



This Week in the Word

Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps 119:89.



Live Holy Lives **Study Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13-25** **Lesson 11, November 16, 2019**

Key Verse

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. 1 Peter 1:14, 15

INTRODUCTION

Our Study deals with some of the blessings that these saints of God to whom Peter writes have received from God in the present and which they will receive in the future.

This Study therefore focuses on preparing your mind for action, strenuous activity, rolling up your sleeves, mentally prepared for the future coming of Jesus Christ and for the moral responsibility you have in the present times.

The Apostle is now dealing with three great doctrines which summarized the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He refers to the doctrine which teaches that the Lord Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice to God, perfectly satisfying the Father's holy requirements and claims that God had against man. We therefore have been told much about this doctrine of Propitiation.

The facts of the election of the brethren in the dispersion because of the foreknowledge of God the Father, His careful planning and determination about the salvation of lost men, the resulting sanctification of the Spirit, and the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ are in the background of this Study which speaks of the blessings of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mercies and the inheritance that they have given us.

Now before he moves on to discuss the doctrine of reconciliation for man needs reconciliation with the Lord God, given the many things that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, the Apostle focuses on the doctrine of Redemption so that the brethren would understand exactly what has been done for them.

This of course will undergird the discussion about the kind of lives that men should therefore live as they live before God. We are now told by this doctrine that there are other crucial elements that were involved in our salvation. To help us understand what Peter's words would have meant to the brethren one writer acquaints us with the meaning of the words used in those times:

“ The verb translated “redeemed” (“ ransomed”) (lytroo) and it's cognate noun lytron were used in Greco-Roman culture to refer to the manumission of a slave. The slave would receive his or her freedom after depositing money into the temple of a god or goddess, money which would then be paid via the temple's treasury (minus a commission) to the slave's owner with the thought that the god or goddess was buying the slave. The former slave would then be free in the eyes of his former owner and society but would be considered a slave of the god or goddess. The money paid for the redemption was referred to as the time (price), and the slave was considered to have been redeemed by the deity. Peter's thoughts resonate with this custom for he describes his Christian readers as having been redeemed (elythrothete), using the passive voice that implies God as the subject. They are free but nevertheless slaves of God (2:16), but not with a ‘time’ of silver and gold but, in what seems to be a play on words, with the timio (precious, valuable) blood of Jesus Christ (1:19)”.

The word translated redeemed therefore means that a slave was set free by the payment of a ransom price at the slave market so that that slave would be free from the slave market. If one wanted to make a payment to buy a slave in the Roman marketplace a specific word was used for that transaction. Paul uses that word in Galatians 3:13. But if a slave wanted to be set free or to set himself free the necessary money would have to be found to buy his freedom and that is the word for redemption used here.

In the background therefore we have the idea of what is involved in redemption as God spoke to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-11.

Note carefully what He says to Israel for these words form the basis of what the Apostle Peter states to the brethren scattered all over Asia Minor. He speaks to the Gentiles and Jews in his day reminding them of the words God speak to Israel and which applies to those saved from the bondage of sin by Jesus Christ:

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God: the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the people on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all people.

But because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Therefore no one that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His Commandments;

And He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him: He will repay him to his face.

Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

Note the elements involved. Gentile should note that these ideas involved in redemption apply to them who are grafted into the original olive tree as stated by the Apostle Paul.

There is among many elements, the idea of God's choice, God's love, how God regards His people as a treasure, His requirements of obedience, and the requirement of holiness.

In addition, the Apostle Peter uses thoughts from Psalm 33 and 34, and Isaiah 52:3 as he teaches about God's redemption from the bondage of sin that characterized their former way of life.

That's the doctrine of redemption of which Peter speaks. So as one writer says: "God through Jesus Christ's finished work, the payment of the ransom price of the shedding of the precious blood, has redeemed our spirits already, has set us free and at the second coming of Jesus Christ our bodies too shall be redeemed so that we will have a body which will be a body that is able to fully manifest the new life that we have now through Jesus Christ, and we will no longer be longing for release from the body for we shall have a body, a resurrection body in which the life of the spirit may be fully manifested".

