



SOUTHLAND CHURCH

THE FIRST & SECOND LETTERS OF  
**PETER**

*11 Day Devotional*



**foundations**  
daily devotional

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**DAY 1**

Before getting into the letter, it is helpful to read something about Peter's background.



**READ:** Matthew 4:18-20; Matthew 14:22-32; Matthew 16:13-23;  
Matthew 26:31-35; John 21:1-19; Acts 3:1-10

Peter became a disciple of Jesus sometime between A.D. 28 and 30. He is one of the most well-known disciples, and one of the most relatable. The gospels are not hesitant to reveal his faux pas; Peter is known for his brash eagerness and outspoken zeal. But these qualities, when refined by an encounter with the risen Christ, give way to a man of boldness, conviction and passion. The Peter of the book of Acts is a faithful apostle, convincing in speech, diligent in prayer and obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Peter of Christian history is a man of deep love for Jesus, who, when taken to be crucified under the demand of Emperor Nero, asked to be suspended upside-down; he felt unworthy to be martyred in the same fashion as his Lord.

Peter's faith should inspire us. His dying request – to be crucified upside-down – builds our own faith, reminding us that Jesus is indeed God. Peter was a real person of history who walked this earth under the discipleship of Jesus of Nazareth. He knew for certain that Jesus rose from the dead. It wasn't wishful thinking for Peter – He actually saw the risen Lord and even breakfasted with Him on the beach! And because of this, he dedicated his life to spreading the news of the gospel and to teaching the new churches sound doctrine. He knew that to die in the body was to gain eternity with his Friend and Saviour, and so he could lay down his life for the gospel with full assurance. It is with this faith and resolve that he writes his letters to the churches, and it is with this in mind that we read 1 Peter.

Peter's story is of great encouragement to us. We know he was a man with weaknesses. We know he royally screwed up when he turned his back on Jesus the day of the crucifixion. But then we see what he becomes. Certainly, it doesn't take long to recognize our own weaknesses and failures, our own betrayals of Jesus. Yet, the message of restoration that Jesus had for Peter is offered to us as well! The Lord is calling us to lay all our junk before Him – our inadequacies, failures, mess-ups and weaknesses. He is able to carry them! And then He invites us to get up and tune our ears to His voice, to His calling. Like Peter, let us respond to this call with joy and gladness and a faithful heart!

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Spend some time laying your weaknesses and failures at Jesus' feet. Confess areas of sin, and also confess to Him if you have been unwilling to surrender anything to Him because of shame or pride. Thank Jesus for His love, forgiveness and restoration.
2. In prayer, ask Jesus for a word for your life – what is He working on in you in this particular season? What is He calling you to? Thank Him that He would consider you worthy for this!
3. Ask God to do a refining work in your life. What is a struggle you have had for a long time? Ask Him to change your heart in this. Pray this prayer for those in your family as well – for character change and growth to come to your spouse and kids.

**DAY 2** **READ:** 1 Peter 1:1-12

What a wonderful beginning to this passionate letter! Immediately, Peter reminds us of something that will show itself as an underlying theme of the letter: we are strangers on this earth. This truly is our “temporary home.” We are God’s elect – His chosen – and as such, we have abdicated the throne of self, turned from the kingdom of the world and started on a journey towards real and abundant life, the kingdom of God. Peter must begin with this truth – it sets our perspective for the rest of the letter, which will speak much of the hardship that the faithful Christian is bound to endure.

Peter greets the churches through whom his letter will be circulated and with this first truth, lays out some other basic claims: According to God’s great and sovereign foreknowledge, and through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, all Christians have been chosen for obedience to Jesus and the cleansing of His blood. Because the Holy Spirit empowers us, we can be clean vessels of joyful obedience in the kingdom of God, our true home. This is the calling that Peter crowns us with at the outset of his letter.

