

1 Peter 1:1-12 Discussion Questions

Sermon Outline

Introduction

- Story of the two longest overseas mission trips I have participated in
- The Purpose of 1 Peter and Why Now for KHC
 - Martin Luther cited 1 Peter as one of the noblest books of the New Testament and a paragon of excellence on par with Romans and the Gospel of John.
 - “the most condensed New Testament résumé of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires” (Clowney 1988: 15)
 - Wherever Christians are a minority, the message of 1 Peter takes on renewed relevance. For instance, the apostle’s letter became a source of hope and encouragement to Christian students at the University of Halle in Soviet-dominated Germany after World War II (M. Eugene Boring 1999: 143). In former Yugoslavia and Muslim Indonesia, 1 Peter is said to be the most popular book among Christians (Scott McKnight 1996: 35).
 - 1 Peter 5.12
 - *By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.*
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Chosen and Rejected (v.1-2)

- Introduction addresses author and audience
 - Peter
 - Connection to the Gospel of Mark study this fall
 - Elect exiles
 - Election- chosen by God
 - Exile theories
 - Two theories
 - A spiritual metaphor
 - A statement on 1st century socioeconomics
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- Third theory-
 - Peter's exiles had been deportees of the Roman emperor, Claudius during his reign from AD 41-54
 - Claudius was the most aggressive agent of Roman expansion through colonization
 - Established urban centers in all five regions Peter is writing to
 - Pontus- Neoclaudiopolis
 - Galatia- Claudiconium (formerly Iconium)
 - Cappadocia- Archelais became a Roman colony
 - In the Asia province- Claudiolaodicea (Laodicea)
 - Bithynia- Bithynium-Claudiopolis
 - It was also not uncommon for the emperor or senate to deport a group viewed to be troublemakers in Rome to colonize a newly acquired territory in some remote area of the empire (Frend 1967: 108).
 - The choice of the target group was often based on religion, ethnicity, or occupation
 - Not only were those deported from Rome often "foreigners" (i.e., not citizens of Rome), but they were often viewed as foreigners at their destination as well.
 - AD 49, according to Roman history Claudius expelled people from Rome because they kept causing disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.
- Therefore, it seems probable these believers were politically exiled for the expansion of the Roman Empire because of their faith in Christ.

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- Biblical understanding of exile
 - Humanity is exiled because of unfaithfulness in the Garden
 - Israel is exiled to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness
 - When Israel returns, though they are home, they are still oppressed and alienated- exile has become larger than location and is the reality of the human condition.
 - Christ comes as an exile
 - Immediately after his birth, has to flee to Egypt to avoid Herod

- Has no place to lay his head
 - Is rejected in His hometown
 - Proclaimed an enemy of the state and executed
- Sprinkling with blood and obedience
 - Exodus 24.3-8
 - *Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." 8 And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."*

Unlikely Worship (v.3-9)

- Verses 3-12 are actually one sentence in the original language.
- The initial response to the reality of exile status by and because of God's plan is speaking of the glory and praise of God.
- His mercy has provided
 - Living hope- a hope connected to the living Christ
 - Inheritance
 - *the inheritance is untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time; it is compounded of immortality, purity, and beauty."* - Francis Beare
- Guarded through faith for salvation
 - Peter's understanding of salvation is
 - Currently ready because of the finished work of Christ
 - To be fully realized in the future at when the Lord judges

Longing and Looking

- The same Spirit that revealed in the prophets what was to come was the very same Spirit that led the message to be preached and worked in the sanctification of these exiles.
- Angels long to look on the sufferings and subsequent glories of Christ

Implications

- If trials and suffering prove the genuineness of faith, does that mean that comfort hinders it?
 - *“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” - C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*
- Worship is outward expression of a transformed identity because of the revelation of Jesus Christ

Discussion Questions

Feel free to choose what questions will be most helpful to your group to grow in their understanding of the Scripture and faithfully apply it to their lives.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12

1. Peter opens his letter by identifying his audience with an interesting phrase: he calls them “elect exiles.” *Elect* refers to those chosen by God on the basis of his grace. *Exiles* denote a group of people who are currently displaced, not living in their native land but in a foreign one. The first term is one of favor and the second one of tragedy.

a. There is a sense (spiritually speaking) in which we are all in exile, in that we were created to live in perfect fellowship with God but that has been broken by sin. Then there is physical exile where you are living as an outsider away from home. There can be social or psychological forms of exile as well. It is being cut off from the place you belong, or not living in the state of being that you were created for.

1) In which ways can you relate to this concept of exile? How have you experienced this kind of alienation and the sense of not belonging or being an outsider?

2) In these verses Peter explains that God elected them, foreknew them, caused them to be born again, and is guarding them. Why would you think that Peter goes to such great lengths to emphasize God's saving action from beginning to end for those who are in a state of exile? What is this meant to do for them?

3) For those of us who are both in Christ and in exile, how should these truths affect us?

2. Peter goes on to assure them that they have a "living hope" that is tied to their risen and living savior, and then they have an imperishable inheritance.

a. Again, what is the significance of these for those who are exile?

b. What do these images (living hope and imperishable inheritance) mean to you personally? How do they encourage you?

3. Vv. 6-7 seem to be teaching that trials are for the purpose of testing and proving the genuineness of our faith. If this is true, then do you believe comfort tends to have a negative effect on our faith? Has that been true in your experience?

a. If so, then what is the right approach for us with regard to both comfort and trials?

1) When is it OK to enjoy opportunities for comfort and when is it right to shun them? In other words, how do we know when we are self-medicating in order to avoid reality and when we are simply enjoying the blessings that God has given us?

2) When is it right to do our best to avoid trials and when should we embrace them?

4. Another thing that this passage points to is the reality that if we understand what we have received in Jesus (the very things that the prophets longed for and the angels in all their glory are fascinated by), we will have a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. Thus, as we grow in our understanding of what we have in Jesus, our joy will grow too.

- a. How have you seen and experienced this in your own life?
- b. Where do you see the evidence of this joy in your life? How do you see it expressing itself in your life?
- c. In what areas and ways do you want it to increase?