

Bible Study
1 Peter



Trinity Church Mount Barker 2022



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Heading For Home...

How much does your home address define you? For many of us the answer is 'not much' – until we realise that living in Australia gives us remarkable privileges and freedoms that many around the world don't enjoy. And yet, wherever our physical home address might be, 1 Peter teaches us that we have a life-giving, identity-shaping, eternity-securing, suffering-enduring home address provided by and located with the Lord Jesus Christ. In five short chapters we not only learn the reality of this new home, but again and again we see how it impacts our daily lives in very practical ways.

You might have heard the saying that someone was 'so heavenly minded they were no earthly use'. It's a phrase that implies that you can be so focused on the notion of heaven and life there and then that you disengage from life on earth in the here and now. Well, in 1 Peter God teaches us that the very opposite should be true: Being assured of our eternal security in Christ equips us to live lives of radical service here and now, come what may!

The studies that follow are written to complement the Sunday talk series. 1 Peter covers some huge theological themes as well as providing encouragement for the simple things of daily life.

For further resources, the Bible Project video on 1 Peter is a great overview (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-peter/>) while the "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries" volume on 1 Peter by Wayne Grudem provides detail without being overwhelming.

Study 1 – 1 Peter 1:1-12

God's Resident Aliens

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12

Let's get our bearings... who wrote to whom and why?

- **Who wrote 1 Peter? What do we know about him from Scripture? (consider 1 Peter 1:1, 5:1; Matthew 4:18-20, 14:26-31, 16:13-16, 26:31-35, 26:69-75; John 21:15-19; Acts 4:5-14)**

- **Who was 1 Peter written to? What insight do we gain about them from 1 Peter 1:1-12 and 2:11?**

- **Turn to 1 Peter 5:12. What does this say about why the letter was written?**

Let's dig into the what... what is this letter about?

- **While v2 is describing who we are, it is also giving us profound insight into who God is. What do we learn about the God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?**

- **According to v3-5, what has God given to us?**

- **According to v6-9, what role does suffering play in the life of a believer? How does this suffering relate to our joy?**

- **What do v10-12 explain about your salvation?**

For discussion and prayer

- **How do you cherish and care for your faith that is more precious than gold? What can you do this week to care for your faith?**

- **What will it mean for you to be filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy this week? Prayerfully consider what God would have you focus on this week.**

- **As you share prayer requests consider sharing how you can pray for each other to grow in faith and joy in light of who God is and what he has done.**

Study 2 – 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

A Family Grounded in Grace

**Last study we saw that Peter called our salvation “a living hope... that can never perish, spoil or fade... kept in heaven.”
What did you do to cherish your faith over the last week?**

Read 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

- **Make note of the exhortations in this passage. What role do these commands play in a believer’s life?**

- **Do you recognise some of these behaviours already in your life? Which actions do you find easy to do? Which seems most challenging?**

- **From v18, what does it mean to redeem something? (Feel free to look up the meaning in a dictionary)**

- **Why do we need to be redeemed?**

- **What does 1 Peter 1:18-20 say about our redemption?**

- **In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter says that we've been given new birth through Christ's resurrection. What else does Peter tell us about resurrection and birth in 1:20-23?**

- **Have you tasted that the Lord is good (2:3)? How?**

Study 3 – 1 Peter 2:4-10

The Living Stone and Living Stones

We've seen Peter press the point about salvation over two weeks. (It must be important.) Jot down in a couple of sentences how you would summarise this for a curious unbeliever.

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10.

- **Who is Peter referring to by the term 'living stones'?**

- **What do we know about these stones? What is being done with these living stones and who is doing it?**

- **Verses 6-8 quote sections of the Old Testament. Many Bibles will include a footnote to inform us that they are from Isaiah 28:6, Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14. Other New Testament authors use these passages to discuss belief and unbelief in Jesus. Jesus himself refers to Psalm 118:22 and Peter famously quotes it in Acts 4.**

Read Mark 12:1-12.

- **Who was rejecting the Stone in the Mark passage? What about in 1 Peter?**

- **According to Mark what are the consequences of rejecting the Stone? And in 1 Peter?**

Read Acts 4:8-13

- **What was Peter's point here?**

- **These passages give examples of the responses of those who do not believe in Jesus. How do you see similar responses today?**

- **In contrast to those who have rejected Jesus, what does**

1 Peter 2:9-10 say about those who do believe? What has God done, who are we now, and what are we called to do?

For discussion and prayer

- **We have been given a new identity and this profoundly shapes our behaviour. Look again at the exhortations from last week. What is God calling you to do this week? Consider how you might do this. Write your approaches below.**

- **Over the coming week why not refer to this list and prayerfully consider how to live out your identity in Christ. You might like to memorise 1 Peter 2:9 as a summary of this new identity:**

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9

Study 4 – 1 Peter 2:11-3:7

Having an Impact on Unbelievers

How did you go last week living out your identity in Christ?

What worked? What didn't? Take time to pray for each other in light of this.

This week we are looking at a very large section of 1 Peter. The principle is outlined in 1 Peter 2:11-12 '...living good lives among the pagans...'. Then we have three case studies: 2:13-17 How to live as a believer with unbelievers in authority; 2:18-25 How believing slaves should live with unbelieving masters; and 3:1-7 How believing spouses should treat unbelieving spouses.

