

Life Group Notes 8/21/2022
Mark Warren Peter's Epistles Week 4

If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, or if you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please be obedient and enjoy!

CROWD BREAKER Share a time where you were surprised by love...something you observed or something you experienced. What difference did it make?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 8/21. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Pastor Mark let John and Shannon talk about "Emotionally Healthy Relationships." What did you think? They spoke of these steps: Clarify expectations. Incarnational listening (hearing is our gift.) Fighting cleanly. Deliberately grow closer to God...(we've been commanded to love.) **What has worked for you? What is the Lord doing today that is encouraging you?**

On translations: See scribes notes below.

Mark's questions of the week:

1. Does God judge us, and if so, to what standard?
2. When you give your life to Jesus, and become born again, do you get a pass on your sin?
3. Is there merit to the prosperity gospel?

1 Peter 4

Living for God's Glory

1Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves with the same resolve, because anyone who has suffered in his body is done with sin. **How many times so far in this letter has Peter referred to Christ's suffering. Take a moment to look.** (1:11, 2:21-24, 3:18-22...**What is Peter doing? What does Peter say our response should be? What does it mean to "arm yourselves with the same resolve? To what degree did Jesus suffer? To what degree have you suffered as He suffered?**

2Consequently, he does not live out his remaining time on earth for human passions, but for the will of God. **3**For you have spent enough time in the past carrying out the same desires as the Gentiles: living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry. **What does this make you think. Without being specific, (please be careful and sensitive in your sharing here) what is the alternative that Peter is offering to the world's offerings listed here? Is verse three pertinent to today? To what degree? Was it worse in Peter's day or today? Why is the danger so much greater today? Compare Peter's list to Paul's "acts of the flesh" in Galatians 5: 19**The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; **20**idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, **21**and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **What do you notice ?**

4Because of this, they consider it strange of you not to plunge with them into the same flood of reckless indiscretion, and they heap abuse on you. **Do you have a testimony?** **5**But they will have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **Who has to give an account? What is included in that account? What is not included? Is it comforting or terrifying that everyone will have to give an account? Why?** **6**That is why the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged as men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. **If the gospel offers a choice, what is that choice? Is it good to know the choice? If the gospel is not preached, is the responsibility greater or less? Look at what Jesus says in Luke 12: 47**That servant who knows his master's will but does not get ready or follow his instructions will be beaten with many blows. **48****But the one who unknowingly does things worthy of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from him who has been entrusted with much, even more will be**

demanded. ⁴⁹I have come to ignite a fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!... **What exactly is Jesus saying here? Have you heard this in anyone's sermon before? What does it make you think?**

⁷The end of all things is near. **Peter said this around 60 AD. What did he mean? What did he expect? What is "the end of all things"? How near is it today? How much nearer is your own end today than it was yesterday? Is your own end the "end of all things"? If it is the end of all things for you, is there anything in your thinking you can adjust, to be helpful?** Therefore, be clear-minded and sober, so that you can pray. **How many times has Peter mentioned effective prayer? Do you remember? (Look at 3:7 and 3:12) Why do you think our prayer life is so important? Do you expect specific answers to specific prayers? Why? Why not?** ⁸Above all, love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Look up Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all transgressions. **Can you see the difference?**

Look up Proverbs 17:9 Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, but he who brings it up separates friends. **What is the alternative to "concealing an offense"?**

Look at what James says 5: consider this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

How practical are these steps? What does love cover? How? Do you have a testimony

⁹Show hospitality to one another without complaining. **Do you have a testimony?**

¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (Scribes note: The word Peter uses here for gift is the same word Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 12-14 for "spiritual gift", *charisma*, or "gift of grace.") **What is a "gift"? How do you earn a gift? How do you exercise a gift? How do you waste a gift? What is a good steward's job? ?** ¹¹If anyone speaks, he should speak as one conveying the divine oracles of God. **In Revelation 12, it is written, "...the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." What does Jesus testify concerning you? Concerning your neighbor? How does Jesus' testimony concerning your neighbor compare to your testimony concerning the same? How do your words become a gift to another? How would speaking Jesus' constant, forgiving compassion and love to your neighbor help?** If anyone serves, he should serve with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. **Is there a gift that is earned as a salary by merit? Is there a gift mentioned by Peter that is meant for you and you alone? How does each gift mentioned above add to the strength of the church?**

Suffering as Christians

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at *the fiery trial* that has come upon you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory. (See scribes note on sharing trials.) **What does this remind you of? Do you remember what Peter said in chapter 1:6-7?** ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in various trials ⁷so that the proven character of your faith—more precious than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **Look again at what James says, James 1:2** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

And now Peter adds: ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Indeed, none of you should suffer as a murderer or thief or wrongdoer, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear that name. **Why do you think this theme keeps recurring? What does it prove if you suffer insult in the name of Christ? How?**

¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And,

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” **Look back to what Peter said of judgement above (v.5). Who gets judged? Now, who gets judged first? Why do you think it begins with the church? What do you think the outcome will be for those who disobey the gospel of God? Answer Peter’s question.**

