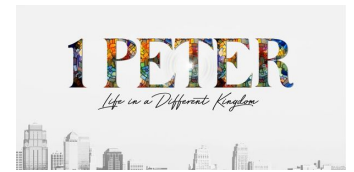


Allegiance – You are something new.

1 Peter 1:1-2:10

(Expanded Sermon Notes)



If you've ever stepped into an environment and instantly felt like you didn't belong, Peter and the audience he wrote to can sympathize with you. They were living in a moment in history where being a Christian was noticeable publicly because it meant living a totally new lifestyle. Simply put, they didn't belong to the Roman kingdom, and they felt it. However, as Peter tells them, that is great news! They don't fit with Rome because they belong in the kingdom of God. And because they belong in the kingdom of God, they have a hope that is living, an inheritance that is imperishable, and a salvation that leads to something greater. Their allegiance is to Jesus, and nothing could be better for them, even as they struggle to fit into Rome.

The Christians of Asia Minor were facing troubling times. Because of their faith in Christ, they were being grieved by social ostracism. Slander and malicious talk undermined their relationships with associates and family, threatened their honor in the community, and possibly jeopardized their livelihood. The issues of how to maintain a vital Christian faith in such circumstances and how to respond to unjust treatment pressed upon them. Peter writes to give these Christians hope, consolation, and encouragement by explaining their new identity in Christ and how even suffering is an integral part of that identity.¹ What was the main tension point as they lived out this new identity? They refused to worship the gods of their culture; they had an exclusive message of salvation; they had odd customs and practices; and they believed in a God who became a man and who, rather than triumph and establish his kingdom as expected, had been killed, only to rise again (they claimed) from the dead. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were exiles in the world they once called their own.² The reality is simple, they are new people, and they are to continue to live as such, even in the face of opposition. However, that reality is easier said than done. And, frankly, it is one that we can relate to in our modern moment. It is also the greatest opportunity, why? **Because if we have a living hope, we should live like it.** And, when we live like it, others will come to experience that same living hope.

¹ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 63.

² Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 15.

1. When faithfulness isn't easy. (1:1-2)

- a. Greeting / context → The opening two verses help us to understand the audience.
 - i. This book is actually a letter. - It is called a pastoral epistle.
 - 1. Peter is writing to a group of people with pastoral authority to teach, encourage, and even correct them.
 - a. **Peter writes to give these Christians hope, consolation, and encouragement by explaining their new identity in Christ and how even suffering is an integral part of that identity.** ³
 - 2. Who is he writing to?
 - ii. The audience. → Christians who are suffering for their allegiance to Christ.
 - 1. **Slander and malicious talk undermined their relationships with associates and family, threatened their honor in the community, and possibly jeopardized their livelihood.**
 - 2. The issues of how to maintain a vital Christian faith in such circumstances and how to respond to unjust treatment pressed upon them. ⁴
 - 3. The Roman world was all about your allegiance.
 - a. There was no greater authority at this time in world history than Rome, and they demanded absolute allegiance.
 - b. Secondly, the world was deeply fractured ethnically and religiously. This meant your second allegiances were to your group (ethane).
 - 4. **Peter wrote to Christians scattered through modern-day Turkey (1:1), who experienced sporadic mistreatment and abuse, ridicule and shame, simply and only because they identified with Christ.** ⁵ → They are exiles.
 - a. **The term 'exile', *parepidēmoi*, always refers to a temporary resident in a foreign place.** Abraham called himself 'an alien and *sojourner* (*parepidēmoi*)' among the Hittites (Gen. 23:4, LXX). Heb. 11:13 says that all the heroes of faith from Abel to Abraham acknowledged that they were 'aliens and *sojourners* (*parepidēmoi*) on the earth' ⁶
 - b. As exiles, their allegiances were not to be the "in-between" place they found themselves.
 - 5. **They refused to worship the gods of their culture; they had an exclusive message of salvation; they had odd customs and practices; and they believed in a God who became a man and who, rather than triumph and establish his kingdom as expected, had been killed, only to rise again (they claimed) from the dead. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were exiles in the world they once called their own.** ⁷
- iii. Peter establishes his authority and occasion for writing. (v.1)
 - 1. Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, reminding his readers of the authority and commissioning he has received from the Lord. He does not

³ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 63.

⁴ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 63.

⁵ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 15.

⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 52.

⁷ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 15.

explain or defend his title of apostle, suggesting that he was known at least by reputation to his readers if not by personal relationship.⁸

2. **Those who held this office had authority at least equal to the Old Testament prophets**, for the apostles could speak and write God's very words (Acts 5:3–4; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3; Gal. 1:8–9; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:8, 15; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 2 Pet. 3:2) and thus could write the words which became New Testament Scripture (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:16, cf. Rev. 22:18–19; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14).