In John 3, Jesus met with the Pharisee, Nicodemus, under the cover of darkness. Unlike many of the other Pharisees, Nicodemus was a truth-seeker. And in their conversation, we are introduced to a concept that would rise to become one of modern-day Christianity’s biggest catch phrases – being born again. “I tell you the truth,” Jesus said to Nicodemus, “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” Born of water and of the Spirit. We are born into this world with a sinful nature, an innate hostility towards God. Though there is life in our bones, we are dead – spiritually and eternally lifeless. Rebirth comes through faith in Christ. When we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we are saved, reborn! Because Christ rose from the dead – conquered sin and death – we now have a hope that is alive, a hope that promises wonderful and eternal life! This life is the inheritance we receive when we accept Christ and are born again – adopted into God’s family, sons and daughters alongside the Son Himself. This truth spurs us on! We can face whatever trials and temptations are thrown our way because we know that God is guarding our wonderful inheritance, that if we remain faithful, our inheritance remains waiting for us. And so, even though we have not seen the risen Lord as Peter had already seen Him, we trust His promise and are filled by the Spirit with intense joy. Faith itself is not what we live for; it is the One we put our faith in that spurs us on. We put our faith in Him with the goal of receiving the life He has for us, the life He will live with us!

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Read these twelve verses a few more times. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you something thrilling about God’s plan for your life through this passage.
2. Meditate on the phrase “*strangers in the world.*” How does God want to encourage you with these words? How do you feel about this title? If your feelings are negative, share them with the Lord and ask for His perspective.
3. Use what the Lord has shown you to help you pray for others that you know who need to understand the life that comes from being born again.

**DAY 3** **READ:** 1 Peter 1:13 – 2:3

The passage begins with a “therefore” – a key that, though there may be new heading, the message is building off of the previous verses. Therefore – because we have been reborn into a living hope which is the salvation of our souls – we are commanded to be prepared. Peter speaks to our conduct, urging us to be holy as our Father is holy, because we have been reborn.

Peter’s message is not an attack at sin in the churches like some of Paul’s letters had to be, nor a warning against false teachers; yet it is still a heavy message. He consistently glorifies what Jesus has done for us while imploring us to respond. The gift is free – we have done nothing to deserve it; but following Him is costly. Peter leaves no room for the doubled-hearted or –minded. He calls his fellow believers out of their former sins and into full reliance on the grace of God. But this requires an abandonment of worldly living. We are reminded again that we are strangers in the earth and we are called to lives of reverent fear and holy living in response to the precious sacrifice of Jesus. The world is a marketplace of buying and selling. But we were bought for another kingdom, not with money, but by the precious blood of Jesus. Our faith and hope are not in this world, but in the God who raised Christ from the dead.

As we obey God, He will purify us more and more and make us more and more like His Son. Our sincerity and love for others will grow – the things that will last beyond this life come alive. And because of this wonderful mystery, we are urged to put away common, specific sins of character. No more malice, hypocrisy, lying, envy or slander. Like a baby who needs nothing but the pure milk of her mother, we are to crave pure spiritual milk – the life that comes from the Word of God and from a relationship with Jesus who is the Bread of Life, the Spring of Living Water.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Twice in this chapter, we are urged to be *childlike* (1:14 & 2:2). Meditate on these verses and this call to be like little children. Think about the children that are in your life: how do they display obedience and childlike faith? Ask God to make you like an obedient little child, and to give you a craving for pure life.
2. YOU were bought at a price – the precious blood of Christ, the perfect Lamb. Think about this truth, and how Christ’s death and resurrection was a personal gift to you. Ask Jesus to show you the value He has for you. Ask Him to increase your heart of thanks and love for Him.
3. Take the list Peter makes in 2:1 and ask God to search your heart on sins from this past week. Confess these to God and ask Him to help you to be holy as He is holy. Thank Him for His grace and His Spirit, which enable you to walk rightly.

**DAY 4** **READ:** 1 Peter 2:4-12

Peter’s letter gives Christians a sense of belonging. We were each individually bought with the precious blood of Christ, chosen and purified to be children of God. But we have also entered into something beyond ourselves – as children, we are part of a family, the Church! Christ is likened to a stone, the cornerstone of a building. This is a foundational stone that

forms the base of a corner of a building and which joins two walls together. Jesus was the founding stone of a new building – the living Cornerstone of a living Temple which would be called the Church. As Christians – little Christs – we, too, are living stones, coming together to form the walls of the building to which Christ is the foundation.