Our Text by the Apostle Peter is thought to have been written from Rome between A.D. 64 and 67. The Epistle was written in the face of empire-wide persecution of Christians. Peter's stated purpose for writing, was to encourage his readers to stand firm (5:12), though they were facing persecution for their faith.

Peter is a perplexing figure in the Gospel accounts. He tended to blurt out whatever was on his mind at the time, sometimes seeming to contradict himself in the process (Matthew 16:22; 26:35; Mark 9:5; John 18:25–27). He was impulsive and recklessly bold, often acting before thinking (Matthew 14:22–33; John 18:10). In short, Peter was an Apostle with whom we have much in common. A dramatic change came over Peter after Jesus' resurrection. He grew spiritually, constantly preaching, teaching, and healing in Jesus' name (Acts 2:14–39; 3:1–8; 10:34–43).

Peter addressed "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1). These regions encompass a very large swath of land in northeastern Asia Minor, now Turkey. Such a wide expanse of land suggests the Apostle's intended to reach a large number of people. The majority of Peter's audience was likely Gentile believers (1:14; 2:9, 10; 4:3, 4).

A time of terror, of living day to day and being tempted to abandon the faith, form the backdrop for Peter's two letters. This first letter mentions being in "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13); some believe this is a derogatory code term for the city of Rome (Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2). After a devastating fire in Rome in AD 64, Emperor Nero called the fire arson and blamed the Christians in the city. As a result, many of them were put to death. Reliable church tradition maintains that Peter was crucified in Rome in AD 67 or 68.

This first chapter in this Epistle contains profound theological truths. It details the future hope that Christians have in God, God's unshakeable love for us, the surety and security of His love for those born anew, the promise God has given us in Christ, and the encouragement and direction on how to view what is going on in our life. Peter gives us the big picture.

He tells those who were suffering and those soon to suffer that:

- They are born again to a living hope, and he rehearses the hope for the future and the plan that God has reserved in heaven for them. He praises God and worships Him because of who God is, what He has done and what He is doing.

- The living hope comes because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus was resurrected and glorified; raised as the first fruits from the dead, so that many will follow Him in resurrection life. Christians are told that their bodies will be given new life, raised from the dead, and that they will have an eternal existence in this new and glorified body, living in fellowship with the risen Christ.

- He taught that what God has done for us stems from His mercy. God gives us a 'new birth' and alters the inner core of our being through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are radically reoriented, taken out of the bondage of sin and into a new life and a new relationship to God Himself.

- Not only that, but we are born to a glorious inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, that is never ending, incorruptible, never downgraded or diminished in scope or grandeur.

- Our inheritance awaits us, currently kept for us in heaven and reserved by God. The inheritance began when we received the new birth.

Everything that happens to believers is fitted into God's plan and the events of life will prepare them for His eternal kingdom, for God is committed to conforming His people to the image of Christ. Persecution then tests the genuineness of their faith, and at the end their faith will lead to glory and honor at Christ second coming.

Peter makes it clear that our great salvation was prophesied by the Old Testament writers who spoke of the sufferings of Messiah, His resurrection and glorification to the right hand of the Father. Messiah was going to suffer, be humiliated and had to die. But then He would be Ruler, Conqueror, and become the triumphant Messiah. Christians as followers of Christ will to some degree have to experience the same consequence as the pioneer of their faith; He led the way!

There was a purpose for the suffering of Jesus and it was for the benefit of His people. His followers would also suffer according to the divine purpose. It was a part of the calling of His followers. They would have to enter the sufferings of Jesus. They would also be triumphant with Him,
(Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-23).

In light of the surpassing value of their salvation, the security and surety of their inheritance, their election by God Almighty and the Trinitarian work in their redemption, Peter now gives the guidelines and commands to these pilgrims of the dispersion to live in a manner consistent with who they were and who their God is.

Peter's words are enjoined on all Christians; let us read carefully, consider our great salvation, its cost and heed the call
"Be ye holy; for I am holy".

THE TEXT

Verse 13. ...Wherefore... is always part of a reasoned argument which indicates that now will follow a logical conclusion to what has gone before.

