



Standing Firm

Studies in the book of 1 Peter

(with thanks to Gracepoint & St Helens Bishopsgate)



hope at the hill

ROOTY HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Contents

Introduction	3
Study #1: 1 Peter 1:1-12: The Christian Identity, New Birth, Experience & Privilege	5
Study #2: 1 Peter 1:13-2:3: Standing Firm with Hope	9
Study #3: 1 Peter 2:4-12: Standing Firm as His Chosen People	13
Study #4: 1 Peter 2:13-25: Standing Firm Trusting in God's Future Judgment	17
Study #5: 1 Peter 3:1-12: Let Future Hope Shape your Relationships..	22
Study #6: 1 Peter 3:13-22: Standing Firm without Fear	26
Study #7: 1 Peter 4:1-11: Standing Firm by Suffering & Loving Others	30
Study #8: 1 Peter 4:12-19: Standing Firm by Rejoicing in Suffering	34
Study #9: 1 Peter 5:1-14: Standing Firm Knowing God will Restore	38



Introduction

▶ Who wrote 1 Peter?

As 1:1 states, the apostle Peter who knew Jesus well is the writer of this letter. While some scholars have wondered if this was actually written by someone influenced by Peter, none of the arguments of this sort undermine the plain reading of the text.

▶ When was 1 Peter written?

1 Peter was probably written in the AD 60s. Persecution took shape under Nero's reign (AD 54-68), which is the traditionally accepted period of Peter's death.

▶ To whom was 1 Peter written?

1:1 says, "To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,". This letter is written to Christians all over the Roman Empire, specifically in areas of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey – see map on next page).

There was a period when scholars believed that the letter was written primarily to Jewish believers, but a careful study seems to indicate Gentile readers as well (e.g. 1:18; 4:4). Our sermon series will take the view that Peter is less concerned with people as Jew or Gentile Christians, but who they are now as the people of God through Christ.

Map of Asia Minor



Available at: <https://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/Map-of-asia-minor.jpg>

► Big Ideas and Themes of 1 Peter

This letter very strongly speaks about how to live as a believer in a world that is unaccepting of Christianity. To list some themes throughout (just sample Bible verses are listed):

- Persecution and suffering, and the example of Christ (2:12)
- Great hope (and even joy) in the midst of suffering (1:8; 5:10)
- Responding to a non-Christian world (2:12; 3:15-16)
- Encouragement to stand firm in the faith (5:12)
- Christians as people chosen by God, saved by Christ, and kept by Him (1:3-7)
- Living as aliens in a foreign land (1:1)
- Salvation (starts with new birth, but is also the goal of our faith to be revealed at the last time) (1:3, 9)

Study #1: 1 Peter 1:1-12: The Christian Identity, New Birth, Experience & Privilege

► Purpose

Stand firm in the grace of God by joyfully remembering that we are chosen by God and praising him for our certain heavenly inheritance in Christ.

► Introductory Question:

1. What do people/we find hard about the Christian life? What causes you to doubt whether being a Christian is worth it?
2. Does anyone have any ideas why Peter might have written this letter?

► v1-2 Remember you are God's chosen temporary residents in this world:

3. Who is this letter to? What are the names which Peter calls his Christian readers in v1? What do they mean?
4. Why would this be an encouragement to Peter's readers? And us?

▶ **v6-9 Continue to rejoice in your inheritance and in Christ as you face many trials:**

9. What are these Christians facing in v6? Look up 2:18-20,3:14,4:12-16,5:9 to see this.
10. So, how can they continue to rejoice? Why does God allow them to suffer? What do we gain?

▶ **v10-12 Be amazed and in awe that God's long-promised plans have been preached to you:**

11. What were the prophets doing in the OT according to v10-12? How are Peter's readers different to them? How should this give them and us confidence in God and His promises?

► Engaging with God:

12. What 3-4 ways should Peter's readers be encouraged by, in this letter so far?

13. Or, from this passage:
 - a. How would you encourage a Christian who doesn't think that they are special??
 - b. How would you encourage a Christian who is enjoying this life?
 - c. How would you encourage a Christian who is suffering?

Study #2: 1 Peter 1:13-2:3: Standing Firm with Hope

► Purpose

Stand firm in the grace of God by being full of hope and therefore living a holy life of deep love for other believers and of craving God's Word

► Introductory Question:

1. How would you define a Christian? What does it mean to be a Christian?

► 1:13 You have great grace so hope fully in it:

2. What is the first thing that Peter wants his readers to do as temporary residents in this world? What are they to hope in?
3. We are to have our minds set on this hope and our selves controlled by it. Why do we find this hard? What might we be controlled by (or distracted by) instead?

