



HIGHER AIM

A Call From Peter

Answering The Call | Part 1 | 1 Peter 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION

The book of 1 Peter was written to believers who were facing persecution. And it's important for us to understand this particular book of the Bible because as time goes on, we as Christians will face more and more persecution and opposition for what we believe. The Scripture that we will be studying will shake your heart, and help you understand what God has for you in the days to come. As believers, we could experience more and more persecution, as the Second Coming of Jesus approaches. Therefore it is absolutely vital that we take this Scripture and use it to prepare our hearts for what could be coming down the road.

KEY POINTS

1. The Servant

You can't read today's key passage without understanding that Peter cast a long shadow of influence and leadership in the early church. Peter's life was all about Jesus! His whole life was wrapped up in Jesus. He lived for Jesus. He spoke and proclaimed Christ. That is what he was all about; from the moment he followed Christ to the moment he would shut his eyes in death, his life was all about Jesus. He lived to serve His Savior, regardless of whatever opposition and persecution he faced. He was the picture of a true servant, and that's an example we should all strive to follow.

2. The Saints

"The Saints" are God's elect. Peter wrote the letter of 1 Peter to God's elect, the chosen. The Greek word, "eklektois" means "chosen." But what is very interesting is that these saints are described not only as chosen, but also they are called exiles. The Greek word here is an interesting word. The Greek word is, "parepidamous" which means an alien, a temporary resident. They are sojourners. Because of persecution from the Jews and Rome, they are temporary residents, or Jews living outside of Jerusalem or Palestine. This description is used to describe sojourners, people who are on a journey. They will walk with Christ all the way to heaven.

It is from this passage that we have the important reminder that this world is not your home! Peter's Letter captures this concept. We have to stop living like this world is our home. We are just passing through to have an influence upon this culture until God calls us home.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call From Peter

Answering The Call | Part 1 | 1 Peter 1:1-2

3. The Salutation

There is a very common greeting that Peter says to the saints in his book, "Grace and peace be yours in abundance." The Greek word for Grace is "Charis" which means "God's unmerited favor." The Greek word for Peace is "Iranan." That's where we get the word "Irene." It means "Peace." It literally reads like this in the Koine Greek, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied to you."

Life Application

- God has a plan for your life.
- Knowing who you are in Christ is critical to your spiritual maturity.
- Live to be a blessing to others

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call From Peter

Answering The Call | Part 1 | 1 Peter 1:1-2

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What can you learn about servanthood from Peter's example that he set in following Jesus?
2. How does your perspective on life change knowing this world is not your home?
3. What is one practical way you can live to be a blessing to others this week?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Hope

Answering The Call | Part 2 | 1 Peter 1:3-12

INTRODUCTION

Hope is the belief that circumstances will get better. It's not a wish for things to get better -- it's the actual belief, the knowledge that things will get better, no matter how big or small. Today's key passage from 1 Peter 1 is a call to experience that kind of hope. God wants all of His children to live in hope. He does not want you to live hopelessly in this world. The poorest person is not he or she without a dollar; it is the person who is living without hope. I pray that as we go through this content together, you would get engaged with the hope that God has for you and live a rich, hope-filled life.

KEY POINTS

1. The Author Of Hope

Although hope can be learned, the only way it can be sustained is through the relationship you have with the Author of hope, and that is God. Scripture tells us, if you want your hope to last, you must make sure that you are plugged into the Author of hope. He is God the Father, through Jesus Christ.

2. The Pathway To Hope

The Scripture says, "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Salvation is the key to experiencing this everlasting hope that God wants you to have. This new birth in Christ produces a "living hope." The phrase, "living hope" is in the present active participle, which means it is continuous. This living hope continues to pump through your veins, through your heart, and through your mind. And it comes as a result of your relationship with Jesus Christ, who was resurrected from the dead. Without Him, there is no pathway to hope.

3. The Future Of Hope

The Scripture continues talking about "The Future of Hope." It literally says, "You have an inheritance; your focus is on the future inheritance." The Greek word here is, "Kleronoman." It is an old Greek word describing, "Property received by the heir from the benefactor." This is a picture of God's wealth. He is our benefactor, and we are heirs of what He has. Our inheritance is coming from Him. God owns everything! And we can have hope because of that truth!

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Hope

Answering The Call | Part 2 | 1 Peter 1:3-12

4. The Testing Of Hope

Hope gets tested in life. You will definitely go through testing times in your life. An immature or unbiblical believer might think that once you give your life to Christ, everything will be great. Everything will be roses. You will always have money in your bank account. You won't have any problems. God will make you healthy, wealthy, and extremely wise. But think again! Part of following Jesus is enduring trials and suffering. But we don't have to let these hard times get the best of us because we have hope in Jesus Christ!

