

1 PETER

INTRODUCTION

This epistle portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as the Precious Cornerstone of our faith. "Unto you who believe, therefore, He is precious." 1 Peter 2:7

John became known as "The Apostle of Love," and Paul was called "The Apostle of Faith," and Peter received the title "The Apostle of Hope." It is believed that Peter wrote this letter in the early A.D. 60's, and he addressed it to Christians living in various parts of Asia Minor who were suffering rejection in the world due to their obedience to Christ. He wrote it near the close of his life, when he was staying at Babylon on the Euphrates (5:13) where a Christian church had been established. The letter was probably delivered by Silvanus (5:12), who was one of Paul's companions.

You will recall that Peter was one of Jesus' closest three friends. Although his early life in training under the Lord was that of an impulsive, fearful and restless person, even denying his knowing of his Lord—later by the power of the Holy Spirit he becomes an entirely new man of God. This is a wonderful illustration of the transforming work of God in a human life. He became a leader of the apostles and was the preacher at the great spiritual work at Pentecost. The first 12 chapters of Acts center around Peter and his ministry, as he went about preaching to the Jews. Tradition tells us that he died a martyr's death (approx. 67 A.D.) at the hand of the Roman emperor Nero, and at his own request was crucified with his head downward, considering himself unworthy to even resemble his Master in death.

The Christians to whom Peter was writing were suffering "fiery trials" from the hostile Jews and fanatical Gentiles. He exhorts them to live faithfully in this society that is ungodly, even as Jesus Christ Himself also lived. These Christians needed encouragement from one who had experienced much trial himself, and he pointed them away from the trials to the future glory of their great salvation which awaited them (1:7). Christ is our example (2:21), and we should rejoice to partake of His sufferings (4:13). He speaks of Christ as Precious, and also uses the word "precious" in connection with: the trial of faith, blood, Cornerstone, spirit, faith and promises.

Peter tells them that we have been begotten by Jesus Christ into a lively hope; we have in reserve an incorruptible inheritance; we are kept by the power of God; we are being purified to fit us to stand with Christ; we have salvation for our souls; we have a gospel that angels desire to look into; we have a great hope; we have redemption through His blood; we shall not be confounded or ashamed; we are born again by His Word; we are built up a spiritual house; we are a chosen people; and we shall have a crown of glory! No wonder he was called the Apostle of Hope!

1 Peter 1:1, 2

Before all worlds God chose us in Christ (Eph. 1:4). There is no election outside of Christ. He was chosen, and all who were one with Him, in a union which was before time, but which is manifested in the process of time. We know little or nothing of the secret transactions of Eternity; but we can tell if we were included in them by a very simple test. All whom the Father gave to Christ come unto Him (John 6:37). If, therefore, we have come to Christ, attracted to Him, as steel filings to the magnet, we may assure our hearts, and dare to lay claim to the blessings and responsibilities included within that mystic circle.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Describe the great purpose of God when He chose you (and me) to be His chosen ones.

Rom. 1:5, 6 Rom. 8:29 Eph. 1:4 Col. 1:27, 28 1 Thess. 5:23, 24

1 Peter 1:3-5

Would you realize God's keeping grace? Give yourself entirely up to Him, renouncing all trust in yourself, and all connection with evil. Choose definitely and for ever the lot of the cross of Jesus. And then trust Jesus to keep you. Whenever temptation approaches, look up, and say, "Jesus, I trust Thy keeping power." Ask the Holy Spirit to keep you so constantly in this attitude that it may become the habit of your soul to look to Jesus when temptation assails. Trust Him to keep you trusting. Nourish your faith by devout meditation on the promises of God. Do not look at your weakness or your foes, but at the mighty bulwarks of God's salvation, which He has appointed. "The Lord is Thy Keeper." Hear His gracious words, and hide them in your heart: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Surely it were the height of blasphemy to affirm that the Almighty is not able, or willing, to keep the soul that trusts Him.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Make a statement regarding the source of your faith, and of the assurance that you are able to depend upon that source.

Rom. 4:3-8 Rom. 4:16 Rom. 5:1 Gal. 2:20 Gal. 5:22 Eph. 2:8-9 Phil. 4:7

1 Peter 1:6-12

Peter was to be the special target of Satan's assaults just because Christ had chosen him for so high a ministry. But even his very trials were his best preparation for that ministry, and the Master here intimates that when through the discipline of temptation he shall have himself become transformed, it will be his special calling to comfort and confirm his tried and tempted brethren.

How marvelously has he been transformed since that dark night of the denial! One has only to read his tender and lovely messages in his two epistles to see how truly he had taken up his Master's cross, and how deeply he had learned the lesson of his humiliating fall. One has only to read further his messages of consolation to the tried and tempted to see how faithfully he has fulfilled his commission, "Strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). The first epistle of Peter is the best commentary on this text, and we can find no more comforting and helpful message for those who are passing through fiery trials than these letters of hope and comfort.

