

**Letters From A Fisherman**  
**Week 1**  
**1 Peter 1:1-5**  
**“Our Living Hope”**

**Introduction**

**Blessed be The God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ. Because of His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.** **1 Peter 1:3-4**

Simon Peter is, in my humble opinion, the most colorful person in all of *The New Testament*. He was the son of a fisherman, and he grew up to takeover the family business. By all accounts, he was coarse, tough, and never at a loss for words. He often spoke when he should have been silent. His name, Simon, was a very common name for Jewish boys of his day, and the name literally means “to listen” or “to hear”. Possibly his parents had wished for him to be the type of man who would live according to the Scriptures that admonish us:

**The one who has knowledge restrains his words, and one who keeps a cool head is a person of understanding.** **Proverbs 17:27**

James, the brother of The LORD would expound upon this text later in *The New Testament*:

**My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness.** **James 1:19-20**

Before Christ did a work in his heart, these attitudes were the very antithesis of who Simon was. But that was all to change. For the way that we can know a person has truly been born again is by observing their changed nature. Peter himself speaks of this process in the first portion of his epistle. It is called *sanctification*, and it is what The Spirit does in our lives as we yield ourselves over to His instruction. As we read the letters of this fisherman who loved Christ, the changed nature within him becomes evident. This man who was once criticized for being unlearned (**Acts 4:13**) has set before us two wonderful epistles, ripe with a deep understanding of Christian doctrine. Proving once more that God uses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise (**1 Corinthians 1:27**).

A word that is found over and over again in Peter's writings is “*Hope*” (*elpce* in the Greek). The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, mentions three great tenants of Christianity; namely Faith, Hope, and Love (**1 Corinthians 13:13**). Paul often uses the word for faith (**pistis**) in his writings as John the Apostle often repeats the word love (agape) in his. Therefore, many *Bible* scholars have called Paul the *faith apostle*, John the *love apostle*, and Peter the *hope apostle*. Isn't it a marvelous thing the way The Spirit of The Living God uses different people working in one accord to accomplish his multifold purposes?

At the time of his writing, the Church was suffering immense persecution under the emperor Nero. This same wicked opponent of Christendom had Paul beheaded for his faith and teaching, and according to church tradition, would eventually hang Peter upside down on a cross. The church had begun to scatter throughout the known world in order to escape Nero's wrath, but in so doing, the gospel was being spread far and wide just as Jesus commanded (**Acts 1:8**). So Nero's attempts to eradicate the gospel, only served to spread it all the more. God is sovereign, and His purpose can never be thwarted (**Job 42:2**).

So as we begin to study these wonderful epistles, let us come to know that God is forever in control, and even in the midst of suffering, He is working to accomplish all that He intends to accomplish. We are often times so focused upon what is going on in the world around us that we fail to look to the heavens answers. So today, I would like for us to examine afresh the encouraging words of a great fisherman, who become a fisher of men. In just these first few verses that serve as an introduction to this letter, we see that we, The Church, have been *Selected* by God, *Sanctified* by The Spirit, and *Secured* in Christ Jesus. Please allow me to explain.

### **Selected (vs. 1-2a)**

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:**

**To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...**

**1 Peter 1:1-2a**

We can forego the discussion of the opening greeting. The letter was written by The Apostle Peter himself. There are some who would attempt to dispute its authorship, but it would be the same people who dispute everything about the Christian doctrine, so as usual their arguments hold no value. It has been long established by the early church that Peter was indeed the author of the letter. It is possible that he dictated it to Silvanus (another word for Silas, **1 Peter 5:12**), a trusted companion of the apostle Paul. But the message is most definitely from Simon Peter.

It is also quite possible that Silas was chosen to deliver copies of the letter to the Believers scattered throughout Asia Minor (now modern day Turkey). For in the greeting were the various locales of those who had fled to these places in the hopes of escaping Nero's wrath. They were, as we are, strangers and sojourners in this world. To be of Christ's kingdom is to be an alien in this world. We do not belong here, but our kingdom is certain to come! And Peter wanted to remind his readers of this fact.