When God made a covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, His promise was to take them as His own people and to make them a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. (See Exodus 19:5-6) In Peter's letter, we see that this promise is now extended beyond the Jews to all believers! We can be adopted into the promise that He made so long ago to Moses and the Israelites! We can be a part of this wonderful calling to a holy priesthood! Through Jesus Christ, we – frail and weak as we are – are able to offer spiritual sacrifices which will be precious and pleasing to God. We are able to declare His praises because of the deliverance we have received. The priests of the Old Testament ministered in the temple. They took care of God's house, they worshiped, they offered sacrifices on behalf of the people, they interceded for the people: all-in-all, they represented God to the people. This is the role God is awarding us with and calling us to. We are to be a representation of God to the people around us. We have been given a hope and a future, mercy and grace, because Jesus bridged the gap between us and God. This is the message of the cross that we are to declare to all people.

And again, Peter reminds us that we are aliens on this earth, that we belong to a different place. We are holy priests of His kingdom, not of the world (though we will be in the world until He makes everything new). Yet, we were not born as aliens. We were born as pure-blood, homegrown, sinful nature creatures, and so that nature does sometimes raise its ugly head. Let us remember the world we have been reborn into. Let us remember our calling as priests. Let us abstain from the callings of the flesh and seek to do good by His strength and power in our lives!



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Read the passage again, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you greater insight on what it means to be a living stone, part of a spiritual house.
2. Ask God how you can live out your calling to be “a royal priesthood, holy nation, a people belonging to God.”
3. Spend some time in prayer for the church. Some suggestions in praying for Southland: pray for Church Renewal, Tupendane, Four Winds, camp, church leaders, cells, etc. Suggestions for the universal church: holiness, heavenly perspective, passion for Christ, revelation of God's love, love for the truth, etc.

## DAY 5



**READ:** 1 Peter 2:13-25

In this passage, Peter takes us into a harder and deeper subject. He has spoken of the living hope we have as a result of our rebirth, he has called us to holiness through the work of Christ, he has encouraged us as living stones, chosen by God to reflect His greatness to the world around us; but he takes us now into the harder realms of the Christian life – submission and suffering. It is this suffering that is at the heart of Peter's letter. With our calling and salvation fresh in our minds, we are now called to endure whatever hardships come because of the living hope that we have.

Peter begins with a call to submission, showing us that submitting ourselves to Jesus is more than a prayer or a lofty thought; it is something to be lived out in the practical day-to-day, and we can begin by submitting ourselves to the governing authorities. “But our

government is so corrupt!” we cry. “Our nation is abandoning her Christian heritage!” Well, we find a friend in Peter. The Roman government and lifestyle was extraordinarily corrupt. Immorality reigned via Emperor-worship, sexual lewdness and a lack of cultural compassion. Corruption and hypocrisy within the Jewish leadership made life difficult for the new believers as well. The Acts of the Apostles show us the danger that converted Christians faced daily, and the Apostle Paul himself was once an instigator of much Christian suffering. Our society is certainly heading down the road of greater Christian persecution, but our suffering is nothing like that of the early church. And yet, Peter still urges the believers to submit to every authority for the Lord's sake. Christians are a persecuted bunch throughout the world. God knew this would be true – Jesus said that the world would hate His followers because of Him. And so, Peter urges us that by doing good, we can silence the ignorant talk of foolish people who make claims against Christianity. People may make outrageous claims that Christians are at fault for the majority of the world's bloodshed throughout history, including even the Holocaust. Let our goodness and kindness show that such claims are unfounded and ridiculous!

Jesus showed us how to live under the law while continuing to submit ourselves wholly to God. He taught his followers to pay their taxes. He showed respect for all people, even if His words were bold and convicting. When arrested by the authorities, he went willingly, admonishing Peter for his ungodly zeal and healing the man whose ear Peter had just cut off. “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7) Yet, when the time came to choose between God and the rules of men, it was no contest. He remained humble, but He would not submit to the governing Jewish authorities and deny His divinity. His apostles would soon show the same sacrifice, submitting to the government fully until there arose a conflict in which they had to choose God over man. We are to do the same.

Each Christian will need to wrestle through what this looks like. Peter gives a good guideline in verse 17: Show respect to everyone, love people, fear God, and honour the authorities. We must wrestle through: How do we honour the authorities when we do not agree with many of the nation's laws? How do we share our opinions about various subjects of debate while showing respect and love for all people? How do we grow so that it is the fear of God that drives our opinions and responses, not fear of man, or the need for personal justice?