Peter is indeed the apostle of hope, as Paul is the apostle of faith, and John the messenger of love. The keynote of his first epistle is this word trials, which reappears in every chapter and forms the pivot of almost all his messages of comfort and encouragement. We have but to read the following passages to find that this one thought is sustained through the entire epistle:

Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire— may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (2:19-21)

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the

reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (3:14-17)

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. (4:12-16)

Resist [Satan], standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (5:9-10)

Let us gather out of these passages Peter's special messages of consolation to the tried and troubled.

He begins by giving them the vision of hope and heaven before he says a single word about trial. He tells them of the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, unfading and reserved in heaven for them, before he draws the dark picture of persecution and suffering. When the sea captain sees the sailor boy growing white as he climbs the mast, he always shouts to him, "Look up!" and his nerves grow cool and his fears are assuaged. So the Lord on that dark night, when He was bidding His disciples not to let their hearts be troubled, told them of the Father's house of many mansions and the place prepared. Let us begin every trial with the thought of heaven and the hope of His coming and the joy set before us, and we, too, shall be enabled to endure the cross, despising the shame, and often sing:

When I can read my title clear
to mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall,
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all.

It is only "for a little while" (1 Peter 1:6). Compared with that long and happy eternity, the longest trial is short indeed. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Remember, suffering child of God, it will be over soon, and faith and hope can hear the whisper in an undertone, "It is but a little while."

There is a "need be" for every trial. It does not come by chance. There is a divine purpose in it all. It is necessary for your spiritual education, and some day you will thank God that He loved you well enough to let you learn to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3).

"You may have had to suffer grief," he says, "in all kinds of trials" (1 Peter 1:6), and there is a "need be" even for this. How true it is that trouble never comes alone! When the adversary gets your body under, he loves to strike your soul and inject the fiery darts of discouragement and doubt. And you must not wonder if sometimes the trial strikes into the very depths of your being, and you even lose your joy and spring, and fall into heaviness of spirit. This is the hardest of all temptations. "A crushed spirit who can bear?" (Proverbs 18:14). We are so apt to conclude at such a time that the Holy Spirit has left us or we should not be so depressed. This is simply not so! There was a time when the Master "began to be sorrowful and troubled" (Matthew 26:37). There was a time when Paul had to say, "this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within" (2 Corinthians 7:5). Do not wonder, therefore, if your heart may sink sometimes in deep and long depression. There may be a "need be" even for this. Perhaps the Lord is crucifying you to your natural exuberance of spirit and teaching you to take your joy by faith from the Holy Spirit, and so find an everlasting joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

Your trial is "of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire" (1 Peter 1:7). That is to say, the trial, not the faith, is precious. We really possess nothing but that which has become part of our being. Outward conditions and circumstances will all pass away, but the experience that God burns into us will be part of our life forevermore. Therefore trial is precious because it makes Christ real to us and fixes the spiritual character which the Holy Spirit imparts. Remember, suffering one, that your trial is very precious to Him. He is watching it with anxious and ceaseless solicitude. He will not suffer it to go too far or last too long, but the very moment that the end has been accomplished, He will

withdraw the vessel from the flames and give you rest from your sorrow.

It will result in "praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Pet. 1:7). "Praise," for we shall thank Him for His faithful love in not excusing us from the hardest and highest classes in the school of experience. "Honor," for it will entitle us to rank in the school among the veterans and to wear our battle scars as marks of highest honor amid the overcomers yonder. And "glory," for in no other way can we earn the rewards of heaven and the glory which is superadded to the grace except by sacrifice and suffering. Salvation is a gift of grace, all grace, and we have nothing to pay or do to win it. But glory is gained by giving up our will, by taking up the cross, by letting go our rights, by standing in the hard place now, as we share the sufferings of Christ, "so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (4:13).
(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

It is God who permits the trial. The evil thing may originate in the malignity of a Judas; but by the time it reaches us it has become the cup which our Father has given us to drink. The waster may purpose his own lawless and destructive work; but he cannot go an inch beyond the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Satan himself must ask permission ere he touches a hair of the patriarch's head (Job 1:8-12). The point up to which we may be tested is fixed by consummate wisdom. The weapon may hurt and the fire sting; but they are in the hands which redeemed us. Nothing can befall us without God's permission, and his permissions are his appointments. We cannot be the sport of blind fate or chance; for in trial we are still in the hands of the divine Savior.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Job suffered more painful trials than any of us care to consider, and yet he knew something about the Refiner's fire and its purpose, when he said, "But He knows the way that I take; and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). He looked forward to the glory yet to be revealed. Peter is showing us that Christians can enjoy the presence of Christ in the midst of trials and turn suffering into glory today. **In spite of Satan's attempt to bring out the worst in us through trials, from your study of verses 6 through 12 of 1 Peter 1, write a few statements on how our loving, trusting and rejoicing in Christ can not only strengthen our hope, but also give us confidence for the future.**

1 Peter 1:13-16

Such holiness (as described here) is evidently possible to us—for the holy God has "called" us to it (v. 15). "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). He "hath called us with a holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). All partakers of the heavenly calling are called "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1). But God would not summon us to heights we could not scale, or to tasks we could not perform. His CALL involves two facts—first, that his holiness is within our reach; secondly, that He is prepared to supply all that is necessary to effect in us that to which He calls us. God is pledged to make us holy; or He will expose Himself to the mockery of His foes. But we need not fear for Him. He counted the cost before He issued His proclamation; and He is well able to finish that of which He laid the foundation in the great depths of Calvary (Luke 14:29, 30).