Peter begins his letter by addressing one of the most complicated and controversial tenets of the Christian faith, namely predestination. Many a church split has been conceived over the debate of God's sovereign election verses man's free will. The Scriptures are clear as to this doctrine. No one seeks after God (**Romans 3:10**), and no one comes to The Son unless the Father Who sent Him draws them (**John 6:44**). I could go on, but suffice to say, if you are a Believer today, you did not find The LORD, He found you!

That being said, we are also creatures of free will. God put this within us at creation. Therefore, we must respond in faith, when we are drawn by The Spirit of God to Christ. How all of this works is quite frankly above my pay grade, and honestly, it is also over the heads of those theologians who so desperately try to convince us that they fully understand the mind of God and how His sovereign election and our free will coincide. But the fact is... that they do coincide. And God foreknew everyone who would come to faith in Christ, before the world began. You cannot be omniscient and not know something.

So take comfort in the reality that God chose to save you before the world began. This does not mean, however, that those who reject Christ were predestined to do so. And this is where I have a serious issue with those on the extreme side of predestination. I believe that God wants all sinners to repent. The extremists say that because God is sovereign, that His grace is irresistible, therefore if The Spirit truly draws you to Christ, then you have no choice but to follow. I have a difficult time with this concept based on the words of Christ Himself as He wept over Jerusalem.

**Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate.**

**Matthew 23:37**

Did you catch what He said, *I would...but you would not*. This is a prime example of how a Sovereign God wants to save the lost, but He does not force them to be saved. There is a difference between being sovereign (all powerful) and choosing not to do something. God draws us to Christ, but we must respond in faith in order to obtain the gift of salvation that He offers. But make no mistake. If you are a Believer today, it is because God did all the work. You don't deserve your salvation, neither did you have anything to do with it, other than accepting the offer of grace when it came. Listen to the words of Paul, the "faith apostle".

***For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast.*** ***Ephesians 2:8***

So, if you are a Believer today, give God the glory, for you had nothing to do with your salvation. You simply had to believe that God would do as He promised. This is why my favorite verse of Scripture is ***Genesis 15:6***. For it speaks of how old Abraham got saved. He was saved the same way that you and I were, by grace through faith!

***Abram believed The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6***

Praise God for His sovereign election of grace. He knew us and selected us in Christ, before the world began!

### **Sanctified (vs. 2b)**

***...through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*** ***1 Peter 1:2b***

As it turns out, this sermon could have very well had five points. Scattered, Selected, Sanctified, Sprinkled, and Secure. But I chose to make it three and just incorporate the other two within the points given. Suffice to say, that we as the Church of Christ are strangers, scattered throughout this world in which we do not belong. And it is by God's sovereign choosing that we have been selected as such, in order to spread the message of the gospel, so all men will hear.

Now we come to sanctification. Peter was not speaking in the abstract of something that he didn't personally understand. For to be sanctified is to be changed from within by The Spirit of The Living God. And Peter was a living breathing example of this reality. When he was just Simon, he had a lot to learn about becoming a follower of Christ. He needed to hear (as his name suggests) The Word of The LORD and be transformed by The Spirit according to that very same Word.

When the transformation was complete, the new man was nothing like the old one. That is why Christ changed his name from Simon, a man who desperately needed to be slow to speak and swift to hear, to Peter (Cephas in the Aramaic), meaning "rock". Simon Peter went from being unstable and unpredictable in his walk, to becoming a rock, solid in truth and ready to take his stand in this world. The reality here is simple, and it applies to every Believer. If you are not being sanctified, changed from the inside out by The Spirit of God, then you are not in Christ. It doesn't matter how many verses of Scripture you can recite or how many hymns you have memorized. If you are not changed, then you are not His!

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!*** ***2 Corinthians 5:17***

There are many today who claim Jesus is LORD, but is He truly *your* LORD? Is He LORD of your tongue, your finances, your activities, and your desires? To be a follower of Christ is to have His Spirit working on you from the inside out to conform you into His image. It is a progression for every Believer, and you should be able to see the transformation taking place. If someone is devoid of sanctification, my friends, then they are also devoid of salvation.

