

PETER THE DISCIPLE

This morning we will begin a three week study on the life and ministry of the Apostle Peter. This morning we will consider him as a Disciple of Christ. In two weeks we will consider him as a Preacher of the Word of Christ, and in three weeks we will consider him as a Pastor of the Church of Christ. I am leaning very heavily upon the work of Ted Donnelly and especially his book entitled "PETER: Eyewitness of His Majesty".

OUR LORD BREAKS PROTOCOL BY CHOOSING HIS OWN DISCIPLES

In the first century it was the common and almost exclusive practice for a man to choose the man he would follow as a disciple. In the words of Ted Donnelly, *"There were many 'disciples' in first century Palestine. A disciple was the follower of any recognized leader, in philosophy, religion or politics. When a scholar, for example, began to gain a reputation for learning, he would attract a group of younger men who wanted to profit from his wisdom. The process was usually initiated by the student. He would select a teacher who particularly appealed to him or who lived nearby and ask if he could be accepted as a follower. The disciple chose his rabbi."* (p. 33)

This was not the case with the Lord Jesus as He made abundantly clear several times, none more clearly than in **John 15:16**, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

OUR LORD SHAPES AND MOLDS PETER AS AN EXAMPLE TO ALL HIS DISCIPLES

1) Christ promises His disciple a new identity as He gives him a new name.

In **John 1:42** we read, *"Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)".* These are the first recorded words our Lord spoke to Peter at their first meeting. A change of name in Bible times meant a change of identity and of character. When Abram became Abraham, and Jacob became Israel, and Hoshea became Joshua this marked a new epoch in their lives and destinies. Christ was declaring the certainty of the change He was going to make in Simon in the years to come.

In the same way, when our Lord first comes to us by His Spirit through His Word He purposes to transform us by changing our identity and our character. This is precisely what Paul meant when he said, *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things passed away; behold, new things have come."* (2 Cor. 5:17) What Christ touches He changes, and what He changes remains forever changed.

2) Christ equips His disciple for meaningful service in His kingdom.

In **Mark 1:17** we read, *"Then Jesus said to them, 'Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'"* Our Lord took these men as they were and used language they were familiar with. They were to leave their fish behind in order to seek to catch men in the net of the Gospel. There are two distinct stages in the process: First, Come after Me. Follow Him. Watch Him. Imitate Him. Then, He promises that He will "make them become" those who will catch men. They do not have to make themselves into fishermen. If they follow Jesus, they can leave everything else in His hands. "Our ineffectiveness in evangelism is not primarily due to our lack of skill in fishing but to our lack of consistency in following Him. It has always been the case that the most Christ-like disciples have been the most useful." (TD, 35)

In the same way, our Lord calls each of us to meaningful service in His Kingdom, and He has determined to mold us and fashion us after His image to serve Him in the place of His appointment. All in the body have been given gifts, some are speaking gifts and some are serving gifts but all are useful in spreading the good news of a Savior who came to save sinners. Are we all seeking to find the place where the Lord can use us to bring greatest glory to His Name?

3) Christ Delights to include His Disciples in His own Ministry.

In **Matthew 16:18** our Lord declared, *"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church."* No matter how one interprets these words it is evident that the Lord is going to build His Church, but it is also evident that He will use His chosen servants who are but *"earthen vessels"* to accomplish this work. It was the preaching of Peter that our Lord used to save 3000 people on the day of Pentecost. It was through the preaching of the Apostle Paul that churches were

planted all over the Roman Empire of his day. When the Lord was drawing the Ethiopian eunuch in **Acts 8** He sent Phillip not an angel.

All through Church History our Lord has been using sinful men and women to spread the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. Each of us has been given the unspeakable privilege of being "*God's fellow-workers*" (**1 Cor. 3:9**). Incredible!

4) Christ Prays for His Tempted Disciple and Let's Him Know Beforehand of the Coming Test.

In **Luke 22:31,32** our Lord graciously warned Peter of the great battle he was about to face, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*" What a terrifying prospect! Is there significance in our Lord's use of his former name Simon here? Perhaps. Certainly the repetition of the name added to the solemnity of the moment. But our Lord assured him that He had prayed for him that his faith would not ultimately fail.