5. The Power Of Hope

Hope doesn't have to see it right now. Hope flows out of faith. Hope produces joy. Hope is the indescribable gift that glorifies God in the middle of what you are experiencing. Because you see the purpose of that tribulation, you realize that God is creating a platform for you to shine for His Glory. When you go through pain, sorrow, and challenges in your life, it brings glory and honor to Jesus Christ. People will see your light shine. You don't have to make a big deal out of it. They watch you; they see it, feel it, and sense it. That brings glory and honor to Christ because you are pointing people back to His power!

6. The Revelation Of Hope

We can read the revelation of hope by reading Scripture and seeing with the prophets in the Bible had to say. This is what Peter points us to in today's key passage when he specifically points out the prophets and what they had to say. I would encourage you to go back and do your own study of Scripture, specifically the Old Testament to see what the prophets had to say about hope.

Life Application

- If you need hope, make sure you are a believer.
- If you need hope, ask God to allow it to come alive in you.
- If you need hope, find other believers who are living victoriously, in spite of the odds.
- If you need hope, ask God to give you insight as to how He is using your present situation to make an impact for eternity.
- If you need hope, press on toward the future, refusing to look in the rear-view mirror.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Hope

Answering The Call | Part 2 | 1 Peter 1:3-12

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you consider yourself a hopeful person? Why or why not?
2. How would you define the difference between hope and faith?
3. When was a time you chose to have hope even when your circumstances seemed hopeless? How did God come through for you in this situation?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Holiness

Answering The Call | Part 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-21

INTRODUCTION

Even though Peter might be one of the most “famous” people in the Bible, he was the furthest thing from a goody-two-shoes. In fact, he was probably considered to be a pretty unlikely choice to be one of Jesus’ disciples. Nevertheless, Jesus chose him. After Peter began to follow Christ, he learned what it meant to be a disciple. He wasn't perfect. In fact, God chose a very imperfect man to lead the first megachurch that ever existed on this planet. After all, Peter was the very man who denied Jesus three times. He even used profanity to deny him the last time! After he repented, God used him to bring thousands of people to faith in Christ. Slowly but surely, this man moved toward purity and holiness. The man who was once full of himself learned to be humble. He could take a rebuke and still keep on following Christ. Years later, this very same man is calling (through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) for us to live differently from the evil culture in which we exist. So right now, we’re going to take a look at what Peter says on how we are to fulfill our calling to be holy.

NOTES

KEY POINTS

1. Choose To Live Out Of Our Living Hope

The only way you will be able to sustain a lifestyle of holiness is to live out of the hope that you have in Christ Jesus. It is out of your relationship with Him that the lifestyle which God wants you to have is produced.

In other words, stop trying to be holy in your own strength. Instead, follow the desire on the inside of your heart as you keep your eyes on Jesus. Allow that to be your focus, not your works. If you try to do holy things, you will be frustrated. You will find yourself being manipulated by your own mind. God wants you to live in accordance with His Word and His Spirit so that you can show others how to be holy only by the power of Christ in you.

2. Come To Attention

To come to attention means to come to a place where your mind is fully alert. And that’s what Peter is calling us to do. When he uses the phrase, “fully sober,” in today’s key text, he is not talking about drunkenness at all. He is talking about focusing your mind. To put it in basic terms, Peter is saying, “I want you to get yourself together. I want you to get serious about walking this path of holiness. Stop playing around! I want you to perfectly get your mind together in this focus of being holy.”

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Holiness

Answering The Call | Part 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-21

3. Celebrate Grace

If we have received Jesus Christ, we need to celebrate grace. The church should know what it is like to be full of grace. God's people need to learn what it means to be full of grace. It is to be given something they don't deserve. This includes respect, honor, applause, acceptance, and love. None of us deserve these things, but Jesus has chosen to give them to us. We need to be celebrators of grace.

4. Cut The Old Life Out And Let The New Life Flow

This statement is easier said than done, but it's exactly what we are called to do as Christians. But how do you get rid of your old life? Because you are in this skin suit, your flesh wants to be rebellious. So how do you get rid of those evil desires? Do you just discipline yourself? Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Thankfully, today's key passage speaks specifically about how to cut the old life out and let the new life flow.

- Set your mind on being an obedient child of God.
- Don't give in to how you used to live before you met Christ.
- Look to Jesus.