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

We seek to honor God in many different ways, but the truest way to honor Him is to be holy: "be ye holy; for I am Holy." We are not to imitate God in His Holiness but to draw from Him our holiness. **What should our prayer be to obtain this holiness?**

1 Thess. 5:23

1 Peter 1:17-21

The blood is first for God to see. We then have to accept God's valuation of it. In doing so we shall find our salvation. If instead, we try to come to a valuation by way of our feelings we get nothing; we remain in darkness. No, it is a matter of faith in God's Word. We have to believe that the blood is precious to God because He says it is so. If God can accept the blood as a payment for our sins and as the price of our redemption, then we can rest assured that the debt has been paid. If God is satisfied with the blood, then the blood must be acceptable. Our valuation of it is only according to His valuation—neither more nor less. It cannot, of course, be more, but it must not be less. Let us remember that He is holy and He is righteous, and that a holy and righteous God has the right to say that the blood is acceptable in His eyes and has fully satisfied Him.

(The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee)

Why did God require a blood sacrifice specifically? Could it have been anything else? Could He possibly have given us redemption and require nothing whatsoever from us?

1 Peter 1:22-25

It is clearly true of all Scripture words, that they "are spirit and life," and can never pass away; and that not one jot or tittle shall fail. And this fact that the Bible lives and abides, notwithstanding all that has been done against it, proves that it possesses something of the life of the eternal and infinite God. God is manifestly in this Book, as of old in the acacia bush of the desert; or as natural life burns like a tiny spark within each seed falling down the bank. The persistence of the Book proves God to be in it. And therefore it is God's life which enters dead human souls through the Word and makes them live. The life which is thus begotten in them is infinite and eternal as Himself. And, being so, it lifts its possessors above the time-sphere into the very realm of heaven, and enables them to love, not with the poor faltering love of man, but with the royal, pure, unfeigned, blessed love, which is the very soul of the life of God Himself.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Hosea tells us that "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6), and that knowledge is of the Word of God. And it is through the Word of God that an individual comes to truly *know* God Himself (Jer. 9:23, 24). It is unthinkable that a true Christian cannot overcome Satan and demons as He stands on that Word—as did our Lord. **What is your assessment of your own knowledge of this "love letter" and "manual of instructions" that our God has so carefully given to us, not only to take us Home, but to guard and guide us through this earthly life?**

1 Peter 2:1-8

It is recorded as a Jewish legend that when the temple of Solomon was being reared with noiseless hands, each prepared stone and timber being simply adjusted to its place, one stone of singular form was laid aside as un-suited to any place that they had found for it. After a while it became covered up with refuse and was known as the stone which the builders rejected. But later a niche was found on the principal corner that no stone would fit, and then they looked at this rejected stone and found it was the chief cornerstone—one designed to fill this place and connect together the two walls—thus make the building one. And so it came to be a proverb among the Jews that the stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner. Our Lord applied the proverb to Himself. And well He might. For it is in Him that all the parts of the building are united and compacted and grow together into an holy temple in the Lord. It is as we are united to Him that we are attached to each other, and all Christian unity depends upon oneness with the Lord. The nearer we grow to the Master's heart, the closer will we stand heart to heart in unison with each other. The secret of Christian union is not platforms, creeds, or even cooperative work, but it is one life, one heart, one spirit, in the fellowship and love of Jesus Christ.

"To you who believe, this stone is precious" (1 Pet. 2:7). Literally this means as in the revised version, "Unto you which believe he is the preciousness." He is called in the previous passage the precious stone of God's election. Now His preciousness passes over to you who believe. His merits are imparted to you, and His rights and glories become yours also. And thus "you also, like living stones" (2:5) are built up into Him and become as precious as He. Just as when the iron touches the magnet it becomes partaker of its magnetism and in turn a magnet, too, so the soul that is united to Christ partakes with Him of His divine purity and power, and is no longer earthly and common, but precious and divine. Peter is undoubtedly referring to the interview between him and his Master when he was first called. "You are Simon son of John" (John 1:42) the Lord had said. That is, you are but a piece of earthly clay. But "You will be called Cephas (which, when translated, is Peter [a stone, KJV] (John 1:42)." That is, "your nature shall be transformed by contact with Me, until you shall become part of the living Rock," which the word Peter signifies. And so we find in the vision of the New Jerusalem that Peter and the apostles of the Lamb are there as precious stones laid first on the Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, and reflecting all His transcendent glory. This, then, is the meaning of the preciousness of Christ. It is not only that He is dear to us, for that is ineffably true, but rather that we are dear to God even as He—that we share His preciousness, shine in His beauty, stand in His merits, and will be partakers of His glory.

