

Journey Into Triumphant Living

LESSON 1 . . . Dispelling Discouragement (1 Peter 1:1-5)

NOTES

We all have times when life is tough. The trouble might be a health problem, a financial crisis, a relationship problem, etc. When life is tough over the “long haul,” we all get discouraged. That’s why we need the book of 1 Peter. It tells us how to have a “journey into triumphant living,” even when life is tough.

The apostle Peter was a fisherman from Galilee when Jesus called him to be a disciple. He identifies himself as *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ* (1:1a). The word *apostle* means “one sent forth with a message.” The first time we meet Peter in the New Testament, he is called *Simon* (Mt 4:18), which is his given name. However, what does Jesus tell him in John 1:42c?



The Aramaic name *Cephas* (PETROS, pet'-ros, in Greek) translates “Peter,” which means stone or rock. Peter is called by four names in the New Testament: Simon, Cephas, Peter, and Simon Peter. In the lists of disciples, Peter’s name is always first, indicating he was the leader of the Twelve. We also know Peter had a mother-in-law (Mt 8:14; Lk 4:38). What does 1 Corinthians 9:5 tell us about *the brothers of the Lord and Cephas*?

Peter writes to encourage . . . *those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia* [cap-uh-doe'-she-uh], *Asia, and Bithynia* [bih-thin'-ih-uh] (1:1). Because of severe persecution, Christians scattered from their original homes and fled to several provinces in northern Asia Minor, which is modern Turkey. The infamous Roman Caesar, Nero, burned Rome in A. D. 64, publicly blaming Christians. In the persecution that followed, Christians were arrested, tortured, beheaded, crucified, and fed to wild animals as a spectator sport in the coliseum.

The word translated *exiles*, or “strangers,” means “resident foreigners” or aliens. Since as *exiles* we have morals and values that seem “strange” and archaic to non-believers, we should still expect persecution in various forms today. They don’t understand our convictions about premarital sex,

homosexuality, abortion, marriage, family, and other issues. Our culture is becoming more and more godless and hostile toward Christians because we seem “strange.” What did our Lord say about persecution in John 15:20c?

For that reason, we all need this passage from *1 Peter*, which gives us **three** ways to dispel discouragement . . .

Remember who chose you (1:2-3).

We are the *elect* . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (1:1, 2a). The word translated *elect* (EKLEKTOS, ek-lek-tos') means “chosen,” or “selected” (Eph. 1:4). The word translated *foreknowledge* (PROGNŌSIS, prog'-no-sis) is where we get our word “prognosis.” We use it today to refer to a medical opinion as the likely outcome of a disease. In verse two, the word means God not only knows the future but also has a plan for our lives before we are ever born (Jer. 1:5, Acts 2:23), and that plan includes living through some tough times.

Verse two also reveals all three members of the Trinity are involved in our salvation. Not only did *God the Father* foreknow us, but our salvation is *in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood* (1:2b). This basically means *God the Father* foreknew us, *God the Spirit* sanctifies us (sets us apart for service to God), and *Jesus Christ* cleanses us.

Peter also writes of the cause and effect of our salvation: *May grace and peace be multiplied to you* (1:2c). *Grace* is the cause of our salvation, while inner *peace* is the effect or result.

All three members of the Trinity are involved in our salvation through God's *great mercy* (1:3b). The word *mercy* refers to God's unmerited favor toward us, despite the fact we are sinners. *Mercy* means we receive a salvation we don't deserve. How does Titus 3:5a-b express this wonderful gift?

God's *mercy has caused us to be born again* (1:3c). The phrase *born again* means God has chosen to give us a new start in life and stresses the change that takes place at conversion. We are *born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* (1:3d). The word *hope* doesn't mean wishful thinking, but a firm persuasion or confident expectation. The word *living* means our hope is based on the *resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Therefore, we will outlive all our problems and pain.

To dispel discouragement, **remember who chose you** and . . .

Reflect on your *inheritance* (1:4).

In Christ, we have *an inheritance* (1:4a). In the Old Testament, the word *inheritance* describes the Promised Land, the place the Israelites were anticipating as they wandered in the wilderness (Num. 32:19). As Christians, we look forward to a different kind of *inheritance*. A part of that *inheritance* is what Christ will do when He returns. How is it described in Philip-
pians 3:21a?

We will receive glorified bodies that are not susceptible to disease, age, and the limitations of our physical bodies. Christ’s *glorious body* enabled Him to pass through walls—appearing and disappearing any place at will (Mk 16:14). In our glorified bodies, I believe we will also be able to do the same. Won’t that be great?

Another part of our *inheritance* is what God will do. How is it described in Revelation 21:4, when *the former things* pass away?

Peter describes our *inheritance* as *imperishable, undefiled, and unfading* (1:4). The word translated *imperishable*, or “incorruptible” (APHTHARTOS, af’-thar-tos), means our *inheritance* will never perish or disappear because it is eternal. Also, it is *undefiled*, which means free from contamination. Nothing will ever infect or pollute heaven. It will always be pure and holy because no one who is impure, shameful, or deceitful can enter (Rev. 21:27a-b). Therefore, according to the last phrase of Revelation 21:27, who are the only inhabitants of heaven?

The word *unfading* means the beauty, holiness, splendor, joy, etc. of our *inheritance* will never fade in the slightest. All earthly possessions are subject to constant change, or fading, but our *inheritance* in heaven is eternally the same, or *unfading*.

Next, Peter lists the most important characteristic of our *inheritance*. It is

kept in heaven for you (1:4). The word *kept*, or “reserved” (TĒREŌ, tay-reh´-oh), is a perfect passive participle. It refers to something that began in the past but continues in the present. God has been keeping and will continue to keep our *inheritance . . . in heaven*. Passive means it is being kept for us; we are not keeping it ourselves. So, no matter what happens to us on earth, our *inheritance* is *kept* safe by God.



To dispel discouragement, **remember who chose you; reflect on your inheritance**, and . . .

Rest in God’s power (1:5).

Peter knows some believers might wonder whether or not they will be able to endure and remain faithful to Christ if the persecution intensifies. To reassure them and us, Peter explains God is not only keeping our inheritance, He is also doing something else for us now. Peter explains it like this: *who by God’s power are being guarded* (1:5a). The word translated *guarded*, or “kept,” is a military term that means “to keep with a garrison.” How does Jude 24 describe how God guards us?

When life is tough, we all sometimes wonder if we can remain faithful. We shouldn’t trust in our own abilities or spirituality but in God’s *power* to keep us. That’s God’s part in our *salvation*. Our part is *faith* (Eph. 2:8-9), through which God is protecting us until we receive full *salvation ready to be revealed in the last time* (1:5b).

There are three parts to our *salvation*. The initial stage is called **regeneration**, which is immediate and instantaneous (Tit. 3:5). The second stage, called **sanctification**, is progressive and takes a lifetime. This process takes place as we read, study, and apply God’s Word (Jn 17:17).

The third, and final, stage of salvation is called **glorification** (Rom. 8:17). Therefore, our *inheritance* is **regeneration** (salvation from the penalty of sin), **sanctification** (salvation from the power of sin), and **glorification**, (salvation from the presence of sin). God never starts anything He doesn’t finish. We have what spectacular promise in Philippians 1:6b?



To dispel your discouragement and be triumphant, **remember who chose you, reflect on your inheritance**, and **rest in God’s power**.