

Teacher Class Plan

I Peter: Lesson #79 – Gird Your Minds For Wednesday, Mar. 4th

Read I Pet. 1:1 – 2:3 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: 1 Pet. 1:23 “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

Tonight we are starting to study from I Peter. *[Point to the big letter on the wall.]* Let’s take a look at our Peter poster that tells all about what we’ll be studying the next few classes. *[Review the Peter poster with the class.]*

The Apostle Peter Writes a Letter

- Simon Peter was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle. *[You might find a picture of Jesus and Peter in the resource room.]* He went around with Jesus for about three years and saw all that Jesus did. He preached the first gospel sermon in Acts 2.
- Many years later he wrote a letter to Christians who had scattered out over the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. *[A map is supplied that shows where these places were.]* In other lessons we have talked a lot about how Christians, especially in that time, were persecuted. They were treated bad just because they followed Christ. Peter talks about this several times in this letter. It is possible that these were Christians who had to leave their homes and live in these other regions because they were being persecuted.
- Notice that Peter says these lived as foreigners and strangers in these regions. Do you know what a foreigner is? That is someone who is a citizen of one country, but has to live in another country, like if you went and lived in Mexico.

Born Again to a Living Hope

- Christians are described in the New Testament as “born again”; do you know why? Jesus once told the Jewish leader Nicodemus that he must be born again to enter God’s kingdom. Everyone that ever lived was born physically into this world. But to be ready to enter heaven, and to be part of Christ’s spiritual kingdom, we have to be born a second time. That happens when we are baptized into Christ.
- Peter says these who he is writing to had been born again to a living hope. Our hope involves one day having eternal life, a life with God where we would never die. God is going to give his faithful children eternal life. That means we will live forever with God and Jesus in heaven.

These Christians Were Going Through Trials

- As we already said, these Christians were being treated badly because they followed Christ. They were going through hard times. That made them sad.
- But Peter also says they were very excited and happy about their hope of heaven. They realized that someday they would be rewarded for having served God so faithfully.

- They could also rejoice because even though these trials they were going through were very hard, they could show the Lord that even if it was hard to be a Christian, they would still stay faithful to Him.
- Peter compares this to gold. *[A small poster will be ready for you that illustrates this idea.]* When gold nuggets are first mined, they aren't pure or beautiful, but a refiner puts the raw gold in a fire that burns off all the impurities in the gold. Once the gold is refined, it is pure and beautiful. Trials are kind of like that. They are a fire that tests Christians, and shows that their faith in God is real, and that they don't give up. And then like gold, we are more pure and beautiful to God.
- Peter also said that they could always rejoice in Jesus. Peter had seen Jesus, but many of these people never did get to see Him. Of course, we didn't get to see Jesus either. But we can believe in Him and love him and be glad to serve Him.

The Wonderful Story of Jesus

- We have heard about Jesus all our lives. We know about His birth, His miracles, what He taught, how He died on the cross, how He resurrected from the dead, and then went up into heaven.
- Back in Old Testament times Jesus had not yet been born, so of course, they did not know much about Him. Prophets were men that God told things to. Sometimes God told prophets about what was going to happen. He told the prophets about Jesus coming. All through the Old Testament, we see how the prophets would write things about Jesus.
 - Isaiah said that a child would be born that would rule the world.
 - Micah said Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.
 - Isaiah said He would work miracles.
 - Zechariah said He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver.
 - David in the Psalms said His hands and feet would be pierced.
 - Isaiah said that He would die for our sins.
 - Jeremiah says He would start the New Covenant.
 - In the Psalms David said that He would resurrect from the dead.
 - Also in the Psalms David said He would be both a King reigning from God's right hand, and would be our High Priest.
- But even though the prophets were told some things about Jesus coming, they still didn't really understand all that much. All those great prophets wished they could have known more about Jesus. Isn't it great that now we can know all about Him. I'm so glad we live in a time when we can open our Bibles and learn all about Jesus and how He saved us.
- Did you know that Peter tells us that even angels wish they could come down and see more about what we do in serving Jesus?

Get Ready to Serve the Lord Faithfully

- Christians need to be prepared to go to work for the Lord. We shouldn't let anything get in our way. Peter said this in an unusual way. He said we need to "gird up the loins of your mind." Let's think about what that means.
- Back in that day and time they didn't wear pants, but robes. Their robes usually came all the way to the ground. Now think about how hard it would be to run or work in

something like that. When the men of that time had to run fast or do some work, they picked up the bottom of their robe and tucked it inside their belt which went around their waist (this area was called the loins). *[If you have a long robe at home – that you aren't embarrassed for them to see – you could bring it to illustrate what you are talking about.]* That was called “girding themselves” (a belt was sometimes called a girdle). I Kings 18:46 tells how the prophet Elijah got ready to run and it says “he girded up his loins.” So girding up your loins was kind of like saying, you have to be ready for action, you have to be ready to run or move about a lot.

- But Peter says “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.” He really isn't talking about tucking our robes in our belt, He is talking about getting our minds ready, ready to act for the Lord. He also means that we have to get things out of our way, so that we can do what God needs us to do.
- Most of all we need to be prepared to live a holy life. Holy means we are set apart to serve the Lord. He is holy, so we must be holy. God will one day judge what we did with our lives here on earth, so we need to make sure that we have made time for God and spent our time on earth, not for sinful things, but for serving God faithfully.
- Jesus paid for us to be free from sin. He owns us. His blood that He shed when He died on the cross paid for us. His life that He gave is more valuable than all the gold or silver in the world. Because Jesus bought us, we belong to Him. We must always remember that we are His servants.