What about us? Can we be assured of our Lord's prayers for us? YES. Our Lord prays in **John 17** not only for those disciples in His presence at that time but also "*for those also who believe in Me through their word*" (**v. 20**). "Think of it! Even now your Savior is praying for you personally, that you may be kept through temptation. "*Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.*" (**Heb. 7:25**)

5) Christ Convicts His Backsliding Disciple of Sin.

In **Luke 22:60,61** we read of the manner in which our Lord brought instant conviction to his backslidden disciple: "*Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. **The Lord turned and looked at Peter.** And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.'*" Notice how everything happened in a moment's time - the denials, the rooster's crowing, the Lord's turn and look, and Peter remembered. This is the way the Lord brought deep and lasting conviction to the very soul of Simon Peter. Donnelly remarks, "What a look that must have been! More penetrating than a laser beam, more eloquent than ten thousand words. It was a rebuke, as the Lord looked beneath the bluster, reflecting in His eyes the awfulness of what Peter was doing...Can we doubt that Christ's look was also a reassurance? In this crisis of His life, with Calvary coming near, He still had time to think about Peter." (p. 38)

What about us? Does our Lord still bring conviction to His disciples? What are some ways the Lord brings conviction to us in our day? What are some of the ways He has used to bring conviction to you? Remember Nathan and David.

6) Christ Graciously Reassures His Fearful Disciple that He has not been Cast Away.

After our Lord's resurrection He demonstrated His tenderness toward broken-hearted Peter in the words recorded in **Mark 16:7**, "*But go and tell His disciples--AND PETER...*" - "They are two words which Peter would never forget, inscribed on his memory in letters of gold... He alone is mentioned by name. Conspicuous in his sin, he is singled out for special reassurance. Jesus has not cast him off. Their relationship has not ended." (p. 39) - WHAT ABOUT US?

7) Christ Restores His Disciple to Fellowship and Usefulness in His Kingdom.

In **John 21** the Lord officially restored Peter to his service for the Lord as the Lord asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" Three times Peter affirmed his love for Jesus and was told each time to attend the work of feeding and tending the people of God's flock. Fittingly the fisherman is re-commissioned at the seashore, where he first heard Christ's call.

8) Christ Prepares His Disciple for the Death he would Suffer in the Days to Come.

Finally our Lord informs Peter that he will die a martyr's death in the service of his King. I am convinced this was intended to bring comfort to the disciple who had fallen so hard. Peter recalled these words in his last letter in **2 Peter 1**. The Lord has assured us that He will be with us to death and Stephen stands to testify of His faithfulness in **Acts 7:55-59**.

PETER THE PREACHER

Two weeks ago we looked at Peter the Disciple and pointed out eight things our Lord was pleased to do to mold and shape him into the man he became. This morning we will turn to the second of our intended three week look into the Life and Ministry of the Apostle Peter, as we consider him as a Preacher of the Gospel of Christ. You recall that our Lord made a solemn promise to Peter immediately after the record catch of fish that caused him to fall before the Lord and declare, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Jesus told him, "***Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.***" (Luke 5:8,10). Today we will examine the results of our Lord's training process in bringing this promise to pass.

This morning, once again we will lean very heavily upon the work of Ted Donnelly, as we will consider **Five Striking Features of the Gospel Preaching of the Apostle Peter**. These features are all very evident in the Book of Acts and they set forth the Framework for all Gospel Preaching for all ages. We must not view this as an academic exercise, nor as a mere historical study, for the only hope for the church and the world we live in is the restoration of this kind of preaching in our day. For this men must labor, and for this we must pray.

THE FIRST MARK OF PETER'S PREACHING WAS THAT IT WAS RELEVANT.

-We will use the four main sermons of Peter recorded in **Acts 2:14-39** (at Pentecost); in **Acts 3:12-26** (in Solomon's porch); in **Acts 4:8-12** (before the Sanhedrin); and in **Acts 10:34-43** (in the house of Cornelius).

-What do we mean by RELEVANCE in preaching?

-In what way was the preaching of Peter marked by Relevance?