All that He has shall be mine,
All that He is I shall be;
Robed in His glory divine,
I shall be even as He.

"A stone that causes men to stumble—a rock that makes them fall" (1 Peter 2:8). If you reject this precious Savior, if you miss this supreme opportunity, if you pervert the grace of God and make it only an occasion for your idle criticism,

Christ will become to you as great a curse as He might have been a blessing. "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces" but oh, there is something immeasurably worse, "but he on whom it falls will be crushed" (Luke 20:18).

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Explain how the "living stones" of 1 Pet. 2:5 interact with the "cornerstone" of 1 Pet. 2:6. Why is the cornerstone "a stone of stumbling" (1 Pet. 2:8) to the disobedient?

1 Peter 2:9-12

"They war against the soul"—That word "war" is full of meaning. It gives the idea of the march of an army against a city, as of the Greeks to surround and capture Troy—an assault which began with open war and ended by the stratagem of the wooden horse, from which the armed warriors descended into the heart of the city at dead of night. Of course we should all admit that excessive indulgence in any appetite injures the body, and especially the organs through which the sin against the whole fabric has been committed. But we may not all realize how destructive these fleshly lusts are to the inner life. They attack and conquer it, and lead it into captivity, impairing its energies, sully its purity, lowering its tone, and cutting off the locks of moral strength. Remember then, when tempted to yield to some unholy prompting, even though you only indulge the thought or wish, that you are exposing yourself to a certain diminution of spiritual force, which will inevitably cripple your endeavors, and show itself in failure and defeat. No act of sensual indulgence is possible without inevitable injury to our true selves. It may be forgiven, and put away, through the forgiveness of God, by the blood of Jesus; but the soul can never be quite what it would have been had the temptation been overcome, and the grace of self-restraint exercised.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

There are many temptations prepared by Satan in today's world in order to overcome us and keep us from victory in Christ. **However, we ask of each of you—is there anything that we absolutely cannot overcome as we rely on our Lord and the Holy Spirit?**

Luke 22:31, 32 1 Cor. 10:13 Gal. 6:1 1 Tim. 6:9 Jas. 1:13-15 1 John 2:15-17 Rev. 3:10

1 Peter 2:13-20

As with these household servants, there is no honorable way out of a position in which God seems to have wedged us. We may be in daily contact with grinding tyranny; with almost unbearable cruelty; with an envenomed tongue; with an irritating captious, trying temper, never satisfied, never pleased—a child with the mother; a nurse with an invalid; an apprentice with an employer; a woman with her husband—in some position which cannot be altered, and where the obligation, once entered upon, must be borne to the end. Here then is the unailing divine recipe: when reviled, do not revile again; when buffeted though doing well, do not retaliate; when unjustly accused or punished, be still and take it patiently. And out of all this will come a life which shall not only be like His life who has set us an example, but which shall also exert a remedial and saving influence on the most violent opposers of His Gospel, while it mounts up to God as an odor of a sweet smell, eliciting His smile of loving approbation.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Listed below are a number of Scriptures we should rely on when we need to patiently endure. Either add more of your own, or tell us how a certain Word of God kept you in a trying time.

Ps. 89:33-34 Ps. 103:17 Matt. 24:35 John 6:27 1 Cor. 3:14 1 Cor. 13:13 2 Cor. 4:18 Heb. 12:27, 28

1 Peter 2:21-25

In the sight of God, we are reckoned as being so identified with our Lord that what is predicted of Him is also true of us. Dead in His death. Raised in His resurrection. Seated with Him in His glory. And it should be the purpose and aim of our life to realize by faith in actual practice and experience all that is ours in the mind and purpose of God. You died—reckon yourselves dead. You are risen—set your affection on things above. You are seated in heavenly places—walk worthy of your high calling. By the grace of God, there should be a perpetual deadness to every appeal that comes from the flesh, the world, or the devil; and an ever fuller response to the inspirations and appeals which come from the Spirit of God to a life of righteousness.

The Apostle Paul's teaching in Romans chapters 7 and 8 teach us so plainly that we are unable in the flesh—in the natural—in the human, to identify ourselves with our Lord and reckon ourselves as dead, buried and even now risen with Him. However, beginning with verse 1 of Romans 8, Paul reassures us that by the power of the Holy Spirit we are free from sin, our mortal bodies are given LIFE by Him, we are given Sonship by Him, and we will be taken from this present life of suffering to the glory that awaits us as children of God. **Have you personally experienced this fullness of the Holy Spirit? If so, tell the difference that this makes in your Christian life. Tell what Romans 8:31-39 means to you now!**

1 Peter 3:1-7

The command to be in subjection was primarily addressed to those who since their marriage had become Christians. There was considerable hesitancy in the early Church, as to their duty under such circumstances. "Should they leave their husbands?" "Should they alter their behavior to them?" "Should they assume any superiority?" "No," said the Apostles, "stay where you are, however painful your position, and uncongenial your surroundings, and trying your husband's conduct. Be chaste, gentle, loving, submissive, winsome, so that hearts may be softened, which have never heard a word of Gospel preaching, and may be won by the beauty of your holy and unselfish lives."

