

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

1 PETER LESSON 1 (Chapter 1)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Timothy Sparks:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). I’m Timothy Sparks.

Ben Bailey:

And I’m Ben Bailey. Thank you for joining us for our broadcast today. This lesson is being brought to you by loving, caring members of the churches of Christ. We invite you to visit the church of Christ in your area. You will find people who love God, and who are interested in going to Heaven. We are making each of these broadcasts available completely free of charge on CD or DVD. If you would like a copy of this lesson or any of our other lessons, you may log onto our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com, fill out the request form you will find there, and we will be happy to send to you whatever you need. We will not even charge you for the postage. We would like to help you in your study of God’s Word in any way we can.

In the Book of 1 Peter, we learn about God’s love for Christians. We see how that, even when Christians have trials, tribulations, and difficulties, God’s grace and love are still there for them. Peter, the author of the epistles of 1 and 2 Peter, was one of Christ’s apostles. In John 6, Jesus entered into a figurative discussion about how the disciples would eat His flesh and drink His blood, and, in essence, “consume His whole person” in their lives. Some of the disciples thought that such teaching was “too hard.” The Bible informs us that they therefore “walked with Him no more” (Jn. 6:66). Jesus then turned to His disciples and asked, “Will you also go away?” Peter spoke up bravely and said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life” (vs. 68). Peter was a valiant apostle of the Lord, but he also had his trials and difficulties. In Matthew 26:31, shortly before Christ was led away to be crucified, He said to His apostles, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night.” Peter—always the impetuous one—responded by saying, “Lord, even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble” (vs. 33). Several verses later, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him—and the prediction came true just as Christ said it would. Peter had some things he needed to learn. But he did grow as a Christian. And this is one of the lessons that we learn from Peter. Christians do suffer from without and from within. In 1 Peter, we find an encouragement for Christians not to give up, but to keep going forward.

Timothy Sparks:

As Peter begins his epistle, he tells us that it is addressed to “the pilgrims of the Dispersion” (vs. 1). These were Christians who were being persecuted, and thus who were suffering. The key word in 1 Peter, in fact, is “suffer” (or “suffering”). The Book of 1 Peter is about how to live the Christian life in the face of various trials, tribulations, and persecutions. In the first chapter, Peter offers praise to God and to Christ, because God, through the resurrection of Christ, has been able to offer us a living hope. In verses 3-5, Peter writes,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Through the resurrection of Christ, God has made possible our salvation—our eternal redemption. Later in this chapter, Peter says, “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (vss. 18-19). Jesus had to shed His blood to make our salvation possible, and through His resurrection, He secured for us an eternal inheritance.

Ben Bailey:

Peter writes to encourage Christians regarding the hope they have. He speaks of “a heavenly home.” Peter says that if we remain faithful, we have “a reservation”—i.e., a home “reserved for us” in Heaven. When you go on a trip, you make a reservation ahead of time — whether it is at a theme park or at a hotel. That way, you know when you arrive that there will be a place waiting for you. Isn’t it wonderful for us to know, as Christians, that even if we feel while we are here on Earth that we are “away from home,” God has reserved for us a place in Heaven?! If we remain true, we will get to be with God for all eternity. Peter reminds us, therefore, that we may have to endure trials, tribulations, and suffering in this life—from within and from without—but we are looking forward to a home in Heaven that God has promised us. In verses 6 and 7, Peter writes,

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The key idea here is that we as Christians need to have a genuine faith. The idea of “genuine” indicates something that is true, honest, and noteworthy. There are some people whose Christian walk is not genuine, but merely accommodates their wishes and desires. If it fits to wear the Christian “garment,” they will wear it. If it does not fit, they will cast it aside. Peter is not talking about that kind of faith. He is talking about a faith that is genuine, and that is more precious than gold. Peter wants Christians to know that our faith may be “tested by fire,” but he also wants us to know that when the Lord comes again, we need to be ready.

Timothy Sparks:

In verse 5, Peter says that we are “kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.” Through our faithfulness, and our compliance with the Word and will of God, we will be “kept by the power of God.” There are some people who suggest that verse 5 is teaching that Christians will be saved regardless of what we do or do not do. The idea (known as