¹⁹So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should entrust their souls to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. **Think about this: What is “suffering according to God’s will?” Is there suffering that is NOT according to God’s will? What would that be? Be practical: What is Peter suggesting we do when we face a trial? Can we know what the immediate outcome will be? (Remember: James, John’s brother, was beheaded. Peter was led out of prison through the gates by an angel.) Do we know what the ultimate outcome will be? Why is that encouraging? What tool do we have to influence the outcome? What can be said about prayer if we listen to Peter?**

To what standard will we be judged? What will the Father judge? What standard have you set for yourself? How are you doing? What will the Father say? Do you get a pass on your sin? How do you know?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe’s notes: Bible translations, noteworthy facts:

The original Bible was written in three languages. The OT was primarily written in Hebrew until the narrative relates the circumstances of the exile, where the writers, living in Shushan or Babylon actually wrote in Aramaic, another Semitic language (related to but different from Hebrew, as Danish is related to but different from Swedish). Aramaic was the common language of the Babylonian/Mede/Persian Empires. Specifically, Ezra 4:8 - 6:18, Ezra 7:12-26, Daniel 2:4b-7:28, and one verse of Jeremiah (Jer 10:11) were written in old Aramaic. It is said that Jesus spoke in Middle-Aramaic, and evidence is rich in the NT that this is true. With Alexander the Great's conquest of the region, his Koine Greek became the language of commerce which united what became the entire Roman Empire under one universally understood language. The empire did not speak Latin, but Greek. (Remember that God Himself highlighted the importance of a single language for unity of purpose and fruitful agreement when the Tower of Babel was built in Genesis 11.) Jesus' ministry, then, happened at a unique moment in history when the known world had a single, comprehensible language for commerce, thus creating the gateway for the spread of the gospel in that language throughout. Wherever Paul went throughout the empire, he taught in Greek, and all who heard understood. Greek scholars view his extraordinary writings as excellent examples of classic Koine Greek.) These manuscripts have been transmitted to us through the ages by scribes (copyists) whose sole task was to copy accurately more ancient and therefore worn copies of increasing degradation. The entire Bible is unique in its demonstratively miraculous accuracy of transmission. When one copy of the book of Isaiah, c. 500 BC, discovered among the Dead Sea scrolls around 1947, was compared to the most ancient copy we had prior to its discovery, c. 500 A.D., there was virtually no difference despite the thousand years that separated one copy from another. It is interesting to note that the New Testament quotes the Old Testament using a Greek translation called the LXX that was made for Jews during the dispersion, because so many were losing their ability to understand Hebrew. Students of the Bible have to understand that God's language is that of the heart, and the deepest understanding. Language itself bows to the Word of God and is only as valuable as the clarity it offers in transmitting that Word to the heart of the beloved believer. There is no "sacred" hierarchy of language.

Translations are, then, drawn from these manuscripts written in the original languages, and represent the scholars' best interpretation of the original writings. One translation will differ from another as one scholar's understanding of a particular idiom will be different from another. This does not represent error, but the privilege of understanding that each scholar enjoys. The student can, with different translations, glean a deeper understanding of the original intent of the original authors of our Bible. It's good for us to have apps and web sites that provide a multitude of translations for you to explore and begin to enjoy. No generation in the history of the world has had the privileges we now enjoy at our fingertips.

On "sharing Christ's trials," not to be overlooked: There is a recurring principle concerning suffering that needs to be eventually addressed. Not only is it a counter-

intuitive excuse for rejoicing, but there is almost a cosmic significance in suffering persecution for righteousness' sake. Here in this chapter, we read "[13](#)But rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory." We saw James say, "Count it all joy..."

We know that, for Peter, these are not just words. In Acts 5, early in the life of the church, the apostles, after already having been released from prison once by angels, defied the authorities and preached in the temple precinct again. In verse 40 we read, "[40](#)At this, [the council] yielded to Gamaliel. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them.

[41](#)The apostles left the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.**" Later, when Paul/Saul, is persecuting the church, he has an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, where Jesus asks, "Why are you persecuting me." Every time Paul laid hands on a believer, he laid hands on Christ Himself. Such is His identification with each of us, under trial for His name's sake. We have to understand what he meant when He said, "Inasmuch as you've done it unto the least of these my **brethren**, you've done it unto Me." That is why Paul says to the Colossians in chapter 1:[23](#)*if indeed you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope of the gospel you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. [24](#)Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church. [25](#)I became its servant by the commission God gave me to fully proclaim to you the word of God..."* Are Christ's sufferings not complete, then? Inasmuch as there is suffering anywhere in the Body of Christ, throughout the World, Christ is perfectly identified with that suffering. He will not stop suffering until the least of us is released from suffering. Notice, again, Paul rejoices in his suffering. Each of the apostles we have read has shared this view. **What does this tell you? How important is it for us to prepare our hearts against the days ahead?**