Peter also addresses slaves. This is not to condone slavery, but the fact was that many people were slaves at that time, and so they needed to be addressed. Peter encouraged them to do good and show the love and humility of Christ. This is a message to all who work for an employer.

Praise God that we have an example in Jesus Christ! Peter reminds us of this. Christ is our hope because He endured much suffering – and He did it for us, that “WE might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds YOU have been healed.”



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. What are some of the moral topics that you are passionate about? Perhaps things that our culture says are OK, but that you know are not OK in God's eyes (abortion, for example)? Spend some time in prayer over these issues, calling out to God and confessing areas of sin as they come up. Some things to ask God:
  - a. Have I been expressing my opinions in a way that shows love, respect, humility, while maintaining a fear of the Lord (think conversations, debates, social media, etc.)? Is there something I need to change in the way I express my opinions?

- b. Is the fear of the Lord the thing that is driving me? Or is it a need for personal justice, or a fear of man (fear of what others think) that propels my thoughts and actions in this area?
  - c. Do I need to get more involved in fighting for Your heart in regards to this issue? How do You want me get involved?
2. Ask Jesus to show you if/how you have been given the *privilege* of suffering for His sake. Read verses 21-25 again and thank Jesus for the example He has given you. Thank Him for what He has done for you, and ask Him to grow your heart of gratitude for all He has done in your life.
  3. In prayer, ask Jesus to prepare you for greater suffering. Admit your fears to Him and give them over to Him. Ask Him for a word of encouragement. Spend some time praying for the church as a whole – that God would prepare His bride for the suffering she will endure before His return.

## DAY 6

 **READ:** 1 Peter 3

Knowing that not all readers are married, there are a few key points we can take from the seven verses addressed to married couples. First, our behaviour is a powerful tool. If, with our words, we stand as ambassadors for Christ, but with our actions and attitudes display a heart ruled by the sinful nature, we do very little for the gospel message. Second, true beauty is inner beauty. A heart that is submitted to God and driven by love for Him will hold a truly captivating, unfading beauty. Wrinkles, age spots or greying hair will not diminish it. Third, disrespect and lack of submission can hinder a person's prayers. These are signs of pride, and God opposes the proud – something Peter will make clear later.

In essence, Peter is calling spouses, slaves, freemen – one and all – to live lives of submission. If we could only submit to one another, we would see many of the “common” sins (jealousy, strife, malice, envy, anger, judgment, offense, etc.) disappear! Peter breaks it down for us: live in harmony, he says. When a song is sung in perfect harmony, we marvel at how different notes can complement each other so well. This is a picture of Christian community! Though each person is so unique, having submissive hearts allows us to complement each other as we work side-by-side. Peter commands us to show sympathy – understanding and compassion – to those around us. We are to love each person as if they were close family, and we are to show humility at all times. The world responds in haste. The world seeks revenge, repaying evil for evil, hurling insults at those who offend. But not with us! There is blessing – the blessing of a good life and eternal reward – if we live the submissive life to which we are called! And this submission, Peter reminds us again, must remain intact even in the face of suffering and persecution. Let us suffer for doing good and nothing less! He expands on the earlier call to fear the Lord saying, “But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord.” This is what it is to fear the Lord – to set Jesus apart as the Most High in our hearts, as One to whom no one else can compare. No other opinion, no other calling, nothing, can compare to what He asks of us. Peter goes on, reminding us that to do good and withstand suffering does not mean that we must be ignorant. Withstanding suffering will show others that we are living for something beyond the moment, that we have a living hope. And so Peter urges us to be prepared to tell people why we have the hope that we have. We are to know what we believe! Neither Peter nor God is asking us to become blind when we believe. We are not to go through this world clinging to Jesus because “my mother told me to” or because “they told me at church.” Our faith is REAL, and includes real encounters with the Living God. And our faith has reason – we can know that the Bible is reliable, that Jesus really did rise from the dead, that to believe in a world without a Creator is absurd. So let us not be ignorant Christians; the world has enough of those!



## JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask Jesus if there is anything He wants to convict you of, or call you to in light of what you have read today. Spend some time in prayer, confessing any sin, and asking Him to help you overcome in this area.
2. Ask Jesus to bring to mind the name of a fellow believer who you are *not* living in harmony with. Ask Him what you can do to bring harmony to the relationship.
3. Peter ends the chapter with a word about baptism, comparing the salvation of Noah and his family during the great flood with the baptism that believers are called to. The act of going under the water itself is not a saving act (“not the removal of dirt from the body) – it cannot cleanse anyone from sin. Only Jesus, who showed His power over sin when He rose from the dead, can cleanse us of our sin. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward working. To go under the water represents Christ's death, and that we, as believers, are willing to die to our sinful ways. To rise up out of the water represents the resurrection and the new life that we, as believers, can walk in because Christ has forgiven our sins and put His Spirit in us! Have you been baptised? If so, think back to your baptism and what it represented. Thank Jesus for what He has done in your life since that time. If you have not been baptised, what has stopped you? Spend some time in prayer about whether this is the next step for you.

## DAY 7

 **READ:** 1 Peter 4

Peter continues on the theme of suffering, but with much hope! His aim is not to be a doomsayer; he is responding to the persecution that he has witnessed among the believers and that he himself has experienced firsthand. Sometimes we read the suffering passages of the Bible with blinders. With all the Christian comfort that we have been given for centuries in the west, we don't understand Peter's focus on suffering. For some of us, it has even been a nuisance! For others, it has felt like a message of guilt and we wonder, “Should I be ASKING God to let me suffer?” Jesus said for us to expect suffering and hatred. For some of us, a lack of suffering could certainly be a sign that we need to be more vocal about our faith. For others, we must just be thankful for the lack of suffering and ask God that in this time, He would prepare us for whatever suffering we may one day face. The Apostle Paul learned to be content in whatever season he was in: “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:12-13) The key is that we rely on God for our strength whether we are suffering or otherwise.

Whatever the case, if we are blessed to be in a season of peace, we should use the time to prepare! Suffering could very well come, and if our hearts have been made right through a relationship with Jesus, we will be able to accept suffering with JOY, because suffering brings refinement! Peter makes a bold statement: “he who has suffered in his body is done with sin!” Suffering brings character refinement in a way that nothing else can. James affirmed this in his letter when he wrote: “Consider it PURE JOY, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work in you so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4) So let us not be surprised when suffering or trial comes; instead let us use it as an opportunity to rejoice in the truth that we are able to participate with Jesus, who suffered much. We are never to forget that His hope is our hope. The glory that awaited Him awaits us also.

While we wait in a time of relative peace for Christians, let us continue to do good to everyone. Let us continue to lay our hearts bare before our Maker, allowing His surgeon-hands to operate. There is a warning in Peter's words: God's judgement is not reserved only for the unrighteous; He will judge His people as well. So let us welcome Christ's hands-on work in our lives so that we may stand confidently before His throne one day and so that others may see our good works and turn their own hearts towards our Lord as well.



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. What is a recent trial you have experienced (or are experiencing)? Is your attitude one of joy, or of bitterness? If your attitude has any hint of ungodliness, confess that to Jesus. Meditate on the verses from James and Philippians, along with the passage you read from 1 Peter. How does God want to encourage you through His Word?
2. Ask God how you can do *good* today. He is a good God, and He can empower you to do good. Pray that His Spirit would fill you, and remember to rely on *His* strength to carry out what He has asked you to do.
3. Spend some time in prayer for the church. Pray that your fellow believers would willingly open their hearts to Jesus and allow Him to work. Pray that many Christians would escape judgement because they will humbly allow Jesus to change them. Pray that the church would rely on God's strength and Christ's goodness, not on her own self-righteousness.