▶ **1:14-21 You have been rescued by Christ's precious and imperishable blood and have God as your holy Father so be holy:**

4. What has God done for us in these verses? Who are we?
5. How should our lives change in response to this? Why?
6. How should we view God? And His Son, and His death?
7. If we are not seeking to be holy, what does this say about us and our attitude to our Father and Jesus?

▶ **1:22-2:3 You have been born again by God's imperishable Word so deeply love your brothers and crave His Word:**

8. What has God done for us in v23? Why is this so amazing (in view of v24-25)?
9. How should we live in the light of this?
10. How do we often love on the surface, rather than sincerely/deeply? What is the response we should have to God's grace to us? Is this your response?
11. In what ways have you tasted that the Lord is good? How will this impact the way you view God's Word the Bible?

▶ **Engaging with God:**

12. In pairs, from this passage, what is the response we should have to God's grace to us? Is this your response?

13. Which of these commands seems hardest to follow? Why? How will you seek to live in the light of God's grace this coming week?

14. How does this help us to stand firm in the grace of God?



Study #3: 1 Peter 2:4-12: Standing Firm as His Chosen People

▶ Purpose

Stand firm in the grace of God as His chosen people in Christ by confidently declaring God's excellencies and fleeing from sinful desires in this unbelieving world

▶ Introductory Question:

1. What is the point of being a Christian?

▶ v4-7a Be enthralled and confident that you are part of God's building work through Christ:

2. How was God to be approached in the OT? (See Lev. 16)
3. Together work out what has happened since the OT (i.e. where does God live and who can approach God now, from v5)? Why is this so amazing?

4. How does this help you to stand firm in God's grace?

▶ **v7b-8 Don't be put-off that people rebel against Christ:**

5. However, not everyone does benefit from this. Why is that?

6. These Christians were suffering at the hands of unbelievers. Why would remembering Jesus' rejection and being told that people's disobedience was prophesied help them to keep trusting in God?

▶ **v9-12 Declare God's excellencies as His chosen people:**

7. Peter's readers are those who are trusting in Jesus. How does Peter describe them in v9-10?

8. Why does Peter tell them these things? In pairs, go through 1 Peter and write down the things which are worth praising God for, and then feedback. Why might they not want to declare God's praises? So, why should they proclaim great things about God?

9. Why should they flee from sinful desires and live good lives in this world? How does this fit with praising God?

Engaging with God:

10. What has this passage taught you about a) Jesus, b) God's people, and c) what it will mean for you to live for Him?

11. How would you respond to someone who said that:
- a. Jesus is a good guy, but he doesn't matter that much.

 - b. My church says that only certain people can be priests

 - c. I don't think that children should be allowed to run around in a church building because it is precious as God's house.

 - d. I find it hard to trust in God when I see Christian people around the world persecuted for their faith

 - e. I don't like talking about God much, it's a bit embarrassing really

 - f. Life as a Christian in this world is great, it doesn't matter how I live because I know that God has chosen and forgiven me
12. How do your answers to these questions (from the passage!) help you to stand firm in God's grace?



Study #4: 1 Peter 2:13-25: Standing Firm Trusting in God's Future Judgment

▶ Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by trusting in His future judgement and respectfully submit to present authorities, even unjust ones, because Christ has suffered in this way for you

▶ Introductory Question:

1. If Christians don't belong to this world, does that mean we can give up university, work etc, ignore authority around us and enjoy our freedom until we get to heaven?

▶ v13-20 Respectfully submit to governing authorities to glorify the Lord Jesus:

2. How does Peter want these Christians to use their freedom (v13f, 16f)? Why (v12a, 15)?

3. How does this fit with v9-12 of last week's passage?

4. What example of authority and submission does Peter give in v18-20? What would submitting have involved for them?

5. In pairs, what kinds of authority do we come across in this world? What will submitting to them involve for you?

6. What would you say to someone who said: "you don't know how unreasonable my parents are", or "in my country Christians are tortured"?



▶ v21-25 Don't retaliate but entrust yourself to God the Judge as you follow the suffering Lord Jesus:

7. Is it unreasonable for God to expect us to suffer pain when we have done nothing wrong? How does Jesus answer this objection? What had Jesus done to deserve suffering?

8. What did Jesus not do when He was mistreated? What did He do instead? Why?

9. How does knowing that God judges justly help us not to retaliate?

10. What else was Jesus doing when He died on the cross/tree? Why does Peter use Is. 53 here?

11. What has His suffering achieved for all who trust in Him? How does the word 'tree' of Dt 21:23 help us to see this? Why would this be of comfort to Christians?