“once saved, always saved”) is that we cannot lose our salvation. But 1 Peter 1:5 does not teach anything akin to such a concept. Peter says that we are “kept **through faith** for salvation.” Paul taught the Christians in Galatia, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4). We learn from 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” The New Testament repeatedly teaches us that we can fall from God’s grace. Peter, in his epistle, is teaching us that we do not **have** to fall. As Peter put it in 2 Peter 3:17-18, “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Peter is reiterating the fact that we will **not** be led into error **if** we “grow in grace and knowledge.” That is the same thing he is stressing in 1 Peter 1:5 when he refers to the fact that we are “kept by the power of God **through faith** for salvation.” This reminds me of what one mother told her son about the Bible when she sent him off to college: “Son, either this Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.” If you keep the Word of God, then that Word can keep you safe. But if you do not keep the Word of God, then it cannot keep you safe. In speaking of His sheep (disciples), Jesus said in John 10:29, “No one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” Not even the devil can forcibly remove us from God’s grasp. We can **choose** to leave, just as the prodigal son chose to leave his father (Lk. 15). From 1 Peter 1:5, we learn that we can be “kept” by the power of God’s Word. Paul wrote in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” However, if we choose to leave God, He is not going to “force” us, against our will, to obey Him. He **wants** us to obey Him. But He will not **make** us do so. His promise is that if we continue to obey Him, then we will enjoy security in Christ. This is why Peter urges us—even in the face of suffering persecution—to persevere.

Ben Bailey:

In 1 Peter 1:9, Peter goes on to say that Christians can receive “the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.” Why is the idea of salvation so important? Why should we put so much emphasis on “remaining faithful”? The only way that we will ever get to Heaven and receive “the end of our faith” is if we stay faithful to the Lord. Faith (and faithfulness) play(s) a very important part in the life of a Christian. Romans 10:17 tells us how we obtain faith—“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” The Bible, as the Word of God, is the ultimate source of our faith. It is in the Bible that we learn that God is trustworthy and dependable. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We must have faith in God, and trust Him in every way. John said in 1 John 5:4, “And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” We can say that because of 1 John 4:4—“He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” As Peter speaks to us about trials, tribulations, and sufferings, we can see the motivation that we should have as Christians. What is the end result of our remaining faithful? It is the salvation of our souls! We want to go to Heaven. And we want you to go to Heaven, too. But the only way that any of us can get to Heaven is if we obediently follow the Lord’s will. Jesus has made it abundantly clear. If we want to go to Heaven, we must do what the Bible says. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” The writer of the Book of Hebrews said that Jesus is “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:9). Thus, Peter reminds us as Christians that if we remain faithful, Heaven will be our home.

Timothy Sparks:

We also learn from Peter's comment in 1 Peter 1:9 that it is not just the salvation of our own soul that should be important to us, but that we also should be concerned about the souls of **all** people. [In the text, "receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls," the second "your" is in italics because it is not in the original Greek text; thus, the idea is "the salvation of souls" (plural). Our goal in this life is to bring glory to God the Father. In order to do that, we must be people who have an interest not just in the salvation of our own souls, but also in the souls of those who are lost. In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul said to Timothy, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." We must be people who are compassionate, and who long to see souls brought to Jesus Christ. If we are living our lives for any other purpose than to bring glory to God by bringing others to Him, then we are not carrying out the things God put us here to do. Paul taught in Romans 8:9 that we are supposed to "have the spirit of Christ." If we have Christ's spirit, then we will go where Christ would go, and do what Christ would do." Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Thus, we, too, must seek to save those who are lost. In 1 Peter 1:10-12, Peter writes,

"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into."

The prophets of old prophesied of God's grace in providing salvation to mankind. They did not fully understand it (which is why they "inquired and searched carefully"), and they wanted to know more about it. In fact, even angels in Heaven desire to look into these matters. This reminds us of the question raised in Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape if we neglect **so great a salvation?**" If you neglect the salvation that God has made available through the crucifixion of His own Son, then you neglect the only means by which you can get to Heaven. As Jesus asked, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mt. 16:26).

Ben Bailey:

This is the very point Peter is trying to impress upon us. If we will stay faithful, our reward will be—**Heaven!** This is something so important that the prophets of old "inquired and searched carefully" to try to learn more about it. In 1 Peter 1:13, Peter says, "Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter is saying, "Since you have all these blessings—things that the prophets of old did not even understand—you must not take them for granted. **You have salvation!** Be grateful for it." Peter says, "gird up [strengthen, tighten up] the loins of your mind." We learn from 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 that we are in a battle. It is not a physical battle, but a spiritual battle. We have to bring every thought into the captivity of Christ. We cannot afford to give the devil a foothold in our lives or in our minds. Thus, we must strengthen, or tighten up, our minds. And how do we "strengthen our minds"? The only way to do that is to "work out" with the Word of God! Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:8, "Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." We strengthen our minds by putting our minds to work in the pages of God's Word so that we can know what His will is for our lives. Peter wants us to be sober-minded." We must not go through life with a nonchalant, flippant attitude which suggests that God does not really expect very

much of us and that He will send us to Heaven, “no matter what.” We need to realize that the devil is both real and dangerous. We must realize—every single day—that we are in a battle for our souls, and that if we are not careful, we can be lost eternally. Fortunately, as Peter reminds us, we have the hope of Heaven.