Peter states that because of the certainty of the salvation of the saints, because the Christian's inheritance is sure, the conclusions recorded in our Text, verses thirteen through twenty-five are logically necessary.

It is necessary at this stage to point out that there is a series of verbs in the verses that are imperatives or commands. The first one is found in verse thirteen.

"Fix your hope..."

The second is found in verse fifteen;

"Be holy...."

The third is found in verses seventeen through twenty-one;

"Conduct yourselves with fear.....".

The fourth is found in verses twenty-two through twenty-five;

"Fervently Love one another from the heart....."

One writer comments on these four things which we look at in this lesson as follows:

"These four things, then, are the product of our salvation:

A hope based on the coming of Jesus Christ. He is coming again, and that is our hope.

Secondly, holiness, or conformity to the character of God.

Third, fear of God-a proper sense of accountability.

And finally, love. These are the things which make earthly life heaven."

Peter prepared his readers giving them general instructions first and then later more specific instructions, so that they could deal with problems in specific circumstances.

...gird up the loins ... loins refer to a man gathering up his long, robe-like garment and tucking it tightly into his belt. This allows his legs to be unhindered for working or fighting.

So first, having stated in verse twelve the amazingly wonderful thing God had done for them, (that even the angels in heaven desired to “look into” the unfolding of God’s eternal plan), Peter called on his readers to mentally put themselves in a position, so that they would be free to run the race.

The imagery suggests that one’s mind must be prepared to pay close, focused attention. They were to be in a state of readiness to move quickly. In modern language they should roll up their sleeves. There should be nothing morally holding them back. This calls to mind the instructions given to Israel by Moses to eat the first Passover with their loins girded, their sandals on; to eat the feast with their staff in hand, waiting for the instruction to move out of Egypt.

...be sober... with minds “girded” they would be able to understand what God wanted them to do. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2).

A sober mind is alert, engaged in one’s current situation with seriousness. The Greek word translated “sober” does not necessarily relate to alcohol consumption such as we use that word today. Rather, it is concerned with self-control in a broader sense; living with their full understanding.

... hope to the end for the grace ... Then they could begin to focus on or hope wholly on the grace that would be theirs at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Their heart should not be divided. They were to fix their hope completely on the grace, or the salvation brought at the revelation of Christ.

One writer comments on the meaning of this word hope and states:

“That is what gives peace and confidence and quietness in the face of much pressure.

“Fix your hope on the grace that is coming at the revelation of Jesus Christ”.

Our English word “hope” implies contingency. The Greek word did not, and might better be translated “have a confident expectancy”. It is faith projected out into the future. It suggests an attitude of positive expectation and optimism which are to prevail in our lives”.

This grace operated in the past when they first gave their lives to Christ, but it also operates in the present, keeping them safe and secure, and in the future, when God would begin to show the riches of His grace.

... the revelation of Jesus Christ... Peter is speaking about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and he commands them to fix their hope on that event. Believers’ focus should be on the return of Jesus. This gives hope because of the promise of grace associated with that event. Grace here refers to the good news of Christ’s return—good news for believers, bad news for their persecutors. Hope gives strength to endure hard times, because present troubles pale in comparison to future glory (Romans 8:18–39). With his faith that Jesus can return at any moment, Peter reminds us of Jesus’ own warning to be ready for His return (Mark 13:32–37).

Note the importance of the Word of God. It is not experience, or our vision, that is the foundation of the Christian life, but the foundation is only the Word of God, nothing else. Peter would have the saints call to mind the word of God, so that they could be kept stable and steadfast. What was going to happen at Messiah's coming had long been declared.

Verse 14. ... As obedient children ... Focused minds must produce focused lives. Peter urges his readers to demonstrate their readiness for Jesus' return by the way they live. We must not be distracted by desires to return to sinful behaviors but instead be like obedient children. They were adopted into God's family, and regenerated, and so they should prove themselves to be true children of God by their obedience to His word.