► Engaging with God:

12. How should we respond to this part of God's Word? What are the reasons for this response (from this passage and all that we have seen in 1 Peter so far)?

13. How would you normally respond to:
- a. Paying our taxes

 - b. Seeing the Prime Minister on TV

 - c. Red traffic lights

 - d. Speed limit signs

 - e. Teachers and exams

 - f. Having to tap on the train

 - g. Your visa regulations

 - h. Paying for a Netflix/Foxtel/Spotify subscription

 - i. Being blamed for something you have not done

 - j. Being laughed at by your family for being a Christian

 - k. Governments arresting Christians

 - l. Muslim extremists killing Christians

How does this passage help you have a more godly reaction?

Study #5: 1 Peter 3:1-12: Let Future Hope Shape your Relationships

▶ Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by having your hope in God mould your relationships within marriage, between fellow believers and with the world

▶ Introductory Questions:

1. Who has Peter told us that Christians are? How are they to live?

2. Why might submission to authority have been an issue for Christians?

▶ **v1-6 Wives submit to your husbands because of your hope in God:**

3. Why might submission to husbands also be an issue?
4. What are wives to do (v1a, 2-4)? What are some reasons for this (v1b, 4b, 5-6)?
5. What does v4 say beauty of the inner person consists of? Why is it so valuable?
6. Why do we not like the idea of wives submitting in this way? What objections do people have?

▶ **v7 Husbands honour your wives because you are co-heirs of grace:**

7. How ought the husband to behave? Why?

8. Together answer these questions:

How does this challenge you, whether single or married?

For Men, are you prepared to put your wife first?

For Women, are you prepared to submit?

▶ **v8-12 Believers be compassionate towards one another because you will inherit a blessing:**

9. How are Christians to behave? What if they are treated badly?

10. What does the quote from the Psalm encourage people to do? Why?

11. Think of one person who makes life hard for you. How will you follow Jesus' example and do something good for them?

► Engaging with God:

12. Submit, be considerate, love/don't retaliate — Will they earn us heaven? Why are Christians to do these things?

13. How will this change the coming week for you?

Study #6: 1 Peter 3:13-22: Standing Firm without Fear

► Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by fearlessly and openly hoping in Christ amidst suffering

► Introductory Questions:

1. How do we respond when we suffer for being Christians? Why do we respond like this?

► v13-17 Fearlessly and openly hope in Christ in suffering:

2. If we do suffer for doing good/being Christian, how does Peter encourage us to respond? (What should we do and not do)?

3. Why should we not fear? Why do we find this hard?

4. Why should we set apart Christ as Lord? What will this then lead to in v15b?

5. Together answer:

a. What will your answer be when someone asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have?

b. What hope has Jesus given us for the future?

c. How will you answer in a respectful and gentle manner?

► **v18-22 Be strengthened in suffering through Christ's example, Noah's example and baptism:**

6. v17 tells us that it is better to suffer for doing good than evil. How does v18 help us to see this?

7. How was Jesus' suffering and death far from pointless?

8. How does this answer these points:
- a. "I try hard to live a good life in order to please God"

 - b. "I like seeing the bread and wine in communion because I know that Christ is being sacrificed again for my many sins"

 - c. "Suffering makes me think that God does not care for me"
9. How does Jesus' death help us to be fearlessly and openly hoping in Christ, even in suffering?
10. We know that the 'Spirit of Christ' was at work in the prophets (1:11), that Peter calls Noah a 'preacher of righteousness' in his second letter (2:5), and that Noah lived among wicked people (see Gen 6:11-12).
- a. How does putting these things together help us to understand what Peter is saying in v19-20?

 - b. Why might this encourage suffering believers to be fearless and open about their hope?



11. What does baptism do, and not do? Why might a believer's baptism encourage him/her to be fearless and open about their hope?

12. Peter has told us about Jesus' death and resurrection, what does he add in v22? Where is Jesus now? How does this help believers to be open and fearless about their hope in Him?

▶ Engaging with God:

13. Coming back to the question at the beginning, how does this passage help us to have a right response in suffering? How does it address your fears?

14. If we are to be open about our hope, are you ready to explain it? Turn to your neighbour now to do it — what do you need to say?

Study #7: 1 Peter 4:1-11: Standing Firm by Suffering & Loving Others

▶ Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by suffering and loving others, rather than sinning, because the end is near

▶ Introductory Questions:

1. How do we respond to being called to suffer for doing good (3:17)? How might the prospect of suffering make us behave?