- a. **The opening phrase reminds the readers, then, that Peter is writing in his role as an apostle of Jesus Christ: the words are also God's words, and we should receive them as that.**⁹

- iv. Peter reminds them – You are exiles, but God has not forgotten you (elect exiles).

1. **The phrase 'chosen sojourners' thus becomes a two-word sermon to Peter's readers:** they are 'sojourners', not in an earthly sense (for many no doubt had lived in one city their whole lives), but spiritually: their true homeland is heaven (cf. Phil. 3:20) and any earthly residence therefore temporary. Yet they are 'chosen' sojourners, ones whom the King of the universe has chosen to be his own people, to benefit from his protection, and to inhabit his heavenly kingdom.¹⁰
 2. **'sprinkling with blood'** – Peter reminds them that their future includes continual sprinkling with the blood of Christ, that is, continual restoration of fellowship with God and his people through the sacrificial blood of Christ figuratively sprinkled over them, a continual reminder to God that their sins are forgiven and that they are welcome in God's presence and among his people (cf. 1 John 1:7 for the idea of continual application of the blood of Christ in the Christian life).¹¹

- v. **Faithfulness isn't easy for this group. That is something that each of us today can relate with.**

1. One of the core truths that will and should stand out to us as we walk through this letter is, suffering is a normal part of being a Christian.
 2. Why? → Because, in Christ, we are called to have a new set of allegiances. That is, we are called to do life according to the values of a different Kingdom.
 3. There is nothing that makes that reality more clear than the nature of our salvation.

2. The nature of salvation. (1:3-12)

- a. **Truth to know** – In this section of the letter, Peter sets up a "truth to know" for his audience. He will get to some practical implications in the opening section and flesh them out even more through the body of the letter.

⁸ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 63.

⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 51–52.

¹⁰ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 53.

¹¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 57.

- i. **Our response to this section is that of committing right doctrine/theology to memory.** I.e., This becomes a plumbline that we hold to in confusing and difficult times.
 - ii. The phrase, “facts over feelings” has been weaponized in our current rhetorical moments. But, in the most positive way, that is what Peter encourages them with, and thusly, us today.
- b. **A living hope** – Building off of his opening, where we learn that it is through Christ’s sprinkled blood that salvation is secured, he begins to answer the questions of what kind of salvation is this.
 - i. This hope is the eager, confident expectation of the life to come, which Peter describes in more detail in the next verse. **It is ‘living’—by so describing it Peter indicates that it grows and increases in strength year by year.**
 - ii. The resurrection of Christ from the dead secures for his people both new resurrection bodies and new spiritual life. **Christians do not in this age receive new bodies but God does grant, on the basis of Jesus’ resurrection, renewed spirits. Thus, spiritually, believers have been ‘raised with Christ’** (Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:6; cf. Rom. 6:4, 11).¹²
- c. **Why does a living hope matter?** – Peter explains that the object of their ‘living hope’ is *an inheritance, which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading*. The New Testament regularly uses ‘inheritance’ (*klēronomia*) to refer not only to an earthly inheritance but also to a believer’s ‘share’ in the heavenly kingdom, his or her future heavenly reward (Gal. 3:18; Eph. 1:14, 18; 5:5; Col. 3:24; Heb. 9:15).¹³
 - i. **The contrast is striking:** the readers have been born anew, not to obtain a family inheritance in the earthly land of Canaan, but to obtain an inheritance in the eternal city of God (away from which they now live as sojourners, v. 1). **The ‘inheritance’ is thus their portion in the new creation and all its blessings.**¹⁴
 - ii. Again, let us pay attention to the adjectives that Peter uses to describe this living hope – ***is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.*** – This means:
 - 1. It cannot decay or get worn out over time.
 - 2. It is unpolluted by sin. – I.e., it comes from God, and therefore it is pure as God is pure.
 - 3. It will never grow dim or decrease in value.
 - iii. **Kept in heaven for you...** This phrase cues us into the ultimate permanence of our salvation... God holds it secure for us.
 - 1. **God himself has ‘stored up’ or ‘reserved’ this inheritance in heaven for believers and it continues to be there, ‘still reserved’ for them.**¹⁵
 - a. This is a key concept in the nature of salvation... it is not dependent on our works or faithfulness, but is dependent on God.
 - i. **Peter implies that it won’t be “denied” to you.**
 - b. The more we cooperate with God the awareness and gratitude for our salvation grows... this is a blessing.
 - i. Cf. v. 3 → “A living hope.”

