon and his father Jonah are both Jewish names. They also live in a predominantly Jewish area so, it is assumed he is Jewish. But, the confirmation actually comes later in Acts when a pretty serious argument erupts between Peter and a guy named Paul. Paul accuses Peter of being "conveniently Jewish" when needed and then not obeying the Jewish rules when he's with non-Jews. Paul is nailing him on what he sees as an inconsistency, right. Either you're Jewish or you're Christian but, you don't flip flop back and forth when it suits you and that's what Peter was doing and Paul calls him out on it.
- We also know that he's a fisherman. Both Matthew (4:18-20) and Luke (5:1-11) tell us that when Jesus finds Peter he is fishing with his father and brother Andrew. (Matt 4:18-20 w/ his brother Andrew)
- Jesus calls Peter to follow him as a young disciple would have followed a rabbi back 2000 years ago. Peter most likely went to a rabbinical school when he was young but, when every young boy reaches a certain age they are faced two a choice, find a rabbi and continue the schooling or go to work. Luke 5:1-11 includes the catch of fish that happens when Jesus calls Peter to follow him. And John 1:40-42 hints that he may have been a follower of John the Baptist before becoming a follower of Jesus.

Name(s)

- So, what's the whole name thing about. This one man is referred to by three different names. Names are important in the days when Jesus walked the earth because they carried with them a meaning. Simon literally means "listening" and refers to "reed-like" or "grass-like" suggesting that he was easily blown by any wind that came along. He was willing to listen to any wind and therefore could be blown any direction. That's not a

good thing according to the wisdom of the Bible. So, when he says that he believes in Jesus as the Lord and savior he is stating that he will no longer be blown around but, will plant himself in this faith and belief like a rock is planted where it sits. So, what about the three names for this guy. He starts out as Simon but, Mt calls him Peter, Mk calls him Simon – “to whom he (Jesus) gave the name Peter”, Mk 3:16 points out that he is Simon – whom Jesus names Peter, Luke calls him Simon in 5:1-11 and in 6:14 he adds – “whom he (Jesus) named Peter”, Jn calls him Simon and renames him “Cephas which means Peter” (in Aramaic) upon Jesus calling him to follow.

- So, there Simon which means a blown around grass and which sometimes gets attached to the front of Peter – Simon Peter. There’s just Peter (Gk. = Petros) and there’s Cephas (Aramaic = Kefas) means rock. So, his given name by his family is Simon but, Jesus calls him Peter which was not a personal name and is much like calling someone The Rock today. (Mt 16:18, Mk 3:16)

#### Personality type

- If you asked me to zone in on Peter a bit and identify this guy, the first thing I would say is that I think he ADHD before there was such a phrase. He seems to be easily distracted an “squirrel” doesn’t seem to be able to settle on one “squirrel” idea or thought at a time. He swings from one extreme to another consistently and has this crazy ability to be, well, crazy.
- If I could put him somewhere on the Myers/Briggs personality type it would be ENFP and I’m pretty sure he’s a I with a high D on the DISC inventory. That may not mean too much but basically it suggests that he is guided by his emotions over logic, passions over thoughts, and feeling over rationale.
- He’s an erratic mess at times – having enough faith to jump out of the boat and then, not enough faith to stay afloat.
- He’s impetuous enough to tell Jesus that he cannot wash his feet at the last supper and when Jesus says if I don’t you will not have anything to do with me – he says – then wash all of me.
- He seems to have this ability to run in where angels fear to tread, acting first and thinking later. John (18:10) tells us that it’s “Simon Peter” who pulls out a sword and cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night when Jesus is arrested.
- And he has the constant practice of putting his foot in mouth by speaking before he thinks like telling Jesus that he is willing to die with him when Jesus knows full well that he will deny he even knows Jesus three time after Jesus is arrested.

If there is anyone in scripture who comes shining through as incredibly human and maybe a lot like us it’s Peter. There are a lot of us who can relate to Peter and how he acts and what he says. And the wonderful thing...Jesus uses this guy to kick start the movement that will, in effect, change the world forever. Peter is a part of that group of disciples who leave Jerusalem and travel throughout the known world; teaching, starting churches, evangelizing thousands, and writing messages to people about how to live as a believer. So, how does First and Second Peter get written. Let’s take a look at the opening statement Peter himself makes to see if we can get to the heart of why this book is written, to whom it is written, and what was going on that cause Peter to sit down and write.