... according to the former lusts in your ignorance: This seems to be particularly directed to Gentile believers, who formerly engaged in drunkenness, sexual immorality, and idolatry having considered such things normal (1 Peter 4:3). To return to these former lusts would be to revert to willful ignorance, oblivious to the possible return of Jesus at any time. Such reversion is to ignore the consequences of sin (Ephesians 4:18). This reminds us of Jesus' illustration of the servants who were unprepared when the master returned home (Matthew 24:45–51).

Obviously, the children of God, despite the protestations of some were once very bad. One writer comments: "The best of God's children have had their time of lust and ignorance; the time has been when the whole scheme of their lives, their way and fashion, was to accommodate and gratify their unlawful desires and vicious appetites, being grossly ignorant of God and themselves, of Christ and the Gospel. Persons when converted, differ significantly from what they were formerly. They are people of another fashion from what they were before; their inward frame, behavior, speech, and conversation, are much altered from what they were in times past. The lusts and extravagances of sinners are both the fruits and the signs of their ignorance."

Verses 15. ... be ye holy ... Peter now issues his second command, "Be holy...". to be holy concerns two different but related concepts. First, holiness implies being separate or different. One foundational difference between God and false gods (idols) is that God made people in His image (Genesis 1:27) and not the other way around (Exodus 20:4–6; Psalm 97:7). Like their God, the nation of Israel was to be unique: a different type of people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exodus 19:6).

Second, holiness demands moral purity. God's actions are pure and righteous (Ezra 9:15; Psalm 7:11), so His people's actions should also be pure and righteous. Israel was not to be like the other nations, which lived wickedly (2 Samuel 7:23; contrast Ezra 9:2). To approach a holy God a person must have clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3, 4). This twofold cleanliness is expressed in right attitudes and actions.

It cannot be stressed too much that holiness comes from or is derived from a relationship to God. So as one writer says:

“To be holy is to be called out from the sinful world into a deep and abiding relationship with God so that the person becomes more God-like-- more upright-- less like the sinful world at large”.

Verse 16. ... Be ye holy... Peter’s instructions are not new revelations for the church but those of the written precepts for the people of God. These instructions were first found in the Law of Moses. When the Lord called Israel out of Egypt and guided them to be His chosen nation, He demanded one central thing: holiness (Exodus 19:6; 22:31; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; etc.). They were not to be like other nations with their ruthless kings, immoral practices, and injustice toward the poor. They were to be holy because God is holy (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7).

In times of suffering such as the church experienced as Peter wrote, fulfillment of personal longings for material things, health, happiness, and even security seemed elusive. But suffering or persecution cannot be allowed to diminish holiness and dedication to God and His ways. If persecution causes Peter’s audience to turn away from holiness, they will no longer be lights pointing to God (Matt. 5:14–16). When we choose holiness, we are choosing to be faithful.

Christians have been called out of a state of sin and into the covenant and so they are obliged and enabled to be holy. Notice the negatives; Christians are not to be children of ignorance. They are not to indulge in drunkenness, sensuality, or idolatry. They are not to live as they did in times past. They are not to be ignorant of the mind of God, but to know what God requires of them. They must not be ignorant of the Ten Commandments or the sundry other laws and instructions from God issued. They are to be obedient. On the positive side, they are to be holy, set apart, wholesome, sound, conformed to God's character, free from any form of evil.

Verse 17. ...if ye call on the Father... then we should reflect the family characteristic.

Jesus frequently referred to God as “my Father” (Matthew 18:10; Luke 10:22; John 5:17) and encouraged His followers to see God as Father as well (Matthew 6:9; John 20:17). This relationship implies that the children of the Father will relate to Him in trust, obedience, and love.

The idea of God as Father is found in the Old Testament in 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 63: 16; Jeremiah 3: 19; 31:9; Malachi 1:6; 2:10.

... without respect of persons judgeth ... Fathers must sometimes act as judges of their children’s behavior and discipline them accordingly; so it is with God. Many people claim that one of their siblings is the parental favorite and therefore receives special treatment. Not so with God the Father. As Peter himself stressed years earlier, “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34); no one gets preferential judgment. He expects the same holy thoughts, attitudes, and actions from all His obedient children.