Of course, where true love subsists between husband and wife, and where both are Christians, such a command as this is hardly needed. There is no room for subjection, where there are no masterful commands; no standing up for rights; no jealous strife for independence. The sensitive instincts of love define exactly, as no words could do, the respective position of husband and wife; and, altogether apart from such an injunction as this, it is perhaps rather the nature of woman's love to yield, to lean on one stronger than itself, and to give itself away in deeds of loving ministry.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

From Peter's biblical counseling, and also that of Paul's in 1 Corinthians chap. 7 regarding God's principles of marriage, list what you believe are the reasons for the high divorce rate in our society. What can Christians do to help overcome this?

1 Peter 3:8-12

"Love" is not identical with "like." Providence does not ask us whom we would *like* to be our brethren—that is settled for us; but we are bidden to love them, irrespective of our natural predilections and tastes. You say—That is impossible. But remember that true love does not necessarily originate in the emotions, but in the will; it consists not in feeling, but in doing; not in sentiment, but in action; not in soft words, but in noble and unselfish deeds.

You say that this is your difficulty, and that there are Christians in your immediate circle, whom you cannot get on with. Here, then, is my advice. Do not try to feel love, but *will* to love. Tell the dear Master that you are willing to love, or willing to be made willing to love, but that He must create the grace of love within our breast. Ask Him to pour the tides of His love through your heart, that He may love through you; and you shall finally catch the glow and grace of His tenderness. Offer Him your lips, that by them He may speak the words you cannot utter; and your hand, that by it He may do the gentle deeds of ministry which you cannot bring yourself to perform. Your confessions of inability will bring out the assurances of His all-sufficiency. What you cannot do, He can and will do through you. All things are possible to Him, and will be to you if you believe in Him. Begin, then, to do what you know you ought to do, and would do, if you felt love. Do it because it is right; do it for Christ's sake; do it expecting the Lord to work in and through you—and you will find before long that streams of divine tenderness have commenced to flow through the channels of your being, long choked with silt and debris. And love thus practically learned to one fellow-believer, will open your heart to all.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

From these verses, if we do what is commanded, what blessing is there for us?

1 Peter 3:13-17

"But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord" (1 Peter 3:15 RV). In view of the context it is striking to note that it was Peter whom the Spirit of God first moved to write these words. As he did so, his heart, no doubt, was filled with sorrow and deep contrition. He says, "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (v. 14). On a never-to-be forgotten occasion, he had been afraid of the "terror" of the wicked. In Pilate's

palace the fear of man brought him a snare. But in our text he announces the divine remedy for deliverance from the fear of man.

"But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." In the light of its setting, this means, first of all, to let the awe of the lordship of Christ possess your hearts. Dwell constantly on the fact that Christ is Lord. Because He is Lord, all power in heaven and earth is His; therefore, He is master of every situation, sufficient for every emergency, able to supply every need. When a Christian trembles in the presence of his enemies, it is because he doubts or has lost sight of the faithfulness and power of Christ.

"But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." The motive for obeying this precept should not be our own peace and comfort, but His honor and glory. To guard against the fear of man, the saint is to cultivate the fear of the Lord, that Christ may be magnified. The Lord Jesus is glorified when His persecuted people preserve a calm demeanor and immovable fortitude in the face of all opposition. But this is possible only as our hearts are occupied with Him, and particularly with His lordship.

(Gleanings In the Godhead, A. W. Pink)

Combat fear with fear. Push out the fear of man with the fear of God. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and *let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*" (Isa. 8:13) **Besides the verses listed below, list several other verses from the Word that instruct us to "fear the Lord."**

Deut. 4:10 Deut. 6:2 Isa. 8:13-14

1 Peter 3:18-22

In one of Isaiah's most splendid passages, the king of Babylon, having fallen at last before that mightier monarch who comes with equal foot to the hut of the peasant and the palace of the king, is depicted as a thin, pale ghost entering the abodes of the departed. And as he comes, the shades of the kings of the nations and chiefs of the peoples stir themselves, and with thin voices accost him in tones of withering sarcasm: "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?—that did shake kingdoms?"

But surely the abodes of the departed were stirred after another fashion when the Son of God, having welcomed the dying thief to Paradise, refused to rest there after the strain of His long conflict and agony, but started forth to spend the brief interval until His resurrection in proclaiming with herald voice the wondrous news of accomplished redemption. This is surely the emphatic teaching, not of this passage only, but also of that marvelous announcement of the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "He descended into the lower parts of the earth," a phrase which was constantly used among the Jews for the nethermost abyss, the unseen Hadean world, the abode of the departed. On such testimony as this, the Church in all ages has affirmed, *He descended into Hell* (the word *Hell*, of course, standing, as it does so often on the page of Scripture, for *Hades*). We do not know the full burden of our Master's message there. It is not declared; and all our surmisings must fall short of the reality. All that we need to notice is that the word employed of His ministry is carefully chosen, and only includes the work of a *herald*, as distinguished from that of an *evangelist*.