¹² Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 61.

¹³ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 61.

¹⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 61.

¹⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 62.

- d. **We have a complicated relationship with “testing” and trials.** (vv. 7-8)
 - i. We can know in our heads that salvation is a gracious gift from God alone and kept for us by God alone, but in our hearts, we are often misled by the whispers... “You did it. You earned it. You made it happen.”
 - ii. This is because we have a proclivity for self-centeredness.
 - 1. This tendency comes out in all sorts of environments and experiences.
 - 2. One of the particular challenges with trials in our modern context is discerning whether the trial is from standing firm in our faith, or because of the way we took a stand.
 - a. **We need to be willing to reflect and ask ourselves some questions:**
 - i. Is what I’m standing for a Biblical precedent or commandment?
 - ii. If so, where in the Scriptures is it stated or taught?
 - iii. If so, is this a major (salvation issue), a minor, or an area of Christian liberty?
 - 1. Am I treating it according to its appropriate position?
 - iv. If so, am I holding to my conviction in a way that communicates care and dignity to those that disagree with me?
 - 1. This will be a central point to Peter’s letter... you are to live an honorable life, even in your affliction.
 - v. If not, is it a cultural idea that needs more investigation and study on my part with wise Biblical counsel?
 - iii. We can think that trials come because of a “weak faith.”
 - 1. To this Peter says, nope.
 - a. **Peter does not wish his readers to confuse the testing of their faith with the failure of their faith or to think that their distress implies they have inadequate faith.**¹⁶
 - 2. Instead, Peter tells us that the testing of our faith brings us confidence in our salvation.
 - a. That’s right, the salvation that was given to and secured for us by Jesus (remember those adjectives in v.4?) **is not** made secure by the action of faithfulness in the testing period.
 - b. Instead, and this is a really important instead, the action of faithfulness through a trial actually builds greater confidence in the reality of our salvation!
 - 3. **Therefore, Peter reminds his readers that genuine Christian faith is more valuable than anything the world can offer.**¹⁷
 - a. It is actually the testing process that proves the genuine nature of faith.
 - i. This is why James can tell believers to “consider it pure joy that you encounter trials of various kinds.” (Jas. 1:2)

3. Our resulting identity. (1:13-25)

¹⁶ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 97.

¹⁷ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 98.

- a. Application of that truth. → Peter moves from the “truth to know” opening to the “so what” introduction of his letter.
 - i. This “so what” section (vv. 13-25) will continue to be unpacked through the letter.
 - ii. Up to this point, Peter has reminded believers about the nature of their salvation. Now, he turns to the change that their salvation has yielded in their lives. I.e., They now have a new identity.
- b. **Therefore refers to the great ‘salvation’ blessings explained in verses 3 to 12.** Because of their possession of these, **Peter’s readers are to think and act in certain ways.**¹⁸
 - i. *Be sober* forbids not only physical drunkenness but also (since the phrases before and after have to do with attitudes of mind) letting the mind wander into **any other kind of mental intoxication or addiction which inhibits spiritual alertness, or any laziness of mind which lulls Christians into sin through carelessness** (or ‘by default’).¹⁹
- c. **“Prepared for action”** – He would have to gather his robe between his legs and tuck it into his belt. **Peter is saying, *Setting your hope fully on God requires mental preparation and resolve.*** *Setting your hope fully on the grace to come is an act of faith that requires renewed thinking, disciplined thinking.* In other words, if we are to set our hope fully on the grace yet to be revealed, **we need to prepare ourselves with the proper mindset**, with mental resolve.²⁰
 - i. What is the proper mindset?
 1. See 2:9-10 → Peter comes back to the nature of our new identity in Christ.
 - ii. **We are to “prepare [our] minds for action” by not imbibing the patterns and philosophies of this world that inebriate our minds, make our minds dull provoke us to do things that are contrary to God’s revealed will.**
 - iii. So, here is Peter’s logic. To live as God’s people in our conduct, we need to set our hope fully on God and on his promised salvation. We are to worship at his altar alone. To set our hope fully, we need to be sober in our thinking—not drunk on the priorities and promises of this world, but clear sighted about who God is and all he gives. The battle to live well begins with rightly directed hope, which requires clear thinking. This is what enables us to live in the way that Peter calls us to next.²¹
 - iv. **V.22 → Obedience to the truth.**
 1. The action that we are to be prepared for is an obedience to the truth.
- d. The famed theologian Karl Barth expresses this very same idea:
 - i. In the self-giving of Jesus Christ fulfilled in His crucifixion, God Himself intervenes for man who cannot help himself, as God the Son obedient to the will of God the Father, as the Judge bearing the judgment for the judged. To this action of God there corresponds on man’s side the obedience of faith which accepts what is done (IV, 1). **In the assumption of human nature by the incarnation of Jesus Christ God raises fallen man up again and exalts him to be a partner of His covenant and to new life in righteousness. To this action of God there corresponds on man’s side the obedience of love in which man, freed for right action, imitates in relation to God and neighbor that which God has done towards him and for him.**²²
- e. **The mission of Christ Community Church – “We exist to connect people in life-defining relationships in Christ.”**

¹⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 80.