God will call into account not only those who have never known Him, but also those who claim to know Him (1 Pet. 4:5,17-18; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Those to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48)!

Those that called on the Father, who are holy, must understand that God's holiness rules out impartiality. God is merciful, loving, gracious, and compassionate but He is also an impartial Judge. He wants righteousness, everywhere. He has set up certain laws, which must be obeyed. We cannot bribe Him, trick Him, fool Him, or manipulate Him.

... Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear... the sobering fact of God being not only a Judge but an impartial Judge leads to the third command which is to "be fearful.."

As children, we were able to hide some disobedience from our parents. That's not so with God, for He knows all. Therefore, we should have a sense of reverent fear that leads us to obedience

(Leviticus 19:37; 25:17, 36, 43; Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:2; Isaiah 8:13; etc.).

Since Peter's message of salvation is a message of grace, that we are saved by faith (1 Peter 1:5; 5:10), then where does fear of God fit in? 1 John 4:18 say "perfect love casteth out fear". Peter's idea here is that since the tests his audience faced can lead them to unfaithfulness, a proper fear for God is necessary to yield faithfulness instead (Psalm 86:15; 2 Chron. 19:9; Heb. 11:7).

Note that when we refer to God as Father we are linking our thoughts to God's creative powers and authority so that while the word Father suggests familiarity we know that it also indicates that we should have a sense of awe because of God's power and authority when we called into God's presence.

Christians must have an honest respect for God. God does not care how we look, about our color; whether we are educated or uneducated, old or young, a man or woman, short or tall. All these are superficial things which do not reveal our true personalities. He judges us by our actions.

There is an appropriate respect due a holy God (2 Cor. 5:21). That respect is that His children live godly lives, knowing that they will give an account to God.

Fearing God means reverence and faith and that leads to obedience, serving the Lord only as Deuteronomy 6:13 states. Fear of the Lord is "the beginning of knowledge" and "the beginning of wisdom" which makes a person make good decisions and avoid bad consequences (Proverbs 9:10). This believers will do because they are separated from the world and are considered To be living as foreigners or sojourners, which means that they are just passing through a place and would enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship.

So we remember the old Gospel song

"This world is not my home, I'm just a- passing through

My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,

And I can't feel at home in this world anymore".

Verse 18 - 19...the precious blood of Christ... The second incentive for godly fear is the nature of the price paid for our salvation. Saints are redeemed, bought by a ransom. The ransom price should always be considered and this should be a powerful inducement to holiness and living in the fear of God.

Peter's tack now is to establish the value of his readers' redemption by stressing its cost. Had their redemption been purchased with corruptible things, as silver or gold, then its staying power would have been the same. It would have no eternal value. Remember the gold and silver might not deteriorate but they certainly can be lost and have therefore no value. Do not therefore trust in them.

In making this point, Peter is likely addressing Christians from a Gentile background since the phrase vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers would not refer to Judaism. That way of life was established by God. By contrast, Ephesians 4:17–19 speak to the utter worthlessness of paganism. (The word conversation refers to an entire manner of life, not just talk.)

The subphrase by tradition from your fathers can remind us that many sinful and destructive behaviors are carried across generations. People too often find themselves in toxic lifestyles that parallel the life of a parent. So look carefully at your heritage and assess what was good and what was not so good. Many people have great difficulty in doing this, but now Peter tells us we must let go of some of the habits, values, and beliefs that we have inherited. Remember that your genes are not your masters and do not determine what your life will be.

But Jesus can rescue us from this cycle as He opens the path to new life available only in Him (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; etc.). This new life is possible because Jesus was without sin, likened to a lamb without defect (Exodus 12:3–5; Hebrews 9:14). The Torah taught the Israelites that the lambs used to for sacrificial purposes were to be perfect-- free from imperfections, blemishes, diseases, or injuries. The sacrificial language was applied to Jesus and He Himself told us in Mark 10:45 "The Son of man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many".

Remembering this puts Christian ethics in perspective. If Jesus, the one without blame or sin, died willingly to offer salvation to all people, should we not strive for blamelessness ourselves?

