

1 Peter *(opening slide)*

The Man:

 Peter is probably the best known disciple of Jesus. He was the **first disciple** to be called and the first to be named an apostle. His name heads every list of the Twelve in the New Testament. He was a **fisherman** with his **brother Andrew**, and was in partnership with James and John, who also became disciples. He was a disciple of John the Baptist before following Christ. We know that Peter was **married** because Jesus healed his mother-in-law. He was the disciple who actually **walked on water** at least for a little while. Peter was bold and brash, but **denied** that he knew **Jesus** when the pressure was on. Yet, he was one of Jesus' closest friends along with James and John. His name means "**rock**," and though he was originally unstable, he eventually became the **reliable leader** of the early church. One time he preached and 3000 people got saved the same day.

The Letter:

 Peter wrote this short letter **around 63 AD** to the Christians in Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. This is the same audience that received John's letter of Revelation. Peter's purpose in writing is to **encourage the believers** whose basic problem was living righteously in the midst of a society which was ignorant of the true God. These believers were misunderstood and subjected to cruel treatment because of their faith. Peter wants to help believers see their **sufferings as temporary** and to focus on the **coming eternal glory**. He emphasizes the godly **life of submission and good deeds** in the midst of suffering. **Christians** are God's choice people, **representing Christ** in an ignorant and rebellious world.

His writing is relevant for us today because we are still called to a life of submission and good deeds. As well, we are living in a world that is still rebellious to God and often opposed to Christianity even to the point of hostility. So, we also need to focus on the coming eternal glory and rely on the grace of God.

The Supremacy of Salvation

1 Peter 1:1-12

 It's important for us to understand just how **big a deal salvation** is. God didn't have to save any of us, but he chose to make a way for everyone to be saved.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Peter 3:9 says that God doesn't want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance

v. 1-2 God's elect; strangers in the world; chosen according to his foreknowledge.

Election is a hotly debated subject. Do people have any choice when it comes to salvation? Some say that God hand selects only some people to be saved and others have no chance whatsoever. I believe that God chooses everyone, but not everyone chooses to follow him. However, in this context, my main thought here is that this is simply a greeting. Peter does not focus on this subject as a doctrinal issue, but is simply being eloquent in greeting his Christian friends. The main emphasis is that **we are different from non-Christians**. In a couple of weeks we will see that Peter calls us peculiar people.

v. 2 the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

It's the **spirit who works in us to be sanctified** and obedient. We can't do it on our own. I know we talk a lot about being a good person and living a Christlike lifestyle. But we also acknowledge that we cannot do that in our own strength.

Philippians 2:13

it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness...

We can't sanctify ourselves. I have often said that we simply need "more of Jesus." It's not more effort on our parts; it's more of Jesus and actually less of us.

v. 3 Great mercy

God allows us a pardon when we deserve punishment. God has always been seen this way by those who really know him.

Psalms 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Even Jonah, when he wanted harsh punishment for the people of Nineveh acknowledged that God was gracious and compassionate and "a God who relents from sending calamity."

Last night Stanley Roberts shared part of his story and it included being something like the prodigal son. The prodigal son had squandered his inheritance and had lived in rebellion. Yet, when he finally decided to return home, his father saw him from a long way off and had compassion on him and ran to greet him. That's the way God is!

v. 3 **New birth into a living hope**

We deserve punishment for our sins. But God generously offers us a fresh start! It's like being born all over again. The Scripture says that anyone born into Christ is a new creation. It's a whole new you! And, it's not only a fresh new start, but we have a fantastic future ahead of us as well...

Titus 2:13

we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

And, not only the return of Christ, but we have an inheritance coming as well...

v. 4 Inheritance that can never perish

We are joint heirs in the kingdom.

Daniel 7:27

Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.

Revelation 22:5

They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

v. 5 Salvation... revealed in the last time

 **Christ is returning** = final and full salvation; we have been saved; we are being saved; and will be fully saved...

Hebrews 9:28

so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

v. 6 **We rejoice**

Looking forward to his return, we can have joy in spite of suffering.

*It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus;
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase;
So bravely run the race, till we see Christ!*

v. 7 Genuineness of your faith

More valuable than gold. Jesus said we should store our treasures in heaven rather than on earth. **Faith is the gold standard of heaven.** Do you believe what God has said? Will you trust him in spite of your circumstances? Will you hang in there no matter what? Job went through the most taxing types of trials anyone could experience. But he kept his faith. He even said, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him."

James 1:12

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

Keep the faith no matter circumstances you are facing. It's gonna be worth it!

v. 8 Unseen Christ

Still, we love him; still, we believe in him.

☞ 2 Corinthians 5:7 says **we live by faith, not by sight.**

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

v. 8 inexpressible and glorious joy

This is such a good deal that we can't really describe it. It's been said that "working for God is very hard and challenging, but **the retirement plan is out of this world.**"

v. 9 End result of faith = salvation

Christ is returning = final and full salvation. Right now we understand salvation to a certain degree, but one day very soon, Christ will return in fullness of glory, and salvation ☞ will be total and complete. **Even our bodies will be transformed.**

1 John 3:2

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

See how big a deal this is?

v. 10-11 the prophets searched intently

They were looking for this salvation that we now know. They anxiously awaited for the first coming of Christ to bring salvation. We know all about salvation because we can look back and see what Christ did on the cross. Sometimes we read about the prophets and wish that we could experience the power of God like they did. But they were actually looking ahead with anticipation to what we currently experience. So, in a sense, **the Old Testament prophets would be envious of us.** Salvation is supreme!

v. 12 Even angels long to look into these things...

It's a big deal; **we are unique in the universe...** sinners, saved by grace. This makes us unlike anything else in all of creation. We understand from Scripture that God created mankind as unique among the creatures of the earth. But the supremacy of salvation takes our uniqueness to a whole new level. There have been angels who have always seen God and experienced his glory, but they had no need to be saved. And there are angels who once saw God and experienced his glory, but rebelled against him and will never be saved. So, here we are... people who have only seen glimpses of God's glory, but have been thoroughly corrupted by sin and yet have received mercy and salvation and will one day see God in all his glory. There is no other creature like those who have become children of God!

Salvation is supreme! Rejoice!

How wondrous you are