## DAY 8



**READ:** 1 Peter 5

Finally, Peter addresses the leaders in the churches that will receive his letter. As leaders, they have been given the role of shepherds, with the Good Shepherd as their model. Like Jesus, they are to be leaders who love and care for those under them. Most of the leaders modeled by society were probably cruel and corrupt. Greed and pride have a tight hold on many leaders, causing many shady dealings and arrogant demands. Not so with the leaders in the church! They are called to a higher standard. Humility and service are the keys – if we can see those under our care as people to serve, our outlook will be closer to that of Christ's who, though fully God, did not come to be served, but to serve others. Peter's words to the elders are easy to apply to all believers. Many hold leadership positions of some degree, whether you lead a cell group, or oversee a group of people within a certain ministry. The principles can be applied to the workplace, and to the home. Mothers are leaders, supervisors are leaders, co-workers are leaders. Humility will enable even the lowliest person in the workplace to lead from within. Peter rephrases Proverbs 3:34: God works in opposition to those who walk around in their pride, but to those who seek humility, God shows His grace. This is strong motivation to be people of humility!

Peter digs deeper into this attribute of Christ. Humility is not only for leaders and overseers. It is more than being kind to the little guy. Humility is to force ourselves into alignment with God's way instead of our own. Humility is to cast all of our anxiety on God instead of trying to bear the weight on our own – it is admitting our weakness and inabilities. Satan is crafty and clever. He knows how to wait and watch and prowl and devour – and he is hungry! He knows our weaknesses; he has seen us fail every time we have done so. And so, relying on Christ, we must be self-controlled and alert, as ready for the enemy's attack as he is ready for our stumble. Remember – God gives grace to those who are humble. There is so much joy in knowing that we are not alone, even when we feel alone. Christians everywhere struggle and suffer and must learn the road of humility.



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. How have you grown in humility since becoming a Christian? Thank God for the journey He has taken you on. Ask God what the next step is for you in dealing with pride. Ask Him to reveal the next level of pride in your heart. Confess it to Him, and ask Him how you can start to walk in humility in this area.
2. What is one specific situation in your life where you find it hard to resist the devil? Ask God to give you insight into why this is a struggle. Humbly ask Him to help you to resist the enemy and stand firm in your faith.
3. Spend some time in prayer for your leaders. Pray that they would be the leaders God calls them to be in 1 Peter 5:1-4. Pray that they would continue to be self-controlled and alert so that they would not fall into the enemy's traps.

## DAY 9



**READ:** 2 Peter 1

Peter's second letter was likely written 1-5 years after his first letter, and sometime after this second letter, Peter was martyred in Rome for his faith in Jesus.

One can tell, just from Peter's introduction, that He is a man of firm conviction, strong faith, and deep love for Jesus. Little did he know when, as a young fisherman, he decided to follow Jesus that his life – and the world – would be changed forever as a result! Peter's calling in Matthew 4 seems almost random: "Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow Me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed Him." Jesus notices the boys, calls them over, and that's that. But the sovereignty of God was in this calling! God knew the bold force that Peter would become, and the soft heart that he would demonstrate for Christians throughout the ages.

Like in his first letter, Peter hits us with something big right up front. Essentially, through God's grace, followers of Christ are able to participate in His divine nature. Though we will never be God, we will become more and more like Him as we live by the power of His Spirit! Wonderful truths spill out of these lines. Through God's power, we have been given everything we need to live a godly life! This is made possible because, by His glory and His goodness (not ours!) He has saved us and called us His very own. And so, we can become more like Him and escape the corruption of this world. These three verses show us God's glorious role in our lives, and are followed with the action steps that we must deliberately take in response to the gift we have received. We are to "make every effort" to add various virtues to our faith. In other words, because we have chosen to accept the grace offered us – to put our faith in Christ – we must work on the qualities Peter lists. Acceptance of God's grace will lead to fruitfulness in our lives. As we grow in godliness, we are ensured to be productive and effective workers for the kingdom! We will certainly receive a warm welcome and a rich inheritance when we enter God's kingdom. These promises are as real and true for us today as they were for Peter and the people he was writing to!

Peter knew that his time was short, and he sought to use his remaining time to point fellow Christians to the Lord and the truth of the gospel. He didn't want people to rely on him; he

wanted to present truth that would provide a foundation for the church whether with or without his leadership. His only pride was in Christ.