(Philippians 2:14, 15)? This striving is the correct response to the holiness and love of Jesus, not an attempt to earn our salvation.

Verse 20. ... was foreordained ... (1 Pet. 1:2), Christ's death was not an afterthought (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Mark 10:45; Acts 2:23; 13:29). Jesus came to die!

... before the foundation of the world... speaks of the pre-creation activity of God for mankind's redemption (Matt. 25:34; John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8). This

also speaks to the pre-existence of Jesus (John 1:1-2, 8:57-58; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-7; Col. 1:17; Rev. 13:8).

... but was manifest ... God has caused Jesus to be clearly revealed, (Heb. 9:26; 1 John 1:2; 3:5,8). Redemption was manifested or put plainly, in front of men but they should be mindful that this was determined from before the world was founded. It was now being revealed says Peter, so that men could see the gracious act of God for themselves and believe.

... in these last times... refers to Jesus' incarnation at Bethlehem. He exists as deity from all eternity but was clearly revealed in human form in Bethlehem according to prophecy (Mic. 5:2). The last days began with Jesus' birth as He inaugurated the Kingdom. They will be consummated at the Second Coming.

Verse 21. ... do believe in God... Biblical faith or trust is not primarily something we do, but someone in whom we put our trust. It is God's trustworthiness, not ours, which is the focus. Fallen mankind trusts God's trustworthiness, faiths His faithfulness, believes in His Beloved. The focus is not on the abundance or intensity of human faith, but the object of that faith.

... raised him up from the dead... Those that believe that God redeemed man through Jesus Christ would see that God raised Jesus from the dead and gave Him glory. The resurrection of Jesus Christ substantiated their faith and hope.

This shows God's approval of Jesus' life and death. This is a recurrent theme of Peter (Acts 2:24-28, 5:30; 10:40; 1 Pet. 3:18, and Paul, Acts 13:30; Rom. 4:24, 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:14). This was confirmation of the Father's acceptance of the Son's substitutionary death (1 Cor. 15). Theologically all three persons of the Trinity were active in Christ's resurrection.

1. the Father (Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,33,34; 17:31)
2. the Spirit (Rom. 8:11)
3. the Son (John 2:19-22; 10:17-18)

... and gave Him glory... In this context the Father's acceptance and approval of the Son's words and works are expressed in two great events:

1. Jesus' resurrection from the dead
2. Jesus' ascension to the Father's right hand

Verse 22. ... purified your souls... obedience to the truth issues in a personal purging (James 4:8; 1 John 3:3). This spiritual purging does not earn God's love and acceptance but reflects it instead. This purifying process starts at salvation and continues throughout life.

... obeying the truth ... here refers to receiving the gospel (i.e., truth, John 17:17; 2 Thess. 2:12) and making it a lifestyle. Remember the gospel is (1) a person; (2) truth about that person; and (3) a life like that person.

Truth is the characteristic of both God and His children. Jesus expressed the importance of obedience clearly in Luke 6:46. Obedience is the evidence that we have truly met Him and been changed by Him. Eternal life has observable characteristics.

... through the Spirit unto unfeigned love... It results in a sincere love of the brethren (1 John 4:7-21). Christianity is both (1) an individual faith response to God's offer of salvation through Christ and (2) a corporate experience of service to the body of Christ (1Cor. 12:7).

Such love-motivated acts are the obedience to truth that Peter wants his readers to practice. Alone, this is difficult. Peter promises this is done through the Spirit, indicating that God's Holy Spirit is active in helping us love each other.

Believers express their love for God by loving His other children (Rom.14:1-15:13).

... see that ye love one another... Since they placed their hope and faith in God and were purified and recognized that their salvation was not an afterthought, but a forethought in the mind of God, they were now commanded to love the brethren fervently.

Their lifestyle should be to love one another, though they were under pressure and suffering persecution in their communities. There were probably having struggles with their own spiritual family, some of whom would be faltering in their faith and maybe even turning in others to the authorities.

