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1 PETER

Unshakable: Standing Firm in a Shifting World

PART 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

WARM-UP QUESTION

What do you think is the reason behind the human preoccupation with trivial concerns of living for the here-and-now?

INTRODUCTION

- The first chapter of 1 Peter introduces the themes of hope, holiness, and the enduring nature of God's promises.
 - Written to Christians facing persecution, Peter encourages them to focus on their eternal inheritance and the living hope found in Christ.
 - This chapter challenges believers to view their trials as refining processes that lead to greater faith and glorify God. It also calls us to live as holy people, set apart for God's purposes, while standing firm in the hope of salvation.
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1 PETER CHAPTER 1 (NIV)

Greeting and Introduction (1:1-2)

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise for Salvation and Living Hope (1:3-5)

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Joy in the Midst of Trials (1:6-9)

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Prophets' Role in Salvation (1:10-12)

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

A Call to Holiness (1:13-16)

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Living as Redeemed People (1:17-21)

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Love and the Power of the Word (1:22-25)

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Question:** How does Peter describe the inheritance believers have in Christ (verses 3-4)? How does this description encourage you?
2. **Question:** What is the purpose of trials according to verses 6-7? In what ways does it answer the question, "If God loves me, why does he let me experience difficult times?"
3. **Question:** How does Peter contrast earthly life with the eternal perspective (verses 23-25)? Do you think most Christians grasp this eternal perspective? Why or why not?
4. **Question:** What does Peter mean by calling believers to "be holy" (verses 15-16)? In what ways might Christians misunderstand what it means to be holy?
5. **Question:** What role does Christ's sacrificial blood play in redemption (verses 18-19)? Why is Jesus often described as a lamb?

SUMMARY

- Peter addresses believers as chosen exiles scattered across the world, emphasizing their election by God through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - Believers are given new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, promising an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance kept in heaven for them.
 - Trials serve to refine faith, which is more valuable than gold, and lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. This faith brings inexpressible joy and salvation.
 - The salvation believers experience was foretold by prophets, who spoke of Christ's suffering and glory. Their revelations serve the current generation of believers, who are privileged to receive the gospel.
 - Believers are urged to set their hope fully on God's grace, live disciplined lives, and reflect God's holiness in all they do, as He has called them to be holy.
 - Christians should live reverently, recognizing that their redemption was bought not with perishable materials like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ, chosen before the world's creation.
 - Love for one another is a fruit of obedience to the truth. Believers are born again through the enduring word of God, which is eternal and life-giving.
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APPLICATION

- **Learn to _____ in difficult times:** Reflect on how your current challenges can refine your faith and bring glory to God. Choose to see them as part of God's transformative work in your life.
 - **Learn to _____ life:** Take intentional steps to align your behavior, thoughts, and values with God's character, recognizing that you are called to be set apart.
 - **Learn to keep looking to your _____:** Anchor your daily perspective in the promise of your eternal inheritance, letting it guide your decisions and interactions.
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