

Life Group Notes 9/25/2022
Mark Warren Peter's Epistles Week 8

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 How many times in your memory has the “last days” been announced, with books and teachings? Can you recall stories? Sunday, Rosh Hashanah began at sundown. What do you know of the Jewish Fall festivals? Do you do anything to commemorate them?

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, 9/25. 2 Peter 3. 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.**

Look up Matthew 25: **1**“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2**Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **3**The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take along any extra oil. **4**But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. **5**When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. **6**At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ **Why midnight? A wise preacher was asked, “Do you think this is the**

***last generation before the Return of Christ?” He answered, “For you it is...”
Why is that such a good answer?***

7Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9‘No,’ said the wise ones, ‘or there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10But while they were on their way to buy it, the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

11Later the other virgins arrived and said, ‘Lord, lord, open the door for us!’

12But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’

13Therefore keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour.

What’s the difference between the wise and the foolish? What do they have in common? (What did all ten do?) What did five do before they slept? How? What do you think the oil represents? What did Jesus say “...keeps your light shining before men?” Why could these five good, “Christian” virgins not share their abundance of oil? What has changed in this parable? On whom does your own oil supply depend? What do you think you might need to do?

(Scribe’s note: There are three significant parables in this chapter dealing with Christ’s return, and not knowing the day or the hour. Take the time to read them this week, and discover the significant differences between them.) What promise did each of the ten virgins enjoy? What exactly did the five foolish ones do wrong? What did they lose for their error?

Look up 2 Peter 3:

The Coming Judgment

(Genesis 7:1–24; Jude 1:17–23)

1Beloved, this is now my second letter to you. Both of them are reminders to stir you to wholesome thinking 2by recalling what was foretold by the holy prophets and commanded by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. ***Why is the gospel never “one time and done?” What is the purpose of “stirring up to wholesome thinking?” What is the alternative if that stirring doesn’t happen?***

Why do we need reminders? Why do experts need to exercise their expertise? Where do these reminders come from?

3Most importantly, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **4**“Where is the promise of His coming?” they will ask. “Ever since our fathers fell asleep, everything continues as it has from the beginning of creation.” **Do you have a testimony? Are there more “scoffers” today than you remember from before? Do you have friends we can pray for today? What is their excuse for unbelief?**

5But they deliberately overlook the fact that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water, **6**through which the world of that time perished in the flood. **Recall where all this happened. Where do we find the account?** **7**And by that same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Pastor Mark says, “There are so many views on the last days, and the days of judgment, the rapture, “pre-trib,” “post-trib”...I’m not going to get into that, I just want to be found faithful when He comes, doing as He gave me to do.” **What do you think? Is there a better approach? If, as we discovered last week, knowing God is key to all the promises, why is knowing the theories of less value?** He continues, “I want to be prepared if I have to go through some difficult times. I do not want to deny the One Who came to save my soul.” **What does this make you think? If Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation...(but fear not, I have overcome the world...)” what should we be prepared for?**

Mark talks of the “Great White Throne Judgment” (See Revelation 20:11-13) where our works will be examined. Some of our works will be burned up in the fire and some will remain.” **Apply this to the parable of the ten virgins? Can this be the oil? Examine the other parables in Chapter 25 of Matthew? Does the concept become clearer? Look up 1 Cor 3:** **10**By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. **11**For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, **13**his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man’s work. **14**If what he has built survives, he will receive a reward. **15**If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as if through the flames.

Describe what Paul is saying. Does this fit the concept of “oil”? Is it a little scary? Look at what Paul says in Romans 2: 5But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. 6God “will repay each one according to his deeds.” 7To those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life. 8But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow wickedness, there will be wrath and anger. **Does this speak of “oil?” Have you ever thought you were seeking “glory, honor and immortality?” What does that mean? What do you think “perseverance in doing good” involves?**

Pastor Marks refers to the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, one of the other parables in Matthew 25 (see above). **How does the light of the sheep shine compared to the darkness of the goats? What were the sheep seeking when they visited Jesus, clothed Him, and fed Him? How much does being a light to the world depend on what we do?**