Verse 23. ... Being born again... They were 'born again' and so should love the brethren, even someone unlovable, since they had received love in an unconditional way. It would be difficult but their hearts were changed since they now had divine love. They were enjoying a new life and status because of the begetting action of the Heavenly Father. To remind yourself of what this means please read John 3 meeting when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus.

... not of corruptible seed... the new life did not come from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible. They were now regenerated, having experienced the 'second birth' and were children of the Most High.

When they experienced the begetting of the Heavenly Father they would have the kind of life that is imperishable. This is eternal life. It only comes from the 'new birth'.

... the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever... Gospel preaching is personified as the means by which the Father has brought forth believers (James 1:18). The apostolic preaching of the truth of the gospel is described as both alive and remaining (Heb. 4:12), which are both aspects of YHWH!

The word of God now lived in them; it being a 'living word' nourished their spiritual life and instructed them to love one another. They believed in the word and it would preserve them. One writer brings up an interesting point as follows:

"Some people try to draw a sharp distinction between the two Greek words most often translated "word", which are the ancient Greek words *rhema* and *logos*. But here Peter

uses both words (logos in Peter 1:23 and rhema in 1 Peter 1:25) to refer to the exact same idea. The two words sometimes have subtle differences, but no significant differences.”

Verses 24-25. ... For all flesh is as grass... Now that he had shown the differences in the ‘born again’ person, Peter now showed what the natural man was really like. He quotes from Isaiah 40, which tells us that man at his best, at his most glorious is nothing but a fading, dying, withering creature. At his best he is just like grass, which in a short time soon dies and withers away. He might have his short time of honor in the sun and behave with pomposity, but he really is very temporary.

... And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. Peter ties the words of the prophet Isaiah to his own ministry. The ancient and eternal Word lives again in the preaching of the gospel, the word of God’s grace and mercy. For those experiencing uncertainty and fear in persecution, the promise that the gospel is eternal invites them to experience peace and hope.

The apostles and prophets before all preached the same thing. The Gospel of the good news of salvation came because man in his natural, unregenerate form, is of little or no value. So he would preach that old message to them as long as he could.

CONCLUSION

The simple truth is that we are aliens and pilgrims on the earth. We should listen to the word of God and obey it. The resurrected Jesus is available to help us cope with all our problems. Christian believers have kind of life that is imperishable and eternal because they lived by the word of God which lives and remains forever.

When we look around us we see buildings and great monuments that are perishable. Many people would die and die and be quickly forgotten along with the work that they spend so much time doing. But it must always be remembered that the word of God “lives and remains forever” and so will we if we have built our lives on the word of God.

When we do work in God's service our service will continue to live through many generations. When our witness results in someone coming to Christ that person’s life and testimony will affect everyone he or she knows and the ripple effects are so large that they cannot be calculated. But God knows the full effects of our Christian witness.

He will reward us and bring us to Him.

We must be a holy people, separate from the world, imitating our holy Father. There must be a constant striving in the power of the Holy Spirit to be morally blameless with a rejection of all hypocrisy. Holy people do not behave as the people of the world. They are not conformed to the world.

Holy people love the poor, the fatherless and widows. They are concerned with the things of God, to witness for God, and to save souls. They consider themselves to be slaves, servants to the people, and are not masters and overlords. They love all in the body of Christ and are willing to forsake all to obey the call of Christ.

Are there holiness gaps in your life, pockets of sinful attitudes and actions you harbor and protect? Are there areas where a holy God is not welcome, where your privacy rights are paramount? Sometimes the holiness gaps are not private at all. Others can see uncontrolled anger, lack of integrity, shameful treatment of a spouse, etc. But no matter how private our hold is on our sinfulness, God is a witness (1 Peter 1:17).

This Lesson Study helps us understand why and how to live in stressful times and maintain our faith. We may not face imminent arrest and death for being Christians, but we have trials all the same. Many things call us to acknowledge them to be “lord” in place of Jesus. Peter’s guidance helps us to focus on what is important, to live without fear, to strive for holiness, and to always remain faithful to our calling as followers of Jesus. His words encourage us to remain confident in Jesus, no matter what problems might threaten. Peter would do the same.