In this letter, Peter must address heresy and false teaching that was slipping into the church, which will be fleshed out in chapter 2. But first, he takes the time to remind his readers of the certainty they could have in Jesus Christ. The gospel was no man-made invention; Peter himself had known Jesus personally and seen Him in his resurrected body. Eyewitnesses were present at the baptism of Jesus and attested to the presence of the Father and the Spirit, confirming Jesus as the Son of God. Peter himself had been present at the transfiguration. Furthermore, the Word stands forever as a testimony to the divinity of Jesus. The words of the prophets foretold of the coming Messiah and described Jesus perfectly. Oh the sovereignty of God is something to rejoice in! Let us take heart when moments of doubt creep into our minds – our Lord reigns and is coming again to rule as our King forever!



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Read verses 3-11 again. Ask God to reveal something personal to you through this passage. Journal your response.
2. How do you know that God is real? What experiences have you had that prove His existence to you? Spend some time reflecting on this and praising God for the different ways He has revealed Himself to you personally. Ask Him to give you an opportunity to share your joy with someone else today.
3. Ask God to give you a specific name of someone who needs to know the truth found in 2 Peter 1. Use this chapter to help you pray for that person.

## DAY 10



### READ: 2 Peter 2

This is the heaviest, most ominous chapter we have received from Peter thus far. Evidently, false teachers were preaching an anti-gospel message among believers. Remember, Christianity was in its earliest forms. The Bible as we have it – nicely bound and compacted into an accessible book – was only developing and consisted of letters (like this one) floating around to the churches, and being copied down for congregations to keep. Without a formalized Bible, false teachers snuck in unnoticed by many of the new believers.

Peter's warning is one of judgement. While he has written much about God's grace, salvation, humility, and love, he launches into the equally important role that God takes as Supreme Judge. The Old Testament affirms that God is a patient and merciful God of love, but that when His love is consistently rejected and when wickedness mounts to an unbearable measure, He judges those who sin against Him. Peter reminds us specifically of the great flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah where sin was punished on a grand scale. Those who sneak into the church in attempt to lure God's bride into sin will receive no less judgement. These specific false teachers were clearly seeking to open the Christians to stumble in sexual sin.

And so we must heed two warnings from this address. First, we must be aware of false teachers in our midst. And the only way to heighten our awareness and grow in wise judgement is to know the Scriptures. If we know God's Word, we will know when one comes preaching something that is otherwise. Second, we must be wary that we do not become false teachers ourselves. The final verses of the chapter allude to the truth that

many false teachers once knew the true gospel, yet their cravings for sin caused them to stumble and teach corruption. Again, humility and the pursuit of Christ are the keys that will keep us from being mastered by the sinful nature we have abandoned. "A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him," Peter tells us. Let us choose each day that we will be slaves only to Christ!



### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Spend ample time in prayer today, asking for God's protection on your local church, and on the Church as a whole. Pray that leaders would stay humble and stay in the Word and be kept clear of developing false doctrine. Pray that God would make false teachers known, and that He would reveal truth to those who are leading people astray, and to those who are being led astray. Pray for congregations, that Christians would be in God's Word daily, that their eyes would be open to anything that goes against the Scriptures. Pray that God would protect your heart and mind from buying into false teachings.
2. What are some of the false teachings that you know are popular in the worldwide church? What are some of the false teachings that the secular world presents to us (ex. sexual promiscuity)? Make a list of these things and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any ways that you have bought into these teachings or compromised your faith in these areas. Confess these things to God. Ask Him to strengthen your faith.
3. God's Word is our weapon against the lies of the enemy. Ask God to give you a passage of Scripture – His truth! – that you can take with you into the rest of your day.

## DAY 11



### READ: 2 Peter 3

Peter ends His letter by focusing his readers on the prize that awaits us: the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the kingdom He will bring to earth! Peter's intention with both letters is to stimulate believers to wholesome thinking, and, boy, do we need that stimulation. In a world that seeks to stimulate our senses to sin and hopelessness, we must be wholesome – complete, not lacking anything – in our thoughts, and we can be, because of the hope of salvation we find in Jesus.