Going back to Peter, how important is the Word to creation? Look up Hebrews 1:3 “who [Jesus] being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” **Do you see cosmic significance in this verse? What holds atoms together? Look up Colossians 1:17** He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **What truth will “the Science” always miss? Why is it important that, as Jesus said, “All things will pass away, but my Word will never pass away?”**

The Day of the Lord

(Zephaniah 1:7–18; Malachi 4:1–6; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11)

8Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance. **Why is it taking so long for the judgment to come? Why is that knowledge so comforting? (See scribe’s notes on God’s chronology below.)**

10But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. **How recurrent is this theme, that the Lord “...will come like a thief?” Why is this so often repeated in the gospels? What is the message to us?** The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its works will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **Answer Peter's question.** You ought to conduct yourselves in holiness and godliness **12** as you anticipate and hasten the coming of the day of God, when the heavens will be destroyed by fire and the elements will melt in the heat. **What part do you have in "hastening the coming of that day?"** **13** But in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. (Scribe's note: **See** Revelation 21:1-5 and Isaiah 65:17-19)

Final Exhortations

14 Therefore, beloved, as you anticipate these things, make every effort to be found at peace—spotless and blameless in His sight. **Why is this such practical advice? Do you remember Peter's "progression" from chapter 1, two weeks ago? What comes after this expression of "godliness" described here? Why does Mark suggest this is the way to purchase the oil we spoke of from Matthew 25?**

15 Consider also that our Lord's patience brings salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom God gave him. (**What did Paul actually say? Look up Romans 2: 4** Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance?)

Peter continues: **16** He writes this way in all his letters, speaking in them about such matters. Some parts of his letters are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. **What do you think? Was Peter quoting Paul in Romans above? What do you think of Peter's personal assessment of Paul's writings? Do you agree with Peter?**

17 Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you will not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure standing. **Analyze this statement. How is one "carried away by error?" What happens when that one falls? Do you have a testimony?** **18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. **What is the best defense against being "carried away?" What does it mean to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?" Is it possible to "...grow in the knowledge..." of a person? How? What does it take? So, how do you get to know Jesus better? (What did Peter, in Chapter 1, say would happen if we possess these qualities and are growing in them? (See verses 8-9** **8** For if you possess these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, having forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.) **How is possessing and growing like "having oil," and not having and not growing like "not having oil?" When Jesus says (see Matthew 7:23), "Depart from me,**

I never knew you,” what does that “knowing” entail? Did the doing of miracles and the prophesying of prophecies signify the kind of knowledge that saves, and the kind of oil that lights lamps? What is missing? What is the difference between the good works the sheep did, and the “works of lawlessness” these prophets and miracle workers?

Why is our not knowing the day and the time of His coming to our advantage?

Mark says he will be held accountable for how well he is preparing us to meet Jesus face to face. How did He do today? What struck you most in today’s message? How much oil is in your reserves?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe’s notes:

On God’s Chronology: There is a branch of Christianity called “young earthers” who have not bought into evolution’s theoretical claim to “billions and billions of years.” They firmly believe that the earth is only around six thousand years old, and there are some reputable scientists who have written much to back the claim with paleontology and from the fossil record itself. It’s a fun debate to enjoy and get into anywhere but in life group, but there are lessons to be learned from Peter.

For the Jew, the year 5782 begins on the 25th of September, called 1 Tishrei. Today is called *Rosh Hashanah* (“Rosh,” the head, and “Hashanah,” [of] the year) beginning at sundown. It is also called the Feast of Trumpets, and is said to commemorate the day Adam was created. So, for the observing Jew, the world is around six thousand years old. **By Peter’s reckoning in verse 8 above** (*With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day*) **how many days have passed? What day is next? What will God be doing on the seventh? If you understand Jewish reckoning, why is it significant that this begins a “Jubilee” year, the seventh of sevens?**

Corrie Ten Boom on the end times: Corrie Ten Boom, a powerful Christian speaker during the height of the Charismatic movement, who survived Ravensbrück, a death camp where her sister Elizabeth died, was once asked what she thought of the Rapture and the end times. Was she “pre-millennial” in her views? “Amillennial”? or was she “post-millennial?” She answered, “I think that is A-Pre-Post-erous question.” She said, “If anything, I’m “pro-millennial.” I’m all for it. But, if you want to pin me down, you can say I’m a panmillennialist. It will all pan out in the end.”