(1) What was the starting point of the sermon on the Day of Pentecost? See Acts 2:12,13

(2) What was the starting point of the sermon in Solomon's porch? Healing the Lame Man – 3:12

(3) What was the starting point of the sermon before the Sanhedrin? Healing the Lame Man – 4:9

(4) What was the starting point of the sermon in the house of Cornelius? – Going to the Gentiles – 10:28,29,34,35

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT OUR GOSPEL PRESENTATION IS RELEVANT? EXAMPLES?

THE SECOND MARK OF PETER'S PREACHING WAS THAT IT WAS CHRIST-CENTERED.

-It should come as no surprise that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all Peter's preaching

-Just look at the statistics:

Sermon One in Acts 2 our Lord appears in 13 out of 26 verses

Sermon Two in Acts 3 our Lord appears in 10 out of 15 verses

Sermon Three in Acts 4 our Lord appears in 3 out of 5 verses

Sermon Four in Acts 10 our Lord appears in 7 out of 10 verses

-Let us consider how Peter preaches Christ Jesus under three different headings...

(1) Peter Preaches about The Historical Christ.

Peter preaches a real-life Jesus, firmly rooted in history.

Sermon One – Jesus of Nazareth, His miracles, wonders and signs, in your midst as you know, died, rose again, appeared

Sermon Two – you disowned Him in Pilate's presence and chose a murderer to be released instead of Him

Sermon Four – Tells of the ministry of John, Jesus anointing w/ the HS, Jesus doing good and healing, died, rose, appeared

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT WE ARE PRESENTING THE CHRIST OF HISTORY?

(2) Peter Preaches about the Scriptural Christ.

Peter is constantly quoting or alluding to the OT Scriptures in his preaching

Sermon One – He quotes from Joel 2 (Acts 2:16-21); Psalm 16 (2:25-28) and Psalm 110 (2:34,35)

Sermon Two – He quotes from Deuteronomy 18 in 3:22,23 concerning the promised Prophet to come

Sermon Three – He quotes from Psalm 118 in 4:11 in a searching application to the Sanhedrin

Sermon Four – He declares that all the OT Prophets bear witness in 10:43

WHERE DID PETER LEARN THESE SCRIPTURES? From Jesus, see Luke 24:44,45; Acts 1

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT WE ARE PRESENTING THE CHRIST OF SCRIPTURE?

(3) Peter Preaches about the Doctrinal Christ.

Peter was a brilliant theologian who presented numerous doctrinal truths about the Lord Jesus.

Sermon One – Jesus is Ever-living Lord, the Holy One of God, the Messiah, King of David's line

Sermon Two – the Suffering Servant, the Holy and Just One, the Prince of Life, promised prophet & seed of Abraham

Sermon Three – the rejected stone who became the Cornerstone, the One and Only Savior given among men

Sermon Four – Christ is Lord of all, Judge of the living & dead, death by hanging on a tree as a substitute

IN WHAT WAYS MUST WE BE CERTAIN THAT WE PRESENT THE DOCTRINE ABOUT CHRIST?

THE THIRD MARK OF PETER'S PREACHING WAS THAT IT WAS FILLED WITH BOLDNESS.

-Notice how the Book of Acts mentions again and again one feature of the Gospel Preaching: BOLDNESS.

“Men and brethren, let me speak freely (lit. boldly) to you of the patriarch David” (2:29)

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,
and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled” (4:13)

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants

That with all boldness they may speak Your word.” (Acts 4:29)

“(And) they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.” (4:31)
BOLDNESS INCLUDES THE IDEA OF COURAGEOUS SPEECH BEFORE MEN.

EXAMPLES: Sermon One – 2:23 “Him...you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death”

“...this Jesus whom you crucified.”(2:36)

Sermon Two – 3:13-15 ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. ¹⁴ But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ but put to death the Prince of life, *the one* whom God raised from the dead, *a fact* to which we are witnesses.

Sermon Three – 4:10,11 ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief corner *stone*.

HOW ARE WE TO PRESENT THE GOSPEL WITH GREAT BOLDNESS IN OUR DAY?