*Verse 1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God’s chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*

By his own words he states that he is an apostle. The terms refers to one of the original 12 whom Jesus calls from what they were doing and to follow him. As an apostle, he holds a certain amount of authority. People listen to those original 12 (minus Judas) and their words are like gold to the early

church. So much so that being an apostle is one of the criteria the early church looks at when they are looking at all the writings that will become what we know as the Bible.

This first verse says that he is speaking to a large audience. The geographical area he covers is huge. Look at the area on a map. We've highlighted the towns he mentions and you can see for yourself that this is a pretty big area he's touching with this letter which means he's talking to a huge group of believers and a really wide range of cultures.

And he's writing to them because he believes they are foreigners living in a foreign land and they need some guidance on how to live. He is not suggesting that they are not in their home country or home town. He is stating what all believers then and now learn when it comes to following Jesus, that this world is not our home, we're just passing through. Heaven is our home and we are only here for a while. One day we will all be home.

He goes on in verses 2-9 he gives a powerful word of encouragement to those who are going to read this letter. This is a region of the world that is under strict Roman rule and the Christians in the time when this letter is thought to be written are suffering under an enormous amount of persecution because of what they believe. Rome has burned and the Christians were being blamed for the fire. This was a time of horrific suffering for those who believed in Jesus. Followers were killed in painful ways as sport for the Roman government and its officials. It was, in effect, open season on Christians. So, look at what Peter has to say to them.

**Passage:** <sup>2</sup> *God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.* <sup>3</sup> *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,* <sup>4</sup> *and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.* <sup>5</sup> *And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.* <sup>6</sup> *So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.* <sup>7</sup> *These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.* <sup>8</sup> *You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.* <sup>9</sup> *The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

Let's look at a just a few key words that show up in this passage and what they mean for them and for us. The first word that Peter uses to encourage these people is that they are **Chosen** by the work of the Holy Spirit. The thought process of being chosen by God had been reserved for the Jews but, Peter lays the "chosen" card of the table to tell these people that they are under God's care and God's watchful eye. Nothing that happens to them is missed by God. He's telling them to hold their heads up because God has chosen them! From that moment on to today, Christians would be included in as God's chosen.

### **You are one of God's chosen.**

*God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.* 1 Peter 1:2 NLT

The next word Peter tells these chosen people is that no matter what happens to them here on earth, there is a perfect place for them. He's talking about heaven and the eternal life that is waiting for those who believe. Whatever it is they're going through, whatever happens to them, whatever the government says or does – can never take from them their status in God's eyes. They are kept that way because of

what God has done for them through Jesus Christ and it can never be lost...it's theirs and like then, it's ours forever.

**No matter what happens here, believers have a perfect place waiting for us.**

*...and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.* 1 Peter 1:4 NLT

The next few verses are all about Peter's encouragement to this group of early believers who might be having serious doubts and questions about their faith. They are seeing family members, friends and neighbors killed in terrible ways. It had to go through their minds that maybe this Jesus is not the way. If he is the way he seems to be the way to death. Peter is telling them to stay strong, to hold on. That no matter what happens, God is with you and when you stay strong, you will see a huge reward. Because of the faith of these first-generation believers the church put down deep roots. As hard as the attempt was to shut it down, it only grew more. Peter is offering:

**Encouragement through trials**

*...So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.*

1 Peter 1:8 NLT

So, what are you going through, what troubles might be yours right now? What hardships are around you right now? Peter and these early believers understand what you're going through and the word for you is one of **encouragement too**. No matter what's happening right now, no matter what you're going through God sees you, chose you, loves you, sent his Son to live and die and rise again for you. Why, because he loves you and wants you to be a part of his family on this side of heaven and on the other side forever. I can't see the future, I don't know if everything is going to turn out roses. What I know is this, I know the One who does hold my future and He has great things in store for me. Peter calls this my reward.

**There is a reward**

*You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. <sup>9</sup> The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

This morning we celebrate communion. This is Jesus' ways of saying to all of us, you don't see me but, I'm here. You can't hold onto me but, I'm with you. In these elements of bread and juice are the reminders – physical and spiritual – of Jesus with us. I'm never going to leave you. See...I'm right here with you, no matter what.