It may be asked why He preached only to those who were disobedient in the days of Noah? Why were his messages confined to these? Were there not many more who had been disobedient at other periods of the world's sad story? But none of these are excluded. The sacred writer does not say that the Lord addressed no others, but that he certainly addressed these. And our attention is thus focused on *them*, because it was His desire to guide our thoughts to a comparison, already forming in His mind, and casting its shadow over His words, and which would draw lessons from the days of Noah for our own.

Are we then to think that these spirits had another chance, and swarmed, as the medieval artists loved to depict, in rejoicing crowds after Christ into Paradise? There is nothing of this sort in these words. And it is a mistake to trust to inference in a case so utterly removed from human cognizance and experience. The Bible turns our thought from speculation about the future to life in the living present, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me!"

All that we need to concern ourselves with now is this fragment which Peter has handed down to us from the posthumous sayings of Christ, when He taught them for forty days, and "spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." We must clearly understand that Christ's death did not stop His usefulness, but that He ministered still; just as Joseph, when cut off from his duties in the palace, ministered to his fellow-prisoners, proclaiming to one his deliverance and to another his doom.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

This segment of explanation and searching is for the earnest seeker of truth, the one who waits upon the Holy Spirit in prayer, longing for the knowledge that only God can provide. **Use the Scripture verses below and any others you want to add to answer the questions below.**

Job 17:16 Job 19:26 Ps. 16:10 Ps. 68:18 Matt. 11:23 Matt. 16:18 Luke 10:15 Luke 16:19-31
Luke 23:43 Acts 2:27, 31 2 Cor. 5:6-8 Eph. 4:8-10 2 Tim. 1:10 Heb. 2:15 Rev. 1:18 Rev.

Hades, also known as Sheol in the Old Testament had two divisions—one for the saved souls, and one for the unsaved souls. **Do you agree from the above Scriptures that the part for saved souls was also known as Paradise?** Recall that Jesus promised the penitent thief would be with Him in Paradise that day.

From Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, what did He say separated the two places—one where the rich man was, and one where Abraham and Lazarus were? Could that separation ever be bridged?

Ever since Jesus died, was buried and rose again, we are told in the New Testament that the saved person's soul would be absent from the body (at death) and present with the Lord. Who stated this in 2 Cor. 5:6?

1 Peter 4:1-2

When the mind is renewed, the Spirit of God fulfills the promise of God, where He says, "I will put My laws in their hearts, and *in their minds will I write them*" (Heb. 10:16). Thus we obtain the "mind" of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). What that "mind" is we read in Phil. 2:5-8. The practical life is changed only so far as we are "transformed" by the "renewing" of the "mind." Christ's "mind" was to obey God, even unto the death of the Cross. That "mind" in us becomes an armor. "Arm yourselves with the same mind" (1 Pet. 4:1), *i.e.*, Christ's mind towards the Cross. "*Christ suffered,*" we say, and as our minds dwell upon His sufferings, and the Holy Spirit shows us the separation from sin which fellowship with Him brings about, we too choose to suffer, and we are "armed" by having His mind. Thus the new mind becomes "stayed upon God," instead of being tossed about by distracting thoughts. And a mind stayed on God means perfect peace.

(The Battle for the Mind, Jesse Penn Lewis)

Every soul belongs to God and exists by His pleasure—therefore the relationship must be full Lordship on His part, and complete submission on ours to His will. To truly *know* God, our total personality must be brought into conformity to His. When we do determine to exalt Christ over all, we step out of the world's parade. That person must choose between God and money, between God and men, between God and personal ambition, between God and self, and between God and human love. That person's language then must be "Be Thou exalted" (Psalm 21:13). This is the key to unlock the door to great treasures of grace. **Can we know and have the mind of Christ continuously in our daily walk?**

1 Peter 4:3-6

The secret and power of self-denial: It is not easy to refuse that broad, easy road. No effort is required to take it. Life tends to roll easily and luxuriously down its gentle slopes. The stream insensibly bears the boat, gaily decked with flags, and filled with careless or idle pleasure seekers, toward the fatal rapids. What is the secret which shall lead a man to say "No" to self; to turn a deaf ear to its solicitations; and to face the steep ascent? And, supposing he has the desire to resist, what power is there strong enough to enable him to stem the torrent, beating and seething against him at every stroke?

The answer is found in the cross of our blessed Lord. "Christ suffered in the flesh." The pious contemplation of His death will most powerfully kill the love of sin in the soul, and kindle an ardent hatred to it. The believer—looking on Jesus as crucified for him, and wounded for his transgressions; and taking in deep thoughts of His spotless innocency, which deserved no such thing, and of His matchless love, which yet endured it all for him—will then naturally think: "Shall I be a friend to that which was His deadly enemy? Shall sin be sweet to me, which was so bitter to Him; and that for my sake? Shall I ever lend it a good look, or entertain a favorable thought of that which shed my Lord's blood? Shall I live in that for which He died, and died to kill in me? Oh, let it not be!"