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS TO BOLDNESS WHICH WE FACE TODAY?

THE FOURTH MARK OF PETER’S PREACHING WAS INSISTENT ON THE DEMANDS OF GRACE.

“Peter was not afraid of being called a negative preacher. As we have studied his sermons, we have seen him taking pains to identify and condemn sin. He has brought home to his hearers in the most pointed way their wickedness and guilt. Before any offer of mercy has come the stark declaration that they have broken the commandments of God. There is a sternness, almost fierceness, about him. One of his aims is to wound, to break, to convict. He preaches the holy law of God in its majesty and terror.

But his preaching is more than law. He is not standing up merely to denounce, for the chief purpose is altogether positive—the salvation of those listening to him. Peter loves to end his sermons with a grace-note. In all the messages we are considering, he closes by declaring God’s provision of salvation for all who will trust in His Son. Forgiveness in Christ is the climax towards which he always moves.” (Donnelly, p. 82)

Sermon One - “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” (2:38-40)

Sermon Two - ¹⁹Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;... ²⁶For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” (3:19,26)

Sermon Three - ¹²“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (4:12)

Sermon Four - ⁴²“And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” (10:42,43)

THERE IS A SENSE OF URGENCY IN PETER’S PREACHING. HE DEMANDS A RESPONSE.

IS THERE THIS SENSE OF URGENCY IN OUR PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL TODAY?

(See the Example in “A Pastor’s Sketches” entitled BAD ADVICE, pp. 84-86)

THE FIFTH MARK OF PETER’S PREACHING WAS IT WAS SPIRIT-FILLED.

“The most important element in Peter’s preaching is also the most mysterious. A divine influence accompanied his words. God breathed from heaven upon his sermons and made them vehicles of grace. This phenomenon has been known in the history of preaching as unction—‘anointing’. Peter the preacher was anointed in an unusual measure with the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Donnelly, p. 90)

-Christ promised such an enabling to His apostles in **Luke 24:49; John 16:5-14; Acts 1:5,8...**

-Christ poured out the Holy Spirit upon them on the Day of Pentecost in **Acts 2:4**

-Christ filled Peter with the Holy Spirit to speak boldly before the Sanhedrin in **Acts 4:8**

-Christ filled the band of disciples who cried out for boldness in **Acts 4:31**

DO WE NEED THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT TO PREACH POWERFULLY TODAY?

WHAT ARE SOME INDICATORS THAT OUR PREACHING IS NOT OWNED BY THE SPIRIT?

WHAT HINDERS OR GRIEVES OR QUENCHES THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY?

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” **Luke 11:13**

PETER THE PASTOR OF CHRIST'S FLOCK

We have considered Peter the Disciple of Christ, and Peter the Preacher of the Gospel of Christ for two weeks, and this morning we intend to complete this very brief series with a lesson on Peter the Pastor of Christ's Flock. As with the previous two lessons I will lean heavily upon the work of Ted Donnelly as found in his excellent book, *PETER: Eyewitness of His Majesty* by Banner of Truth. One might be tempted to ask, "Why a lesson on the Pastor when most of us are not and never will be pastors?" Good and valid question. Let me give a very brief answer, it is vitally important for every Christian to know what is expected of the pastor for at least three reasons: (1) to know how to pray for your pastor; (2) to know how to look for a pastor whom you can trust with your soul; (3) to know how to confront your pastor if you find him falling short in these areas. Any other reasons you might suggest?

So this morning we will consider the subject of Peter the Pastor of Christ's Flock under four headings all drawn from our key text which is **1 Peter 5:1-4**...

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ²shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

THE PASTOR'S IDENTITY

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed...

1. A Fellow-Elder—note the humility of Peter (cf. Exodus 18:13-27; 19:7; 24:1,9; Num. 11:16,24,25,30)

-Although an Apostle, in many ways, the Chief Apostle, Peter simply describes himself as a "fellow-elder"

WHAT HUMILITY! He does not demand to be called Reverend or Doctor or Reverend Doctor

-Peter presents himself as a man just like the other men who serve as elders of the flock

-Yet, the term ELDER has a very rich heritage amongst the people of God

-Many trace its origin to Moses' father-in-law in **Exodus 18:13-27** where Moses was wearing himself out...