¹⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 81.

²⁰ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 46.

²¹ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 46–47.

²² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley, First American edition. (London; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 173.

- i. There are lots of things that we as a church could give ourselves to. And, they would all be worthwhile and important.
- ii. We believe that God has called us as a local church to this mission first foremost.
 - 1. This becomes the clarifier and measuring line for all ministry initiatives and ideas.
 - 2. We desire to see lost people come to find a new identity in Christ. And we desire to spur on believing people to faithfully walk in that identity.
- iii. What do we mean by life-defining?
 - 1. This means that we follow Jesus in every area of our lives.
 - 2. This means that we live out of a new identity. → It is an identity of action.

4. Identity in action. (2:1-10)

- a. “Hey mom, watch me...” → Peter has addressed the “so what” segment of his argument.
 - i. Truth to know (1:1-12) → Salvation is secured and held for you by Christ.
 - ii. So what (1:13-25) → You’re salvation results in a new identity.
 - iii. Watch me (2:1-10) → Watch me live out my new identity.
- b. **If trials make our faith stronger by increasing our confidence → obedience increases the desire for the things of God.**
 - i. Why? → Because we continually and repeatedly experience the goodness of the things of God.
 - 1. I.e., They satisfy in deeper and more meaningful ways than anything else.
 - ii. After Peter has explained to his readers that their new life is generated by God’s eternal word and is to be **characterized by love defined as moral transformation in relationships with others**, he continues to unpack the necessity of sustaining the vitality of his readers’ new lives in Christ.
 - 1. **This passage contains only one imperative: crave the pure spiritual milk as infants crave their mother’s milk.**
 - 2. To crave, and therefore presumably to partake of, the pure spiritual milk is for new Christians what it is for newborns to crave literal milk—that is, the very sustenance of life.²³
- c. So, how do we live out our identity? (2:1)
 - i. We do so in community. → **All these sins (Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, slander, and envy) aim at harming other people, whereas love seeks the good of others.**²⁴
 - 1. We must be reminded that in today’s context the greatest good of others is not in some subjective enablement to live apart from God’s design. It is also not an excuse for bad policy-making (both left and right). Instead, it is to point back to the fullness of a new identity in Christ.
 - ii. Jesus is the “living stone” and we are to follow him wholeheartedly → Our identity has changed, and so have our allegiances.

²³ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 131.

²⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 99.

1. The fact that Christ is the *living* stone shows at once his superiority to an Old Testament temple made of dead stones, and reminds Christians that there can be no longing for that old way of approach to God, for this way is far better.²⁵
 - a. Cf. PS. 118:22
- iii. Our allegiances are demonstrated by our actions. → We think of this through our life-defining measures.
 1. Did God make my day?
 - a. Am I engage with God in his Word and prayer?
 2. Is the Spirit flowing through me?
 - a. Am I dependent on the Holy Spirit to lead and guide me?
 3. Who shares my tough stuff?
 - a. Am I invested in community?
 4. Who am I fishing with?
 - a. Am I sharing the gospel?
 5. How worn is my welcome mat?
 - a. Am I practicing hospitality?
 6. How are my investments doing?
 - a. Am I storing up treasures in heaven?
- iv. Allegiance is a serious thing, and there is no greater thing to be aligned with than Jesus and his Kingdom.
 1. *The Christian does not mistake the state, in any of its many forms, for the kingdom of God.* The kingdom of God is “absolutely” superior to every occurrence of the state. No state is identical to the kingdom of God. ... **No state can [demand] unconditional allegiance and unconditional obedience, otherwise it would be the kingdom of God.**²⁶
 2. Am I willing to give unconditional allegiance and obedience to the Kingdom of God?

²⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 104.

²⁶ Karl Barth, *Barth in Conversation, 1959–1962*, ed. Darrell L. Guder and Eberhard Busch, trans. The Translation Fellows of the Center for Barth Studies, vol. 1 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 3.