Read 1 Peter 2:11-25

- How does the reader's relationship with God affect their relationship with unbelieving authorities?**

- How do we live as free people (v16) but still submit to those in authority over us?**

Take a look at Acts 4:8-20

- **Is Peter's advice in 1 Peter 2 consistent with his actions in Acts 4?**

- **In what way is Christ an example for slaves?**

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7

- **What is the exhortation given to wives and what is the reason given?**

- **How does Peter say wives can do this?**

Study 5 – 1 Peter 3:8 - 4:19

Doing 'Good' in the End Times

This section seems to be controlled by the idea of doing 'good' even when we are badly treated. When we are treated badly by others we tend to instinctively react - sometimes we give what we get (and justify ourselves - 'They deserved it') at other points we just cut people off. It is hard to 'turn the other cheek' like

Jesus tells us to do in Matthew 5:38-42.

Read 1 Peter 3:8-4:19

- **What are some of the characteristics of life together for believers in 3:8? How should we deal with evil when we encounter it (v9)? Why?**
- **In 3:10-12 Peter quotes from Psalm 34. What point is he making?**
- **What answer might you give to the rhetorical question in**

- **Why does the end of all things being near (4:7) make prayer important and urgent?**

- **In 4 :12-19 our suffering is linked to Christ's. In what ways? Why should we rejoice when we suffer because of the name of Christ?**

Thinking this through a bit more

- **How would you summarise the key motivation for doing 'good' even when we are treated badly?**

- **How do you avoid becoming bitter when you are mistreated?**

- **Can you think of situations or relationships where you are struggling to do 'good'? How does this passage help?**

- **Reflect on 1 Peter 3:15 and people in your life and how you can respond to their interest in what you believe.**

- **When you think about 4:7-11 – which areas do you think you are doing well in? Which do you think you need to**

work on?

A Brief Appendix on 1 Peter 3:19-22

Imprisoned spirits, Noah and the flood which is baptism which saves you... could it get any stranger? We've chosen to consider these verses separately from the rest of the passage because they're not essential to the main point being made, although those of you who have watched the excellent overview produced by the Bible Project will have noticed that they highlight how the vivid imagery of this section contributes to the shape of the book.

Questions are many, but perhaps the most significant are: Who are the spirits in prison? When did Christ preach to them? What did he preach to them? The recommended commentary on 1 Peter by Wayne Grudem includes a helpful appendix on this passage that summarises five different ways it has been interpreted and comes to the same conclusion proposed here. We obviously don't have space to explore it all, so here's the Simon Marshman take on it:

Comparing v19 in the NIV and the ESV (or the footnote of the NIV) will show two quite different readings. This isn't because the translators have no idea, but because the Greek phrase at the start of verse 19 ('in which') could relate to the final phrase of v18 in two ways: either 'in the time he was made alive...', or 'in the (S)pirit in which he was alive...'

To run with the first, as the NIV does, it seems that Peter is informing us what Jesus did after his resurrection, giving us new information about him making some kind of proclamation to some kind of spirits (which could be angelic or human spirits) who had been disobedient at the time of Noah, but are now in spiritual prison. How this relates to the comments about the flood and baptism or the letter overall is not clear, but it's vivid imagery that fires the imagination!!

Alternatively, if Peter is commenting further on Christ being raised from the dead (as the ESV reads), then he is stating that through the Spirit Christ was preaching during the time of Noah to those alive then, but now dead (See 2 Peter 2:5). It emphasises that even at a time when 'every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time' (Gen 6:5) Jesus was proclaiming the kingdom of God, through Noah. Noah stood alone in the face of this disobedience and as God's judgment swept over the earth in the inundation, Noah was saved 'through water'. In this sense, Peter goes on to say in v21 that our baptism is like that flood-water in that it expresses God's judgment of sin and his saving work for those protected from it by his grace. So, you could paraphrase Peter's encouragement: 'as you give the reason for the hope you have (3:16), do it with a clear conscience (v16, cf v21), knowing that even if they persecute you 'it is better... to suffer for doing good than for doing evil' (v17) because you know that God has always been demonstrating his power over sin and his victory on your behalf has already been secured. After all, look at what the Spirit of God did - not only raising Jesus from the dead, but seating him at the right hand of God (v22).'

Clearly there is more that could be said! Further reading:

Wayne Grudem 1 Peter in *Tyndale Commentaries on the New Testament* IVP <https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-peter/>

Study 6 – 1 Peter 5

Standing Firm to the End

Have there been any experiences this last week that have tested you in finding joy in the face of suffering? How'd it go? How can we pray for each other in this?

Read 1 Peter 5:1-13

- **How does Peter's description of himself in v1 connect back to what we've learnt about suffering in this letter so far?**

- **How do the instructions for elders reflect what we've learnt about the assurance of future glory? Even if you're not an elder, what does this 'case study' in v2-4 teach us all about life in the here and now?**

- **Humility might seem a strange thing to specifically encourage in people who are suffering, but that's what Peter does in v5-9. How might pride (the opposite of humility) get in the way of each of the exhortations included here?**

- **V10-11 sums up so much of this letter. You might like to put it in your own words and share with the group about the encouragement you find in it. Alternatively, use these verses as a launch for prayer at the conclusion of this study.**

- **With all you've learned over the last 6 weeks, how can we pray for one another to "stand fast" in God's true grace? (v12)**