

Peter 1

Read 1 Peter 1:1-5: This book seems to be a continuation of the same mind-set of 2 Timothy. It is about Christian life during the dark ages of man. We need to see ourselves as part of something different than this world. Nobody wants to see the human tragedies all around us. We see the pointless self-destruction between men. It triggers our calling even more clearly. We know that we are not a part of what is happening on earth. It is easier to confirm that we are on God's team. We are going against the current trends. Jesus must have really felt that way; after being in heaven.

Peter is speaking to believers who have had to run for their lives, because of religious persecution. They scattered for their lives away from Jerusalem. When you hear about those who have been persecuted for their faith you also sometimes see that they are living way above their circumstances on an unnatural high.

The darker the evil; the more God wins. The gospel did not spread around the world, until it became illegal. This is another classic case of the work of evil ultimately accomplishing God's will. God knew in advance that this would happen. These extreme hardships helped add the commitment level, obedience and sanctification to these saints. The opposite, would be to compare them to someone who has gone to church their whole life, without really having to sacrifice anything for it. They are *sleepy Christians*.

It is important for us to remember that our eternal life is never in jeopardy. Our home in heaven is kept intact, and unaffected by any problems on earth. This is comforting to a person who has lost a lot of the things; which used to make them happy. Sometimes we can lose the sense of who we are; and what we have in Christ.

Read 1 Peter 1:6-9: Part of my evolving faith is that I have become less engrossed in my challenges and setbacks. Is it genuine to say that setbacks are good; and I like them (in faith)? They invariably become a blessing or route changing device. For me; I am feeling less aggravation; as I see how things pan out. The loss of control used to make me angry and frustrated. I am slowly learning to *keep my powder dry until the smoke clears*. I have fired off shots at my veiled blessings too many times. An apparent curse would come along; and I would say and think all kinds of negative things. It was only to soon see the damage that I did to the *unidentified blessing that came wrapped up in a package of unwanted news*.

We are creatures of habit. The path of least resistance is a way of getting through the day. That stagnation tendency overpowers the right time to make life changes.

We have to get *herded out* of our over-grazed pastures. It is time to move on. Peter informs us that we need trials and hardships to become more-healthy believers. Getting what we want or anticipate is not always good. Trials are compared to precious metals going through fire. The heat boils the impurities to the top; so they can be skimmed off. The result is a more mirror-like finish. God wants us to be like a mirror of himself.

Therefore, since Christ suffered ^[a]for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2)

Discomfort brings about sobriety, and gets us back to brass tacks. We tend to stop sinning when we are suffering. We become more serious-minded. We want relief. We do whatever seems healthy to restore ourselves. The process of hardship causes us to let go of certain things that we thought that we wanted. It also causes us to be more focused in prayer.

The hardships in our world also are able to bring a healing to our land. When we pray that God would heal our land; the answer from God may be hardships. Our false hopes need to be shaken loose. It involves the killing of our idols. We can compare Covid to the 40 years of wandering in the desert. To some it represented a loss of traction towards their goals. To others it was a chance to marvel daily at God pillar of fire at night and cloud by day...as they were supernaturally fed without food or income.

Read 1 Peter 1:10-12: The salvation of the Gentiles (or the church age) was a mystery to the Old Testament Hebrew saints as well as the angels. God had formed a nation out of the seed of Abraham (Israel), which was to communicate God's word to all nations. At that time, all Gentile (non-Hebrew) nations were idolaters. God told Moses to make sure that the children of Israel did not mingle with the Canaanites. The Canaanites were known for their idolatry. The Jews misunderstood that to mean that the Gentiles were *unredeemable garbage*. It came as a shock to Peter and Paul to be the first ones to extend themselves to the once-unclean and taboo Gentiles.

Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about ^[e]the sixth hour. ¹⁰ Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³ And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "Not

so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”¹⁵ And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has ^[i]cleansed you must not call common.” While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you.”²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”²¹ Then Peter went down to the men ^[h]who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?”²² And they said, “Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.”²³ Then he invited them in and lodged them....And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.²⁸ Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”²⁹ Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?” (Acts 10 misc verses).

“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children^[c] of Israel.”¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord ^[d]Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. (Acts 9:15-18)

The Old Testament Jews waited for a coming king who would rule the world with an iron hand; and make Israel the ruling nation. There are many millennial prophecies describing the 1,000 year reign of Jesus in Jerusalem.

