

Date: 10.05.2020

Time: 6pm

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 65:1-5 (Scottish Psalter)

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:1-2

Outline:

a) Introduction

1. Peter's humble introduction

2. Peter's clear definition

3. Peter's Trinitarian understanding

4. Peter's concise presentation

5. Peter's exemplary desire

Apostolic Greetings

- **Introduction**

Peter is the author of the letter. The letters might have been written to Jews or Gentiles, likely to a mixture of Jews and gentiles in the congregations.

Peter reminds the believers of their Christian privileges, like new birth, regeneration, the forgiveness of sins. Again and again He keeps going back to Christ.

Peter also reminds believers of their Christian responsibilities, with Jesus' example being the one to follow. There are privileges and responsibilities for the Christian. Peter tells us that spiritual sufferings are needed to test our faith.

Verse 1 and 2 is the apostolic greeting. He writes to challenge and encourage believers.

1) Peter's humble introduction

An apostle: Peter introduces himself as an apostle. Not the apostle. Not the one who leads, or the chief of the apostles. Peter is humble in his introduction of himself. He guided the early apostles – he had pre-eminence. But Peter didn't focus on his privilege. He realised that in the eyes of God we are all the same. Peter's humble introduction as one of the apostles gives us an example to follow.

We've to remember that no-one is indispensable. We need to have a right understanding of who we are. It is enough to belong to Jesus.

Of Jesus Christ: Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus – he belongs to Christ. He is not owned by men, but knows that he is chosen and owned by Christ. He was under the authority of Christ. To be an apostle of Christ was an honour with big responsibilities. Peter was not free to do whatever he liked – he had to follow the example and will of Jesus, and so have we.

When we think of positions like that of minister, or elder, we think of the privileges, not the responsibilities. But remember what a huge responsibility it is to have in a way responsibility over the souls of people and to care for people as Jesus did.

I am under Jesus' authority. I am His property. I am a servant of Jesus.

2) Peter's clear definition

Honest: Peter doesn't add sugar to the medicine. He is honest about the spiritual condition of believers – they are exiles. Maybe they lived in the town where they were born, with family nearby, but because of Jesus they were strangers in the world. They were out of their comfort zone.

As believers, we don't belong to this world. We feel uncomfortable and out of our comfort zone. Though we love the people of the world, we are not at home in the world. We are different from the world, like in our priorities. We don't understand the world and the world doesn't understand us. We are strangers spiritually in the world. Life is hard. We're not at home. There are trials and Peter is honest about this.

Controversial: Peter wasn't afraid of controversy. He refers to the elect, reminding us that we are God's because He chose us. This is hard to understand and grasp. But we are saved by God's choice. You are who you are because God has chosen you – you were predestined to be His. Behind our repentance and faith is God.

The privilege of being chosen depends on Christ. What's true of Him becomes true of us. By saving us, God has given us what by right belongs to Jesus. By grace, we are the chosen ones. By grace, we are children of God. By grace, the will of the Father is to give us the kingdom. By grace, we are made holy. By grace, we are justified. By grace, the Father is well-pleased in us.

There is great mystery, but as believers, we are chosen. We'd have never chosen God, but He chose us. If our salvation depended 1% on our will, we'd lose our salvation. But if we're God's we'll never lose our salvation because it's rooted in God's will.

3) Peter's Trinitarian understanding

The trinity is a doctrine beyond our understanding. It's a mystery. Peter was not afraid of teaching the trinity.

No subordination: God is triune, three in one. There is no subordination in the trinity. No one person is above the others in the trinity. Our formula is often Father, and then the Son, then the third person of the trinity is the Spirit. But the three persons are one. The three are equal in essence, glory and power. The Spirit is as much God as the Father and the Father as much God as the Son.

There is distinction in the roles of the persons in the trinity.

In salvation: All of the trinity is involved in our salvation. The God who saves us is a triune God. We simplify the gospel in saying it's just Jesus who saved us. We can wrongly think that Jesus had to persuade the Father to save us, but this is not the gospel. The three persons of the trinity are single-minded in our salvation. The Father sends the Son out of love for sinners. The sprinkling of Christ's blood covers us. The Spirit sanctifies us.

The Father chooses us and plans our salvation.

The Son purchases our salvation.

The Spirit applies our salvation.

We need the triune God to save us.

4) Peter's concise presentation

The work of God the Father: The Father chose us – He predestined us and before we were born decided that we will be saved. The Father's foreknowledge of His people is not theoretical, but personal; it is an intimate relationship filled with affection. He's chosen you because He's chosen you. He loves you because He loves you. Out of His love for us, He chooses us to be His people.

The work of God the Son: The Son sprinkles us with His blood. We were chosen by the Father to be sprinkled with the blood of the Son. This is a picture of atonement – our sins are covered and the price is paid. All of our sin is covered and forgiven. The Son accomplishes our salvation. He has done all that was necessary for us to be saved. He has lived the life that we could not live. And so we are forgiven, redeemed and saved.

The work of God the Spirit: The Spirit sanctifies us. We're chosen to be sanctified. We can only be made holy by the Holy Spirit who is vital in our salvation.

Don't undermine any part of the work of the trinity, or any person of the trinity. The gospel is not just the death of Jesus. We've been chosen by the Father and the Spirit brings us to Christ. Our worship should go to all three persons of the trinity as all are involved in our eternal happiness.

5) Peter's exemplary desire

Grace: Our greatest desire must be for God's grace. We want Him to deal with us not according to our sins, but according to His grace. We want Him to be merciful, kind and forgiving. Peter begins his first letter and ends his second letter desiring God's grace for the people of the congregations.

God's grace is sufficient. When we grasp, believe and understand the grace of God, it is a foretaste of Heaven. The devil wants us to forget God's grace. The devil doesn't want us to find rest there, as he knows that if we do, we will be an invincible enemy to him. God reminds us again and again of His grace.

Peace: We need the peace of God. When we experience it, it's Heaven on earth. The gospel brings the reality of the grace of God which allows us to experience the peace of God. This peace is an outpouring of God's blessing to give us spiritual prosperity. The fight is over and so we can now experience His peace.

May we all enjoy the grace and peace of God.