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

As you take another serious look at the questions above posed by F. B. Meyer, does this bring a quieting effect to your soul, and a deepening of your desire to worship Him? As you feel led, speak to this.

1 Peter 4:7-11

Before passing on to consider the fiery trial which is to try us, it seems wise to stay very briefly to consider the master-motive which should inspire our lives—namely, "that God in all things may be glorified." (1 Pet. 4:11)

This was equally the motive of the Apostles: Not for emolument, or human praise; not for power or love of place; not

for the souls of men only; but for the glory of God, did they reckon not their lives dear, but endured hardships and persecutions even to martyrdom itself. They yearned to show men how good and glorious He was; or to open the cavern of some heart to receive into its depths His light—that so the extent of His empire might be increased by one more being brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. *And this should be our motive.*

This motive would never disappoint. If we work for any lower motive, we are always liable to disappointment. Either the desire of our hearts is not realized, or, when we have attained it, we are oppressed with a vague sense of dissatisfaction and depression. But here is a motive which can never mislead us. It is always in front of us. It is an ever-fresh inspiration, ennobling and inspiring, and elevating. When we have done our best, it is still in front of us, beckoning us to loftier ascents, to more strenuous endeavors. And the impression produced on us is one of adoration and devotion, which make all our life and work a means of grace.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

In most of our lives, our early ambitions and motives are far from noble, and most likely, they brought little praise to God and His kingdom work. **Here do one of the following:**

(1) Tell of an early motive that was merely self-centered, and how you came to recognize it.

(2) Tell of the entering into your life of an appointment of God, and how it came to fruition (if it did).

1 Peter 4:12-16

The soul is more capable of receiving divine comfort during a season of trouble, for the things of time and sense then cease to charm it. Moreover, the Lord manifests more tenderness to His people on such occasions: “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” God has various designs in bringing His people into trouble and sustaining them under it: for their growth, for a fuller discovery of Himself to them, and for them to learn the sufficiency of His grace.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Why did Peter tell these Christians to rejoice in their sufferings?

1 Peter 4:17-19

But the sufferings of this life, at their worst, are only part of a great mystery of pain and judgment which exists, not here only, but hereafter. The believer in Jesus has nothing to fear from that. Whatever may be his present sufferings, they cannot pass the limit of this mortal life; they have no power to send one single stab or thrill over the barrier which separates the two worlds. With the ungodly it is not so. The tempest which breaks on their heads in this life is but the beginning of their sorrows. Through death they pass to greater misery. They depart accursed into fire. They are cast into outer darkness. They are reserved unto a further day of judgment to be punished. Moreover, the sufferings of such as refuse the Gospel are of a very different description, both here and hereafter, to those of God’s children. There is the sting of remorse, the reproach of conscience, the bitter sense of severance from God, and love, and hope, and blessedness. Though the believer may suffer, his heart brims with hope; but the heart of the worldling is filled with darkness, the midnight of the soul.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

1 Peter 4:18 states (NKJ): “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?”

The same verse in NIV reads: “If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner?”

Still another NKJ version says: “If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner?”

And, finally, a quote from The New English Bible on the same verse says: “If the righteous in the land get their deserts, how much more the wicked man and the sinner?”

In considering all of the above prayerfully, how do you explain this verse?

1 Peter 5:1-4

The work must be done from love. If it is undertaken as the result of strong pressure brought to bear on him, or for

any reward which may be offered, the shepherd does not fulfill the ideal of this passage. "Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." None of God's soldiers are mercenaries or pressed men; they are all volunteers. We must have a shepherd's heart if we would do a shepherd's work. Nor is this love merely the liking which may come from the flesh, or be dictated by the inclination of the soul. There must be the love which is akin to the love of the Chief Shepherd Himself. A love which can endure without return or thanks; which can grow where there is scarcely any soil; and which clings to the least lovely and thankful. That love is only shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. To take the cure of souls only because there is a good living in the family, or for a livelihood, or because it gives position and influence, is a sacrifice which will entail a terrible reckoning for the hireling shepherd.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

As the Apostle Peter followed in Christ's footsteps continually leading and loving his people as a tender, caring shepherd, he gave earnest directions to those who would follow him in leadership. **What kinds of leaders was he referring to in 5:2 and 5:3 that he warned against? Have you personally been where these have crept into the church?**

1 Peter 5:5

And this insidious sin of *pride* dies hard in the child of God; nay, it may be questioned if ever we shall be perfectly finished with it on this side the gates of pearl. Changing with every temperament, suiting itself to every mood, clinging as a cloak even around the flesh of the converted man. Christian men are proud of their houses, and carriages, and wealth, and dress, and rank, and children. Christian ministers are proud of their influence, and sermons, and the admiration they receive. A bit of flattery, a newspaper notice, a conscious success, are food enough for pride to grow fat upon, till it begins to fancy that all the world is thinking of it, and feels that the most extravagant praise is but a grudging tribute to its worth.