Why are the ^[a]nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing?
² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together
 Against the LORD and against His ^[b]Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us tear their fetters
 apart And cast away their cords from us!”⁴ He who ^[c]sits in the heavens laughs,
 The Lord scoffs at them.⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them
 in His fury, saying, ⁶ “But as for Me, I have ^[d]installed My King Upon Zion, My
 holy mountain.”⁷ “I will surely tell of the ^[e]decree of the LORD: He said to Me,
 ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’⁸ ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely
 give the ^[f]nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your
 possession.’⁹ ‘You shall ^[g]break them with a ^[h]rod of iron, You shall shatter them
 like ^[i]earthenware.’”¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning,
 O ^[j]judges of the earth.¹¹ ^[k]Worship the LORD with ^[l]reverence And rejoice
 with trembling.¹² ^[m]Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you

perish in the way, For His wrath may ^[a]soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalm 2)

What they could not figure out were the other (seemingly-contradictory) scriptures about a suffering servant messiah:

For He grew up before Him like a tender ^[a]shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should ^[b]be attracted to Him.³ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of ^[c]sorrows and acquainted with ^[d]grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.⁴ Surely our ^[e]griefs He Himself bore, And our ^[f]sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, ^[g]Smitten of God, and afflicted.⁵ But He was ^[h]pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our ^[i]well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To ^[j]fall on Him. (Isaiah 53)

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? ^[b]Far from my deliverance are the words of my ^[c]groaning.² O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but ^[d]I have no rest.³ Yet You are holy, O You who ^[e]are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.⁴ In You our fathers trusted; They trusted and You delivered them.⁵ To You they cried out and were delivered; In You they trusted and were not ^[f]disappointed.⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people.⁷ All who see me ^[g]sneer at me; They ^[h]separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,⁸ “^[i]Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”⁹ Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts.¹⁰ Upon You I was cast from ^[j]birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb.¹¹ Be not far from me, for ^[k]trouble is near; For there is none to help.¹² Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.¹³ They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion.¹⁴ I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within ^[l]me.¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me ^[m]in the dust of death.¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; ^[n]A band of evildoers has encompassed me; ^[o]They pierced my hands and my feet.¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. (Psalm 22)

Read 1 Peter 1:13-25: We are told to *gird up our loins of our mind*. To gird your loins is an old way of saying: "Put on your belt" and get to it. The Jews used to wear robe-like garments. You could not do any work until you stood up and roll up your robe; and tie off your robe...so that you can move and bend over, etc... This is an old fashioned way of saying that we need stop thinking about it; and stand up....and do it now.

What are we being told to do? *Stop wasting time*. Wake up. Effectively stop foolish and worldly conversation for starters. Everything that comes out of our mouth is potentially going to be quoted. We need to have a healthy fear of staining the Kingdom by our absent-minded and selfish actions. One good example is to look at President Trump. Anything that he says that can be twisted becomes a hurtful weapon. Like the President, we have a committed enemy, looking to make us look like hypocrites.

Most Christians don't want to be on any kind of platform, where their behavior is broadcasted and second-guessed. We have no choice. To shrink back at moments of truth is a public denial. Our eternal purpose and life goes on forever. Today we effect eternity one way or the other. There is no treading water. Do we make every conversation and relationship better or worse?

1 Peter 2

Read 1 Peter 2:1-3: Why do people cheat and push others out of the way? It is because we want something more than their wellbeing. How do we know if we are making progress in godliness? How angry do we get with human nature? How much are we like the world? We do not want to be copasetic and *asleep at our posts* when these end times roll in.

We read about the importance of preaching the word; and being prepared for opposition in these days ahead. It is like knowing that a dark storm cloud is coming towards us.

Peter is telling us to be so focused on Jesus that we are like naïve babies amidst a sinful society. We still know what is going on around us; but we have to be going in an entirely different direction.

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. (Matthew 10:16)

There is no shortage of sin and disappointments within our world. Good and evil are happening at the same time. We are not here to condemn the sinners.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:17)

We are not here to critique others. We have to resist taking the bait; and throwing more wood on the fire. To focus too much on what is happening in the evening news will completely take your mind off of the things of God.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

One thing that I need to keep working on is removing the *junk food* out of my TV entertainment. I will start watching a series; which seems to be non-offensive and somewhat entertaining. The next thing you know is that now there are characters with aberrant lifestyles added to the script; and then the main characters start showing more and more moral compromise. It is almost like some TV shows are designed to bring in a normal audience; and then once you are hooked, it takes you to places that you do not want to go. I find myself frequently leaving these things behind.