5. Cultivate A Personal Biblical Worldview

In verse 17, Peter says you are to live as a foreigner, as a stranger who is just traveling through life. The mentality is that you are just passing through. You are to look at this world and define how it should be based on what the Bible says, not what everyone likes. Who cares what Congress thinks? Who cares what the President thinks? You need to care about what Jesus thinks. This Scripture is saying to look at the world through the lens of the Lord's will and determine that you will live like that.

6. Confess Daily What Your Redemption Cost

Simon Peter says you weren't purchased by monetary means; you were purchased by the blood of Jesus. He is the Lamb, which is a phrase that all the Jews who were reading this understood. Jesus was and is our Passover Lamb. Therefore, God wants you to thank Him daily that He has saved you. With this knowledge, we should be eager to confess our sins to Him and thank Him for redeeming us and not leaving us separated from Him for eternity.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Holiness

Answering The Call | Part 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-21

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How would you define “grace” in your own words?
2. What is something about your old life that you need to cut out of your life now as you’re trying to follow Jesus and walk the path of holiness?
3. Do you struggle to prioritize what the Lord thinks over what other people think? Why do you think that is?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To The Bible

Answering The Call | Part 4 | 1 Peter 1:22-25

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

We need to come to an understanding as to why we are called to the Bible. As we look at today's key passage, we are going to see that Simon Peter and God's Spirit are calling us to the Bible. Therefore, we need to know why we stand on the Bible. After all, without the Bible, we are just a social gathering. We are just here to encourage one another, rather than grow closer to the Lord. His Word is very powerful, and therefore we can confidently stand on it and root our faith in what it says.

KEY POINTS

1. We answer the call to the Bible because of our redemption.

We stand on the Word of God because we got saved. In other words, our sins were forgiven. Sometimes, when we use words like "saved," people who have not been exposed to Christianity, will say, "Saved from what?" With "born again," they ask, "What does that mean?" "Redeemed" is another spiritual word. It means that all of your sins have been forgiven. They have been wiped off your slate. You are considered spotless, acceptable, clean, and loved, all because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. Do you know why I can say that with confidence? Because the Word of God says that.

2. We answer the call to the Bible because it is true.

Truth is very important. There are not two different truths. If there is a truth for you and a truth for me, that dichotomy is a lie! We are in a culture that is teaching that today. Our kids are taught falsehoods. If they believe something is okay for them, that's their truth. Another person could choose a different truth. Two different truths cannot exist side by side in the area of morality. In God's Word, there is only one truth! In 2 Timothy, it says this, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). I want you to know that the Bible is true. We can have confidence in that, and when we do, our faith grows.

To break it down for you even further, here are five reasons why the Bible is reliable and true:

- It is completely unique.
- It is scientifically accurate.
- It is prophetically accurate.

HIGHER AIM

A Call To The Bible

Answering The Call | Part 4 | 1 Peter 1:22-25

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you regularly read your Bible? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?
2. How has God's Word changed your life?
3. Is there someone in your life who doesn't believe the Bible is true? If so, how can you show the love of Christ to them and pray for them this week?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

INTRODUCTION

I don't know when you first felt the tug of the Spirit of God in your heart that drew you to Christ. I don't know how old you were when the light went on in your mind and in your soul that you were a sinner, and you desperately needed Jesus. If you have answered the call, and you have turned from your sin and placed your faith in Jesus, you are to continue answering that call. It is not just a one-time experience; salvation is a one-time experience that continues on. The lifestyle of continuing in the process of listening to Jesus, responding to Him, and allowing your life to be totally entwined with Him is an ongoing experience. So as we look at today's key passage, Peter is going to give us guidelines on how we can continue to answer the call.

KEY POINTS

1. Turn your back on your past.

In verse 1, Peter was referring to this concept of turning from sin and continuing to turn from sin. If you are going to answer the call to Christ, you must turn your back on your past. Your life is to be different. How you were before you met Christ is one thing, but now that you have given your life to Christ, there needs to be some progression. The only way that can happen is that you continue to answer the call to Jesus.

He is saying, "I want you to turn your back on your past." Can you remember how your life was before you met Christ? Do you remember the disobedience, the sin that was in your life, and the different desires that you had? Your life now is to be totally different. When you follow Christ, there must be a change in your life.

2. Turn your direction toward discipleship.

As you continue to follow Jesus, you must make it a priority to get into the Word of God; the way you do this is to make discipleship important to you.

God doesn't want you to remain as a baby. That is not God's plan. God wants all of His children to mature and grow up in faith. He wants all of His children to move from eating apricot mash to T-bone steaks.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

But in order to experience that kind of growth and develop that kind of maturity, we need to take discipleship seriously. We need to read our Bibles, engage in Christian community, use our gifts and talents to serve others in the name of Jesus, and spend time in prayer, getting to know God on a deeper level. As we do these things on a regular basis, we will engage in discipleship and therefore grow and mature in our walks with Jesus.