May I not press this upon my readers further, urging each to consider his own character and behavior in the light of these words. We must be convicted of pride before we seek the grace of true humility. Pride is one of the most detestable of sins; yet does it find lodgment in earnest souls, though we often speak of it by some lighter name. We call it—independence, self-reliance. We do not always discern it in the hurt feeling, which retires into itself, and nurses its sorrows in a sulk. We do not realize how much it has to do with our withdrawing from positions where we feel ourselves outshone by someone who excels us, and with whom we do not care to enter into comparison with the certainty of being second best. It would not be at all easy for us to be silent; to take the lowest place; to learn—where now we count it our prerogative to teach.

And sometimes, when we are clearly worsted, and obliged to step down, we begin to pride ourselves on the sweetness of our disposition in taking the affront so pleasantly. We are proud of our humility, vain of our meekness; and putting on the saintliest look, we wonder whether all around are not admiring us for our lowliness. I fear that Bunyan's shepherd-boy, sitting in the lowland glade, and singing, would have become proud of being so low, had he known that his lowliness was to render him immortal. There is at least one preacher whom I know, who has been proud of his sermons on humility, and ostentatious of his efforts to be meek. And thus, even if the soul should array itself in the garb of humility, however simple and plain it be, there is imminent risk of its becoming vain.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

In the teaching above, F. B. Meyer tells us that pride itself is one of the most detestable of sins, and the Bible teaches us the following about pride: It brings strife, it hardens the mind, it produces spiritual decay, it keeps one from real progress, it hinders a person from coming to God, it issues in self-deception, it makes men reject God's Word, and it leads to ruin. It was the great sin of Satan. F. B. Meyer says we try to "lighten it" by terming it "independence," or "self-reliance." **How can we combat this inherent quality of pride that appears to creep into all phases of our life?**

1 Peter 5:6

Accept all the divine discipline of life. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God." Ah, what infinite sorrow men lay up for themselves in resisting the divine will! If you fret and chafe against His appointments, finding fault with Him because He has not given you another lot, some other partner for your life, some more congenial occupation, you can only be wretched. For at the bottom of all such dispositions, which fume as the waves of the sea, there lurks a feeling of disappointed pride, which thinks that it deserved some better treatment from God, and considers itself ill-used.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

The Apostle Paul was given a "thorn in the flesh" that troubled him greatly, and though he prayed three times for it to go away, God allowed it to remain. **What was God's answer to Paul (2 Cor 12:7)? From then on, how did Paul cope**

with this problem?

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:7) And it is in the highest degree necessary to obey this precept. So only can we be peaceful and strong. We cannot stand the strain of both work and worry. Two things come between our souls and unshadowed fellowship with God, *sin* and *care*. And we must be as resolute to cast our care on the Lord as to confess our sins to Him, if we would walk in the light as He is in the light. One yelping dog may break our slumber on the stillest night. One grain of dust in the eye will render it incapable of enjoying the fairest prospect. One care may break our peace and hide the face of God, and bring a funeral pall over our souls. We must cast *all* our care on Him, if we would know the blessedness of unshadowed fellowship.

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Psalm 55:22 tells us: “Cast thy burden upon the Lord and *He shall sustain thee*.” Most Christians *know* this truth, but it is another thing to *allow* God to work out that problem that at the moment looms so large. Each believer has to learn how to make this a constant practice. **From your own experience, what is the best way to *yield* the problem to the Problem Solver, and then leave it there? When do you find peace returning to your soul?**

1 Peter 5:8-14

There is no need to suppose that all God’s people are watched and attacked by the devil himself; for this would almost invest him with the attributes of omniscience and omnipresence. But he is supported and abetted by myriads of wicked spirits in the heavenly places, any of which waits to do his will and to execute his plans; and the entire host, with long experience of the frailties of human nature, with desperate malice against God, with unwearied watchfulness to do us harm, rests not day or night, but goes to make up that one malign and terrible adversary of which the Apostle speaks. And, indeed, we might relinquish all hope of being able to withstand his onsets, did we not know that he has been vanquished by our Leader, who is prepared to overcome him again, in and through and for each of those who put their trust in Him. O Victor of the Garden, the Cross, and the Resurrection morning, as You did overcome Satan in your earthly sojourn, so overcome him again in each of us that we may be more than conquerors, because He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world!

(Tried By Fire, F. B. Meyer)

Even though Satan is the instigator behind all evil, yet the Bible tells us that “All things work together for good to them that believe” (Rom. 8:28), and the Apostle John tells us that “God is love”—in fact, he tells us that *all love is* of God, and anyone who does not love *does not know* God (1 John 4:7-11). Then with this knowledge we must assume that this loving God who only intends love for us has an excellent reason for allowing certain troubles and trials to come upon us. **Either from your experience, observation or Scripture story, tell us the possible reasons for our awesome God allowing these kinds of testings and trials to come upon us.** (Refer to the last two paragraphs of the introduction to 1 Peter.)