Ben Bailey:

The Christian’s hope is based on the reality of Christ’s resurrection. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15,

“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable” (vss. 13-19).

Without the resurrection of Christ, Christianity becomes a farce and a lie. Paul showed us why that is **not** the case. Peter shows us that we have the hope of Heaven. This is why Peter says, “As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Pet. 1:14-16). Paul made the same point in Romans 12:2 when he wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” We are not to be the kind of people who allow the world to squeeze us into its mold. Rather, we are to allow God to reshape our minds from within. Peter teaches us a valuable lesson about being holy. Just as God is holy, we, too, must be holy in our conduct. The word “holy” means that we are dedicated or fully committed. This, of course, will factor into the encouragement that Peter offers in 1 Peter regarding the sufferings that Christians will have to endure.

Ben Bailey:

You can tell if a person is committed and dedicated if he or she is willing to endure suffering and persecution. Jesus told the suffering saints in Revelation 2:10 that if they were faithful “unto death,” He would give them “a crown of life.” It would separate those who are willing to name the name of Christ from those who are not willing to do that, if those in both groups knew that if they attended worship, partook of the Lord’s Supper, and were faithful to Christ, they might **die!** Surely, **that** would cause us to think a little more seriously about what is important, and about what really matters in this life. But even if we did have to die as Christians, the words of 1 Peter 1:18-20 should strengthen and encourage us. Peter wanted the Christians of his day to know that they “were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” Even if we are persecuted and have to die for Christ, we can do so because we know that our salvation was not purchased with perishable things like silver or gold, but instead with the precious blood of Christ. He laid down His life for us. We have been brought back to God by the blood of His Son. When John the Immerser saw Jesus approaching him, he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn. 1:29). Before the first moment of Earth’s time had begun, God had made a plan to save mankind. Christ’s death was that plan, and we are living in the fulfillment of that plan.

Timothy Sparks:

Peter stresses the urgency of living faithfully. He wants us as Christians to do **now** what we know we should do. In 2 Corinthians 6:2, Paul said in a similar vein, "Today is the day of salvation." We cannot afford to procrastinate when it comes to our salvation. Procrastination is not merely the thief of time, but also is the thief of people's salvation! If we keep putting off our obedience to the Gospel, then we delay all that God has in store for us. Peter wrote, "You have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1:22). Have you obeyed the truth. We are to "buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). If you want to obey the truth, you must decide not to live any longer for yourself, but to live instead for your Savior. God's plan for our salvation is simple. Any accountable person can know and obey the truth. You must believe in Jesus as the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and then be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. You arise from the waters of baptism to newness of life. Please, do not delay what God has in store for you.

We would like to make a copy of today's lesson available to you. You can visit us on our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com, fill out the request form, and we will be happy to send you a CD or DVD of this lesson, or any others. As always, our prayer is that you will seek to conform your will to the Gospel of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST
607 McLish Ave.
Ardmore, OK 73401

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at www.thegospelofchrist.com. We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where "the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached."

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR 1 PETER LESSON 1 (CHAPTER 1)

1. What one word would describe the thrust of Peter's message in his first epistle?
2. In Matthew 26:33, Peter made a bold, but false, claim. What was that claim?
3. To whom did Peter write his first epistle, and why did he write?
4. What was Peter's point in saying that we have not been redeemed with "corruptible things"?
5. In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter spoke of the "living hope" that Christians have. What is the basis of that living hope?
6. What did Peter mean when he said that we are "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter 1:5)?
7. Explain the connection between Matthew 26:33 and 1 Corinthians 10:12.
8. How does human free moral agency factor into the statement Jesus made in John 10:29 that no one can snatch Christian's out of God's hand?
9. According to 1 John 5:4, what is the Christian's victory?
10. According to Romans 10:17, what is the source of the victory mentioned in question #9 above?
11. Explain the connection among the following passages: (a) Romans 1:5; (b) Hebrews 5:9; and (c) Romans 16:26.
12. Paul taught in Romans 8:9 that we are to "have the spirit of Christ." What does that statement mean?
13. Why does Peter urge Christians to "gird up the loins" of their minds?
14. According to Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 15:13-19, the Christian's hope is based on something. What is that "something"?
15. John the Immerser referred to Jesus as "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). How did Jesus take away the sin of the world?
16. How, according to 1 Peter 1:22, do we "purify our souls"?
17. After you have answered question #16 above, explain what is involved in that activity.
18. What is meant by Peter's use of the phrase "genuineness of faith" (1 Peter 1:7)?
19. Give two biblical passages that refute the idea of "once saved, always saved."