

To help build the context for the 3 verses we looked at on Sunday, read chapter 1 of 1 Peter in its entirety.

Look at vv. 1-2 and make observations as a group.

Who is this letter written to? Christians scattered across Asia Minor because of persecution

What defines or characterizes them? (v. 1) Elect of God, exiles/aliens/strangers
They were chosen/elect of God – (v. 2) **By whom? In whom? For what to whom?**

The big theme of 1 Peter is calling the saints to live holy lives in the midst of great trial and suffering. In chapter 1, Peter piles on immense reason to live in a manner worthy of that calling.

Choose one thing Peter says in vv. 1-2 about our identity as Christians and consider it for a moment.

How do you think this fact should affect a Christian's attitude and behavior?

Peter begins v. 3 with the words, "Blessed be God," or "Praise be unto God."

List the character traits and actions for which Peter praised God in vv. 3-5.

What other words come to mind as you think about God being a God of mercy?

Remember, He is not lacking in mercy, He is *rich* in *great* mercy!

- Good, kind, compassionate, condescending, loving, One who pities etc.

Mercy assumes need on the part of the recipient and adequate resources on the part of the One bestowing mercy.

Pastor Don mentioned, "God brings to life what is dead." Scripture says that before we are saved, we are *dead* in our sins (Eph 2:1, 3, 12).

What can a dead man do to save himself?

- Nothing

Keep this in mind as we study v. 3.

For a bible study tip, it is always good to keep an eye out for the main verb in a verse or paragraph. The main action is critical to understanding a portion of Scripture.

What is the main verb in verse 3?

- "He has caused us

What did God cause us to be?

- "Born again"

What would you tell someone who might ask what it means to be born again?

Read John 3:7-8

If the Spirit has come to you and given you new life, think about how profound that is.

Discuss what kind of response we must have and what lives we must live knowing that God has done it all for us.

Consider the alternative, not being born of the Spirit, in your responses.

How do we know we've been born again?

- The starting point is Romans 10:9-10. Confess Christ is Lord and believe in the resurrection.

With the knowledge of that first step being true, Don said he looks at the things in Scripture that characterize one who is born again and notices them in his life. Not perfectly, but increasing.

What are the kinds of things that characterize one who is born again?

- The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5)
- Love for God
- Love for God's people (1 John 3:14)
- Love for God's Word
- Life-long confession of sin (1 John 1:8) and repentance
- Longing for His return (Hebrews 9:28)
- Striving in obedience (1 John 2:3-5)

Take some time this week to examine your own heart with these things.

What is the result of our new birth?

- A perpetually living hope

What are the two ways you can understand the word hope?

- Desire
- Expectation

How are we to understand the word *hope* in this passage?

- Certain expectation

The last part of v. 3 tells how our living hope is secured. **By what means?**

- The resurrection

How important is the resurrection? See 1 Corinthians 15:16-20

In v. 4, what is the promise made to believers? (Those who have been born again)

- We receive a secure inheritance

What are the four descriptions of our inheritance in v. 4? In your own words, describe each one.

- Imperishable
- undefiled
- Unfading
- Kept in heaven by God

Reflective reading:

Are you looking forward to your inheritance?

Many people are preoccupied with acquiring as much of this world's materials as they can. But it seems unimportant whether we have much or little in this life. Ultimately we will leave it all behind. The priority is to love and serve our Lord Jesus Christ. He will grant us an eternal inheritance that far exceeds our wildest dreams. God's Word says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor 2:9).

According to 1 Peter 1:5, John 10:28, and Philippians 1:6, who protects the believer's salvation?

- God's power
- He holds us in His hands
- He completes the work

Why was that important for those believers to hear and how is that a comfort for you today?

- Persecution and death are not to be feared
- I cannot lose my salvation
- Fear God, not man or perilous circumstances

What truths from this passage are important to share with a believer who is experiencing difficult trials?

Remember, Jesus said in this life you should expect trouble and suffering – particularly because of your faith in Christ. Sickness and illness are common to all, trial and persecution because of faith is what Jesus said to expect in addition. He also said don't be surprised if the world hates you, because they hated Him first.

How does the Holy Spirit, through Peter, comfort the worried, troubled, fearful, and downcast believers in Asia Minor in 5:12?

- The truth in this letter is of utmost importance
- "Stand firm in it."

Prayer.

There is a lifetime of things to praise God for and things to walk in constant gratitude about in this passage.