▶ v1-6 Choose suffering rather than sin because Jesus did this and because judgement is coming:

2. Why did Jesus suffer so much (2:24, 3:18)?
3. Because Christ has suffered, what does Peter want his readers to do (v1)? What will this look like (v2-3)?

4. How are we tempted by these pagan actions?

5. How might abuse at the hands of pagans also tempt us?

6. How would v5 encourage the good Christian to keep avoiding sin?
How is this also a warning to the non-Christian? Do we believe this?

7. How does v6 also encourage the Christian to keep trusting in Jesus,
even in suffering?

8. How would you use this passage to encourage someone to keep
being a Christian and not sin, even though it might lead to suffering?

▶ v7-11 Pray and love others to God's glory because judgement is coming:

9. How is the theme of judgment carried on into the beginning of v7?
10. In view of this end, believers are to pray (v7), love (v8-9) and serve (v10-11). Answer the following:
- i) What do we need to pray about? How will an unclear mind affect our prayers?

 - ii) Why do believers need to love one another? Why is a hospitality a good example of this?

 - iii) What are the gifts Peter mentions here? Why are they to be used?
11. Suppose a is preached at church which brings much media criticism to our church, and people begin to abuse us, why might we need to hear this teaching in v7-11? How might we apply these different actions in such a situation?

▶ Engaging with God:

12. How would you sum up having a Christ-like attitude from v1-11?

13. How would this help these Christians to live as temporary residents and stand firm in God's grace? How will this help you to live as a temporary resident over this week?

Study #8: 1 Peter 4:12-19: Standing Firm by Rejoicing in Suffering

► Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by rejoicing in suffering and continuing to trust in our faithful God

► Introductory Questions:

1. Why do you think that Peter keeps on talking about suffering so much?

2. How do we normally feel when we suffer?

▶ Don't be surprised or ashamed of suffering but rejoice...

3. Which of the following options does v12 suggest:

- i) that Christians who displease God suffer as punishment?
- ii) that some Christians might have to suffer occasionally?
- iii) that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life?

4. What kind of suffering is Peter thinking of in v14-16?

5. Apart from not being surprised, how else should Christians respond to suffering for following Jesus Christ (v13 and 16)?

6. Can you summarise what Peter is teaching us so far?

7. It sounds weird to rejoice in suffering, so let's now look at reasons why this does make sense. In pairs, looking at v12-18, what different reasons does Peter give that we should rejoice in suffering?

8. Here are some things which are often said about suffering:

- i) It's the devil who makes Christians suffer. If God could have His way all the time, it would not happen.
- ii) Christians don't need to suffer. God has promised them a good life in Jesus and they need to receive this in faith.
- iii) A persecuted Christian is a poor advert for God.
- iv) Pain is an illusion.

How would Peter respond to these different points of view from v12-18?

9. What is Peter's final command in v19? Why is this the right application for this passage and all that we seen over the last few weeks?

▶ Engaging with God:

10. Think up scenarios which people can relate to and then address them rightly using this passage, such as:
- i) Some friends ask whether you think that Jesus is the only way to God and that other religions are wrong. When you say “yes”, they are offended and abuse you for being judgemental — how does this passage help you in this situation?
 - ii) A colleague asks you what you did on Sunday. You realise that things might get embarrassing and so change the topic of conversation — how does this passage help you in this situation?
 - iii) Your family has a go at you for giving money away to GracePoint (“what a waste!”) — how does this passage help you in this situation?

Study #9: 1 Peter 5:1-14: Standing Firm Knowing God will Restore

► Purpose

As temporary residents, stand firm in God's grace by humbly living under God's mighty hand and resisting the devil in this suffering world because God will graciously restore you

► v1-7 Humbly live under God's hand:

1. who does Peter now address? How are they to act?
2. In view of the context of suffering/persecution, why might he mention these particular actions/attitudes?
3. What is the encouragement for doing this? Why would this encouragement be vital?

4. Are we elders? If not, how should we apply this to ourselves? Just ignore it...?

5. What are younger people to do? Why?

6. What might this look like? Are we happy to do this?

7. We are told to clothe selves in humility. How does this fit with v1-5 and what we have seen about elders and younger people?

8. What encouragement is there for being like this?

9. How might casting anxieties on God be a clear example of humility?
Is v7 saying "Don't worry about anything?" What is it saying?

10. What problems might there be if a church did not follow this completely?

► **v8-14 Resist the devil by standing firm in God's grace:**

11. What does Peter mean when he says that the devil is looking for someone to devour? What ways might the devil use to devour people here?

12. How are we to resist him?

13. What's new here? (Where does suffering come from?)

14. So, what's the right response? How does this whole letter help us to do this? Has it helped us in this way?