Obedience is required of every true Believer. And to this end, we must understand what Peter is referring to when he mentions that we are to be “sprinkled with the blood of Jesus”. This is a very *Old Testament* reference that has to do with Moses and the Ten Commandments (***Exodus 24:3-8***). When the prophet came down from Mount Sinai, he made sacrifices to God. He took half of the blood from those sacrifices and sprinkled it on the altar of God. The other half he sprinkled upon the people as a Covenant of Blood between God and His chosen people. When God gave the people the law, they responded by saying that they would obey the Law. Thus the covenant was made and entered in as an agreement.

We have been sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and a far better covenant has been made between He and us. He has agreed to pay for all our sin with His own blood, and we have agreed to obey Him as LORD of our lives. As one pastor has said, “That... was the last decision we will ever make on our own. For now, we are bought with a price, and Christ Jesus is LORD and Master of our lives from that day forward.” But the good news is: While Israel could not possibly live up to its covenant of blood, we can! For The Holy Spirit lives within us to sanctify us and help us to follow Christ. He will take the Word of God and lead us into righteousness, until we are completely glorified, transformed into the image of Christ. So the questions are simple today: Are you being sanctified by The Spirit? Is Christ really The LORD of your life?

### **Secured (vs. 3-5)**

***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5***

This is the reality of being in Christ Jesus; not only does He initiate and complete your salvation, He keeps you saved! We must never forget to bless (the word Peter used means to *praise*) God for this wondrous gift. At the time of this writing, Christians throughout the known world were in utter turmoil. The world as they knew it was falling apart. Sometimes, when we are surrounded by grief and chaos, we get so busy looking around that we forget to *look up!* There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ (***Romans 8:31-39***). The battle may indeed rage all around us, but our victory is not only assured, it is imminent. We will never lose our inheritance, for we are not the One Who keeps it secure. Christ keeps us, and He has guaranteed to keep all that we have in Him safe until the appointed time. He proved that He is able to do this by rising from the dead. He is our living hope!

As the Apostle of hope has said, “*We have a living hope in Jesus.*” But many times we need to be reminded of this truth. Peter knew better than anyone what happens to our hearts when we take our eyes off Christ and allow the waves to distract our attention. Remember the time when he walked upon the sea with The LORD?

***“LORD if it’s you,” Peter answered Him, “command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried out, “LORD save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out His hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”*** **Matthew 14:28-31**

In his letter to the persecuted Christians who were now scattered abroad, Simon Peter wanted to remind them to always look to The Savior in faith and not be distracted by the waves. For no matter what Nero might do to them, their inheritance would not perish, would never be tainted by the sinfulness of this world, nor would it ever fade. What Christ has promised us when He returns is both glorious and everlasting. And that inheritance is kept and guarded by God Himself. You did not save yourself, nor can you keep yourself saved. God did that for you, and He continues to provide for your security. And all that He has promised, He will fulfill for you at the proper time.

Now, in this world, we have many trials and temptations. But let's be honest here. At the present time, most of us are not being slaughtered for our faith in Christ. Many in this world are..., but not us here today. It may soon come to that, and I actually believe that it will. While we do engage in spiritual warfare as we endeavor to obey Christ, we do not face the challenges of the violently persecuted Believers. Truthfully, many of the trials we face are in regards to worldly things. And if we were being completely honest, most of those struggle are monsters of our own creation. So in comparison to what the Believers were enduring in Peter and Paul's day, we pretty much have it easy, would you agree?

So when the troubles come, are you looking to heaven for the answers? Or are you too busy focusing on the waves? Are you aware that the persecution of the church in the first century was used by God to spread the gospel? God may well use our sufferings to rescue someone else as well. So as Joseph so famously said to his brothers who sold him into slavery...

***You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people.*** ***Genesis 50:20***

So praise God in the difficult times. For He just might be using them to save someone's life. For:

***We know that ALL THINGS work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to HIS PURPOSE.*** ***Romans 8:28***  
(emphasis added)

**TRUTH!!!**