Read 1 Peter 2: 4-10: The church is compared to living stones. We collectively form a temple for God to dwell in. Jesus is the foundation stone (which establishes location and direction for the whole structure). We are placed side by side in our exact role to support and live in unison. We obviously have to conform to God's plan for our lives for the church to remain in order.

The world has rejected the idea of coming together to subject itself to Gods plan for their lives. They want to be rid of anything that speaks against their choices. To turn your back on God is to walk in darkness. Jesus is in the middle of the road. You have to go around him. They keep falling down, and tripping over this precious corner stone. People want to eliminate moral boundaries to live out their lusts. Those who do so become confused and blinded to their destiny.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."^[E] (1 Corinthians 1:18-19)

Conforming to the Holy Spirit is the opposite of the desires of the flesh.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:16-18)

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[c] you want. (Galatians 5:16-17)

As society gains darkness we will find ourselves separating ourselves more and more.

1 Peter 2:11-25: We are billboards for Christianity. People sense that we are not like them, even before they know we are Christians. We cannot afford to send mixed messages. We need to pray that our witness is honorable and attractive. For starters, we need to put ourselves in the place of others; and be as merciful as we would hope to have from ourselves. On the other hand; we need to be people who keep their commitments. Being nice is not always the only part of the picture. We need to shepherd things under our care, custody and control, as if they mattered.

This is a braking world; where things fall apart. We are being put into challenging situations. One person's needs compete with another's. Spiritual warfare is frequently having to perform, without having the control. All that we can do is to bring our petitions before the LORD; and then take our rest. The temptation is to put yourself ahead of another person, to get your needs covered. Another temptation is to apply force when it is not called for. We also do not always have the luxury of taking what is available to us, when it will cost others.

We will stick out like a sore thumb as we honor God. Some people will take offense to our affiliation with God. We cannot give them an excuse to speak evil about us. We need to be extra careful on how we use our influence. Assume that our intentions are potentially being misread. Go the extra mile to be a non-offender or hypocrite.

Whoever ^[ao]forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (Matthew 5:41)

The other side of it is that we cannot take all of the latitude that grace allows. Our forgiven sins are no license to take short cuts; because none of it will come to roost on us. We need to sincerely do what is best for our neighbor.

We are to take mistreatment in stride. We are not to get vengeance, back stab, or get too excited when we are passed over, mischaracterized or given the short end of the stick. Sticking up for ourselves never plays well. Let God be your advocate. It is healthy for your faith, to let God provide the justice and equity.

In a sense, we need to get to a point where we can enjoy our lives amidst ongoing annoyances and daily setbacks.

Jesus Bore our sins on a tree (piece of wood). He committed to finish the job; knowing that he would be yelled at, shunned and slapped in the face. He had to have a clear vision and motivation to bypass all of that negativity and lack of appreciation. Elsewhere he calls himself a worm.

*But I am **a worm** and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people.
7 All who see me ^[g]sneer at me; (Psalm 22:6)*

to-law'; and (feminine) תולעה tôwlê'âh; or תולעת tôwla'ath; or תלעת tôla'ath; from [H3216](#); a **maggot** (as voracious); specifically (often with ellipsis of [H8144](#)) the crimson-grub, but **used only (in this connection) of the color from it, and cloths dyed therewith**:—crimson, scarlet, worm.



The Crimson worm [coccus ilicis] is a very special worm that looks grubbier than a worm. When it is time for the female or mother Crimson worm to have babies (which she does only one time in her life), she finds a piece of a tree, a wooden fencepost or a stick. She then attaches her body to the wood and makes a hard crimson shell. She is so strongly and permanently stuck to the wood that the shell can never be removed without tearing her body completely apart and killing her.

The Crimson worm then lays her eggs under her body and the protective shell. When the baby worms (or larvae) hatch, they stay under the shell. Only the mother's body gives protection for her babies, but it also provides them with food – the babies feed on the LIVING body of the mother.

After just a few days, when the young worms grow to the point that they are able to take care of themselves, the mother dies. As the mother

Like the Tola worm, Jesus came to die for his family. His blood is on his children; which testifies how they came to have life.