Jesus and the apostles always sought to focus their hearers on the last days – the tribulation and the glory that would follow. They talked of suffering because Christians living in the last days will suffer. They talked of warnings so that believers would be prepared for whatever they would face. And everything they said was underscored with great hope, because suffering is not the end! As Peter declared in his first letter, we are strangers on this earth! This earth with all its death and decay will pass away, and Jesus will bring forth a new heaven and a new earth and we will reign with Him forever. This is reality, and this is what Peter urges us to focus on in his closing. Scoffers will come, he said. People will rise up – in and out of the church – who will question the return of Christ. "It's been 2000 years!" they say, "Can't you see your God is dead?!" Such people have lost their focus. They are ignorant that this God we wait for is the Creator of the universe, that the universe and everything in it did not just pop into existence, but was created by the powerful word of an uncreated, almighty God. They forget the countless stories of God's judgement and His promise to make right all that sin has tarnished and killed. Sometimes, it certainly does feel like a long wait, but Peter urges us to take heart! God does not wait because He is slow; rather He waits so that all people possible will turn their hearts towards Him. But do not be deceived – the day will come when He will destroy this world of sin and usher in His holy kingdom.





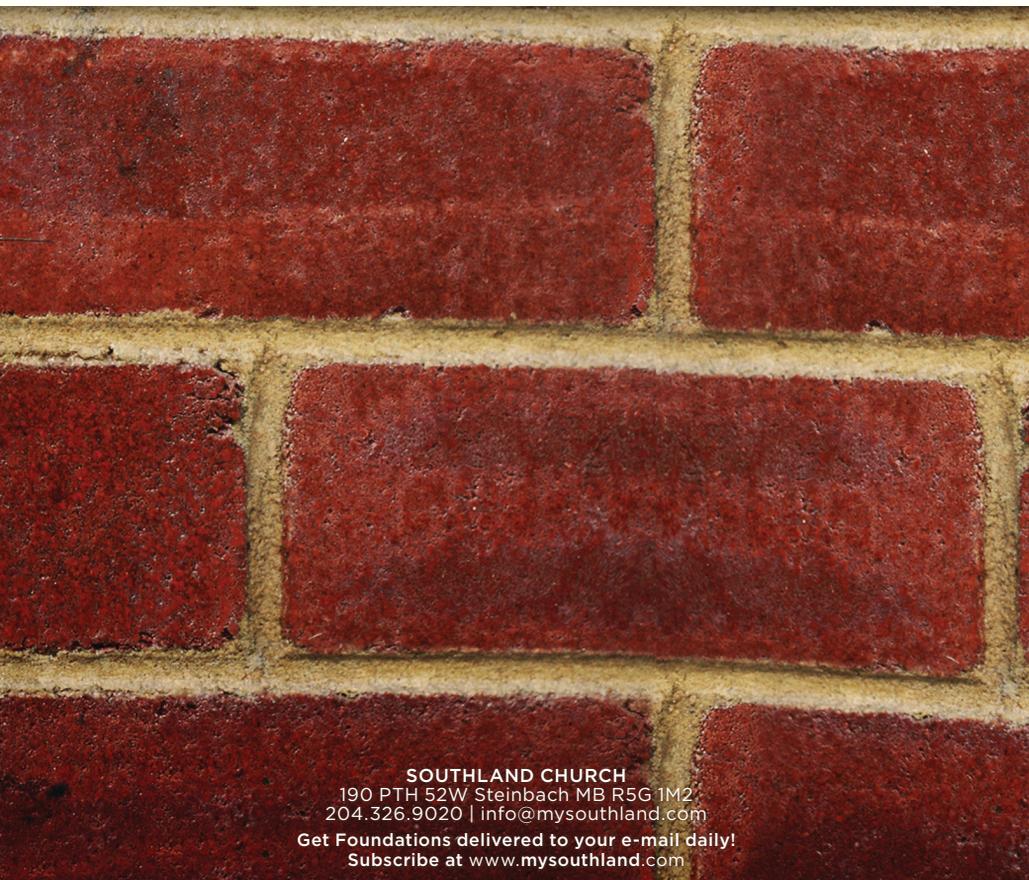


## The First & Second Letters of Peter

Peter's letters to the churches are a great encouragement to Christians living in troublesome times. A man transformed by the power of the Spirit and a real relationship with Jesus Christ, Peter speaks life into his readers, no matter what struggles they are facing. We can live out our call to remain steadfast, holy believers - living stones of a living church because of the living hope we have through Christ Jesus, our Lord!

### **1 Peter 2:5 (NIV)**

*"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*



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