²¹Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²²And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. ²³If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

-But we will see that as far back as **Exodus 3:16,18; 4:29; 12:21** we see the elders prominent role in the Exodus

2. A Witness of the Sufferings of Christ (**Isa. 53:3** → **Mark 14:33,34; Lk. 23:49; contra. Matt. 16:21-23**)

-Peter had seen with his own eyes "the sufferings of Christ" all through His ministry, in Gethsemane, and especially at Golgotha... Luke 23:49, "***all His acquaintances stood at a distance watching these things.***"

-What a contrast with Peter's first reaction to hearing of Christ's sufferings in **Matt. 16:21-23**

-Witness is used in a two-fold sense: (1) to SEE something that has happened; (2) to TELL what you have seen

-Peter was both and all elders are called to do both.

-HOW CAN WE BECOME WITNESSES OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST IN OUR DAY?

Study the Cross...Read often of the sufferings of our Lord...Meditate continually upon His Sufferings for us!

*"When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride."*

-**1 Peter 1:18,19**... ¹⁸knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

-**1 Peter 2:23-25**... ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

-**1 Pet. 4:13**... ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

3. A Partaker of the Glory that will be Revealed (Luke 9:28-36; Matt. 17:1-8; 2 Peter 1:16-18; Rom. 8:17f.)

Peter witnessed the outshining of His Glory on the Mt. of Transfiguration, a precursor of the Grander Glory to Come

Paul says the same telling us “we are joint heirs w/ Christ, if indeed we suffer w/ Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:17) ... WHAT CAN THIS MEAN? 2 Thess. 1:10-12 turn there...

THE PASTOR’S DUTY

“...shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight...to those allotted to your charge”

1. The Pastor’s Duty is of a specialized nature—‘*Shepherd the Flock*’ (cf. Acts 20:28; John 21:15-17)
2. The Pastor’s Duty is one of immense responsibility—‘*the Flock of God*’ (cf. Acts 20:28; Isa. 40:10,11)
3. The Pastor’s Duty requires intimate contact—‘*which is among you*’ (2 Chron. 34:12, overseers)
4. The Pastor’s Duty is given to him by God’s sovereign disposing—“*to those allotted to your charge*’ (Acts 20:28)

“Columba was an Irish churchman who took the gospel to western Scotland in the sixth century. In one of his prayers he looks forward to heaven. He is perhaps reflecting on Psalm 84:10, “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” But his thoughts are equally applicable to the pastor as he thinks of earthly service in the church of Christ:

*Almighty Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Eternal, ever-blessed gracious God,
To me, the least of saints, to me allow
That I may keep a door in Paradise;
That I may keep even the smallest door,
The furthest door, the darkest, coldest door,
The door that is least used, the stiffest door,
If so it be but in Thine House, O God!
If so it be that I can see Thy glory
Even afar and hear Thy voice, O God!
And know that I am with Thee—Thee, O God.*

THE PASTOR’S HEART

“...not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;
³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

1. ‘Not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God’

*1 Cor. 9:16

*2 Cor. 9:7

*2 Cor. 2:17

2. ‘Not for sordid gain, but with eagerness’

*Rom. 1:15

*1 Samuel 12:2-5

3. ‘Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock’
*Matt. 20:25,26

THE PASTOR’S REWARD

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

1. The Timing of the Pastor’s Reward—‘when the Chief Shepherd appears’

*1 Thess. 1:9,10
*Acts 1:9-11
*2 Peter 3:11-18

2. The Bestower of the Pastor’s Reward—‘the Chief Shepherd’

*Heb. 13:20
*Psalm 23
*Psalm 80:1
*Matthew 2:6
*John 10:11-16

3. The Nature of the Pastor’s Reward—‘the unfading crown of glory’

*James 1:12
*Rev. 2:10
*Isa. 28:5
*Matt. 25:21,23 *“Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord.”*

Let us close this brief series by listening to Peter’s last written testimony before he was martyred...

1 ¹ Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire... ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹² Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things...

3 ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace... ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.