

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

“Feed My Sheep”*: *First and Second Peter
Lesson 8. Jesus in the Writings of Peter

The letters of Peter express the gospel in rich and powerful ways. They draw interesting implications and challenges for everyday Christian living, including how God reaches out to the brokenness of this sin-sick world, the fallen humanity. God is seeking and constantly knocking in each and every heart, including the lost soul, to save “that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Take a look at who Peter is: “an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1) These strangers could be believers in Christ. Of all the places that Paul traveled and preached to the churches in Asia Minor, the Roman provinces, and Turkey, it appears that Peter is speaking directly to these same Pauline churches.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is also a reference to Simon Peter, the son of Jonah, and a leader of the first generation church. He is also known as a fisherman. Peter spent three years in the school of Jesus, and some of the lessons that Peter had to deal with were the great doctrines of election, foreknowledge, sanctification, obedience, the blood of Christ, the Trinity, the grace of God, salvation, revelation, glory, faith, and hope.

We see a changed life in Peter, being impetuous, but now patient. Here we learn that Peter’s name means “rock.” Our Lord told him in effect, “You are a pretty weak man now, but I am going to make you a *Petros*, a ‘rock-man.’ And you will build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ who is the Rock on which the church is built.” He is emphasizing that all believers in Christ are small rocks also: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). Actually, this means every believer is a Peter. Please note that Simon Peter never exalts himself in any position, other than referring himself as an apostle, chosen by the Lord to preach the first sermon on the Day of Pentecost. He did not feel that he was exalted above the others. Peter faces and suffers martyrdom through his experience in being a representative for Christ.

Peter explains Christ as our sacrifice through His death on the cross as the Redeemer and Savior for us in 1 Peter 1:18, 19: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

What amazing love poured out through God in sending His Son to reveal the plan of salvation. Peter addresses Jesus as the Messiah when reading Matthew 16:16: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (In Greek the word Christ is *Christos*, meaning “anointed, the “Messiah.”)

Then we get to the divinity of Jesus in the relationship with God, as one. Let's take a look at some of the gospel writings by Ellet J. Waggoner, one of the 1888 "messengers," and Ellen White:

"The new birth completely supersedes the old. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God' (2 Cor. 5:17, 18). He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance, has a power working in him for righteousness, as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies to evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents" (Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, p. 66; 1900 ed.).

"We need not try to improve on the Scriptures, and say that the goodness of God *tends* to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it *does* lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so. Every man is being led toward repentance as surely as God is good. But not all repent. Why? Because they despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and break away from the merciful leading of the Lord. But whoever does not resist the Lord, will surely be brought to repentance and salvation" (Waggoner on Romans, p. 42).

"Abiding in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, the flesh with its lusts has no more power over us than if we were actually dead and in our graves. ...The flesh is still corruptible, still full of lusts, still ready to rebel against the Spirit; but as long as *we yield our wills* to God, the Spirit holds the flesh in check. ... This Spirit of life in Christ—the life of Christ—is given freely to all. 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. 22:17)." (Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, p. 123; CFI ed., 2016).

"Thank God for the blessed hope! The blessing has come upon all men. For 'as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life' (Rom. 5:18). God, who is no respecter of persons, 'has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places' (Eph. 1: 3). The gift is ours to keep. *If anyone has not this blessing, it is because he has not recognized the gift, or has deliberately thrown it away*" (ibid., p. 66).

"As Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, ... they begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ. ... The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son" (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 27).

There is an old hymn, "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," where the message of Scripture comes through clearly that no matter how great your guilt, God's forgiveness is greater. The words say it all.

Wonderful Grace of Jesus

Wonderful grace of Jesus,
Greater than all my sin;
How shall my tongue describe it,
Where shall its praise begin?
Taking away my burden,
Setting my spirit free;
For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

Refrain:

*Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,
Deeper than the mighty rolling sea;
Higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,
All sufficient grace for even me!
Broader than the scope of my transgressions,
Greater far than all my sin and shame;
O magnify the precious Name of Jesus,
Praise His name!*

Wonderful grace of Jesus,
Reaching the most defiled,
By its transforming power,
Making him God's dear child,
Purchasing peace and heaven
For all eternity—
And the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

[By Haldor Lillenas, 1885-1959; for the complete hymn see Hymnary.org]

There was a very dear adopted Mother-like figure to me who has been a caring friend during my nursing career. Just several days before Mother's day, she passed away in her sleep. She was 99. She loved to pray for each encounter she came across. She reached me through a telephone ministry, and the relationship grew where I became part of her life and family.

That is how it is when you are in the Family of God. You are never alone in the walk in the newness of a converted life in Him. And just think, on the "graduation day" of leaving this world of strife, to have your diploma read, "Receive Eternal Life!" May the apostle Peter's experience speak to us out of his tremendous experience in bringing the gospel of hope and grace.

—Mary Chun

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at: <https://youtu.be/3aywZCt20tA>

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