3. Turn your eyes on Jesus.

If you want to answer the call to Jesus and His church (like Simon Peter is encouraging us to do), you need to turn your eyes on Jesus. Stop looking at the church and stop looking at other people in the church. Whatever you do, don't look at me, or any other pastor for that matter. I could fail you. I could say something or do something that would disappoint you. Other believers can do that, as well. Our focus is not to be on other believers; it is to be on Jesus!

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is there part of your past that you have yet to turn your back on since you made the decision to follow Jesus? If so, how can you begin to let that go?
2. Would you say that discipleship is important to you at this stage in your walk with Christ? Why or why not?
3. When was a time you looked to another person or to the church instead of looking at Jesus? What was the result of that decision?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 2

Answering The Call | Part 6 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

INTRODUCTION

As we are in the study of 1 Peter, we are answering the call, and that call is to Jesus and His church. We all need Jesus. And we need Him more and more every single day. Additionally, we also need the body of Christ. We need people in our lives who invest in us. We need the body of Christ to use their spiritual gifts to encourage us, help us, pray for us, and be there for us. So with this in mind, we're going to continue our conversation from last week on the way we answer the call to Jesus and His church.

NOTES

KEY POINTS

Last Week's Points:

1. Turn Your Back On Your Past
2. Turn Your Direction Toward Discipleship
3. Turn Your Eyes On Jesus

This Week's Points:

1. Turn Your Mind On Your Position

How you see yourself is very important. As you read today's key Scripture passage again, I want you to focus on who you are. We often shame ourselves and put ourselves down, thinking that will help us when it really doesn't. God wants us to focus on our position so that we can be confident in who He says we are.

- "Living stones" built on the chief cornerstone
- "A spiritual house" built on the Rock, together with each other, built on Him
- "Chosen"
- "A holy priesthood offering sacrifices." All believers are priests...
- "A Holy Nation"
- "God's special possession with purpose"...to proclaim praise and declare that He called you from darkness to light.

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How does what the Bible says about you differ from how you see yourself?
2. Is there anything inside your heart that needs to be addressed and realigned with the heart of God?
3. How confident are you that people can tell you're a Christian by the way you act, think, and speak?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Submission

Answering The Call | Part 7 | 1 Peter 2:13-25, 1 Peter 3:1-7

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you find it difficult or easy to live a submissive lifestyle?
2. Which of the ways of living in submission do you need to work in your own life?
3. When was a time you suffered because of your choice to follow Jesus and be obedient to Him? What did you learn from that situation?

HIGHER AIM

When Is It Right To Resist?

Answering The Call | Part 8 | 1 Peter 2:13-17

INTRODUCTION

Today, we're going to be answering the question, "When is it right to resist?" Because we are men and women who love the Lord and love His Word, we are to design our lives and our behavior to align with the Word of God. And sometimes that might require that we resist the world and what it says for the sake of our faith and our beliefs. In order for us to understand resistance, we need to understand what the Bible describes. Let me give you several biblical examples of civil disobedience. I am not sharing this with you to get a crowd together to resist the government or to resist some individual. I want to give you some principles that you can use to guide your life.

KEY POINTS

1. Biblical Examples of Civil Disobedience

- Under Pharaoh's Reign
- In Jericho, Joshua 2 and the story of Rahab
- In Early Israel Under King Ahab
- In Israel before the invasion of Babylon
- In Babylon, the stories of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and Daniel
- New Testament Resistance

2. Biblical Guidance for Resistance

- If you are going to resist, do so in order not to sin against God.
- If you are going to resist, do so in order to preserve life.
- If you are going to resist, do so in order to combat evil.
- If you are going to resist, do so, if at all possible, through the government system in place.
- If you are going to resist, do so, with an eye on your witness.
- If you are going to resist, do so, in prayer!
- If you are going to resist, do so, willing to pay the price for disobedience.

3. Do Not Resist the Tug of the Holy Spirit!

You need to listen to the tug of the Spirit, especially if you feel led to resist. You need to make sure it is not your flesh that you are responding to, or your convenience that you are listening to, but rather to the tug of the Spirit of God. He will never lead you to do something that God has said, "Don't do." Don't resist the tug of the Holy Spirit.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

When Is It Right To Resist?

Answering The Call | Part 8 | 1 Peter 2:13-17

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When was a time you witnessed civil disobedience for the sake of Jesus Christ?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt the tug of the Holy Spirit to resist? How did you respond?
3. What can you learn from the people in Scripture who chose to follow God over submitting to the world's demands?
