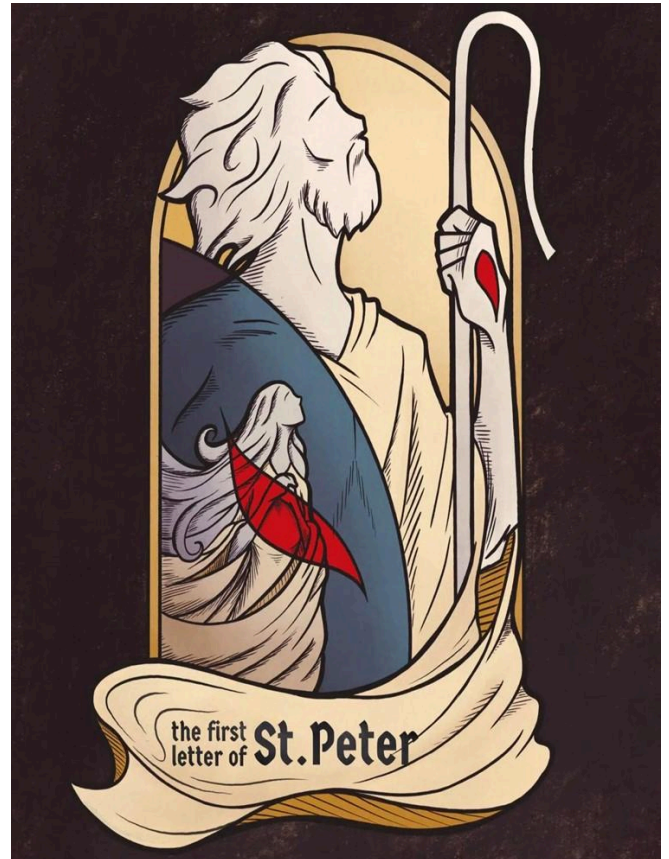


1 Peter—Hope in the Midst of Suffering

Introduction and Chapter 1 (verses 1-12)

Introduction

1. What details do you recall about the historical setting in which this letter was written? In what ways does that shape our understanding of this epistle?
2. Note the apostle's two-fold purpose for this letter in 5:12. For what reasons are those two things necessary for us to receive? In what ways might we be able to share those things with those around us?
3. React to the picture and read the artist's summary to the right.



Chapter 1

Verses 1-2.

4. Note the terms used to describe Christians in. What does each descriptor communicate about you? In what ways does each impact our daily lives and perspectives?
5. In what ways can we, as believers scattered throughout the world, view our dispersion as part of God's plan rather than a hindrance to our faith and witness?

If I were to summarize the message of 1 Peter in one sentence, it'd be something like this: 'In the Suffering and Glorified Christ, Christ-imaging exiles suffer in the living hope of glory.'

In this visual exegesis of Peter's letter, we see Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd (2:24-25) risen beyond death, radiant in glory. Yet he is partially obscured by the circular form of the grave stone which is, as it were, still rolling away from the mouth of his tomb. Within this stone, we see his body darkened with the sufferings of his people and pierced with the mortal wound of their sin. United to him is the Bride, the Church. Even as she still stands inside the tomb stone—the 'shadow lands' of this world of sin, suffering, and mortality—she is already radiant with the light of Christ's resurrection... By virtue of her union to Christ, she is an 'exile' longing for her home (1:1). And, because Christ is risen, her hope of that homecoming is invincibly sure (1:3-5; 5:10).

Verses 3-5

6. In what ways do “In his great mercy,” “new birth,” and “through the resurrection of Jesus,” help clarify what this living hope means for you? In what ways is this different from worldly hope?

7. Verse 6 describes your suffering with three modifiers: “now,” “for a little while,” and “if necessary.” What does each modifier add to the thought?

8. Now compare that to our inheritance and its modifiers in verse 4: “undying,” “undefiled,” “unfading,” and “kept in heaven for you.” What does each modifier add to the thought?

9. In what ways does this in-depth view of your inheritance encourage you for your own suffering?

Verses 6-12

10. Verses 6-7 talk about trials and the refining of faith. Share a current trial in your life and how God might be using it as an opportunity to strengthen your faith?

11. Reflect on verses 8-9. How do you maintain love and joy in Christ despite not seeing him physically?

12. In what ways do verses 10-12 add to our understanding of the Old Testament and the verbally inspired Scriptures?

Next week: 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Try to read through the verses ahead of time and bring any questions or comments you have. Pastor will be out of town. Rich Herrmann will lead the discussion.