Born Again to a New Life

- Jesus once said that obeying the gospel, beings saved and becoming a Christian was like being born again. We aren't born again physically, but we are born again to a new life, a life where we are to serve the Lord.
- God's Word is what helps us to be born to that new life. Our **memory verse**, 1 Pet. 1:23, says, “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” *[Hold up the memory verse card and review this verse with the class to see if they can say it.]* We are to live the way God's Word teaches us.
 - It is a life of love. In this life we are to fervently love our fellow Christians.
 - In our new life, we are glad for other people when they have nice things. We don't covet them and get mad because they have it and we don't.
 - In our new life, we shouldn't be talking bad things about other people and saying things that could hurt them.
 - In our new life, we should love to study God's Word.
- What we are right now, the physical bodies we are in, and even all the things we have – the house we live in, the clothes we wear, the toys we own – all of these things won't last forever. Sooner or later they will fall apart. But God's Word will last forever. It matters more than everything else.

Bible Quiz: Try to make time in your class to review the quiz questions. It also helps to review Sunday's questions if you have enough time.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Peter Writes to Christians in Several Regions

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who God has chosen who are living as foreigners and strangers scattered among the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

You've Been Born Again to a Living Hope

2 You were chosen and known beforehand by God the Father to be sanctified by the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled by His blood. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

3-4 Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy caused us to be born again to a living hope, by means of Christ's resurrection from the dead. This living hope is for an inheritance that will never decay, will never be stained by sin, and will never fade away. It is being guarded in heaven for you.

5 You are being guarded by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Rejoicing During Their Trials

6 Because of your hope and your salvation, you rejoice with great excitement. Right now it may be that you feel sorrowful because of various trials you are facing.

7 These are trials to prove your faith. Gold is tried and purified in the fire, but gold can be destroyed or lost. Your faith is much more precious than gold, and when it is tried with fire and is examined, it will result in you being commended, valued and praised when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 Though you have never even looked upon Jesus, you still love Him. And even though you don't see Him right now, you still believe and greatly rejoice with a joy that can't be described.

9 You rejoice because you are receiving the result of your faith – the salvation of your souls.

Angels and Prophets Longed to Know More About the Gospel of Christ

10 Now the Old Testament prophets who foretold the grace that was coming, carefully and diligently searched and investigated wanting to know more about this salvation.

11 When they prophesied of Christ's suffering and the glory He would have afterward, they carefully studied what the Spirit of Christ had revealed. They wanted to understand what the Spirit was showing them and they wanted to know when and how it would happen.

12 It became clear to them that the prophecies they made were not meant to help them, but were for you. These things have now been told to you in great detail by those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things that angels would like to look into.

Gird Up Your Minds

13 We are living in the time of the fulfillment of all these Old Testament prophecies. Prophets wanted to know more about these times, angels wanted to understand more

about it. And we have the privilege of living it. But we also live in a time when our faith is on trial.

So let's put on a belt and tuck your robe into it around your waist so you can be ready to act unhindered. Now my point is not really about your waist, but about your mind – it needs to be ready. You need to be alert and aware of what is going on (not like someone who is intoxicated). You need to hope completely on the grace that will come to you when Christ is revealed.

14 Like children who obey, don't let your life be molded by the kind of sinful desires you used to do out of ignorance.

15-16 But be holy in all the ways you live your life, just as the One who called you is holy, because in the Scripture God said, "Be holy, for I am holy." (Lev. 11:44)

17 God judges everyone's work without showing favoritism to anyone. So if you call upon God as your Father, do so with a reverential fear. Spend your time living like a foreigner who is only temporarily living here.

The Price Jesus Paid to Set You Free

18-19 You know that a price has been paid to buy you out of that worthless, empty life you inherited from your forefathers. The price to get you out of that life was not paid in perishable things like gold and silver, but with something far more valuable – the blood of Christ, like a lamb with no defects or imperfections.

20 Jesus was known before the world began but has clearly been shown in this last time for you.

21 Through Him you believe in the God that raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Born Again By God's Word to Love

22 Having obeyed the truth through the Holy Spirit, you have cleansed your souls. This has brought you to the duty of loving your brethren in Christ, and doing so without pretending or being hypocritical. So with a pure heart, love each other, be willing to reach out diligently to practice this love.

23 You have been reborn for a new life, not from corruptible seed (this birth did not come about from fleshly parents that are mortal, able to wear out and die), but from incorruptible (from a source that cannot wear out and die), the Word of God that continues to live and remain.

24 As the Scripture says, "All flesh is like grass, and all the glory of mankind is like the flower coming up from the grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off." (Isa. 40:6,7)

25 "But the Word of the Lord remains forever." (Isa. 40:8) And this is the Word, the gospel that was preached to you.

The New Life We've Been Born To

2 Pet. 1:1 Because we were born again through the Word of God to a love of the brethren, we must put away all desires that are mean and want to hurt others. We must get rid of all efforts to deceive others. We must not be hypocrites who just pretend to love and be holy. We must cast aside envious feelings where we resent what others are blessed with. We must not speak against others, especially in such a way hurt them and damage their reputations.

2-3 Like a new born baby, have a strong desire for milk of the Word, with nothing else mixed into it, so that it can help you grow, since you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.