

I Peter
#15 Peter's Friends
I Peter 5:12-14

Introduction

In Peter's first epistle, he covers nearly every type of systematic theological topic: soteriology (1:3-12), ecclesiology (2:4-10, 5:1-7), eschatology (3:13-14, 4:17-19, 5:8-5) ...all the while emphasizing the need for perseverance while suffering.

He summarizes his intention:

1. To encourage (to come alongside)
2. To testify that this is the true grace of God (to bear witness)

"I wrote to you in order to make plain the implications of God's gracious gospel. Don't budge from it!"

And now in his final greetings, Peter turns his attention to people.

Silas/ Silvanus, a faithful brother

"A Leader among the brothers" in Jerusalem: he took the council's letter to the Gentile believers (Acts 15:22, 27)

"A Prophet": "Said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers" (Acts 15:32)

"Paul chose Silas" to accompany him on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:39)

Paul's "right hand man:" (Acts 16:19, 25, 29-in Philippi; 18:5, II Cor. 1:19 -in Corinth)

He is listed as one of the "senders" of the letters to the church in Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:1)

Was a Roman citizen, well educated (Acts 16:37)

Peter's scribe/assistant: Peter's ability to read and write in Greek would have been minimal. Silas may have taken dictation from Peter or Peter may have written a "first draft" that Silas edited. Silas was also trusted to deliver the letter.

Both Paul and Peter depended on Silas all the while he was content to stay quietly in the background.

"She who is in Babylon" sends her greetings.

Babylon in the OT is a symbol of sin, rebellion and evil. See Isa. 13-14, Jer. 50-51

There are several ideas about who this person(s) is:

1. A church in the city of Babylon, Egypt
2. A church in the city of Babylon, Mesopotamia

3. A church in Rome (Rome was often referred as “Babylon.” See Rev. 17 and 18.
4. A well-known Christian lady (perhaps even Peter’s own wife (I Cor. 9:5).
Clement of Alexandria tells us she died a martyr, executed in Peter’s sight while he encouraged her to “Remember the Lord.”

Mark (John Mark) sends his greetings.

Peter calls him “my son.” It could have been his biological son, but more likely it is the Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. But he caused a major rift between the two men. So much so that Barnabas took Mark and went his way and Paul took Silas and went his way. See Acts 15:36-41.

But Mark apparently regained his standing in Paul’s eyes. Apparently, he was with him in his Roman prison (Philemon vs. 23). As he neared the end of his life, Paul asked for Mark to come and visit. “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (II Tim. 4:11).

Eusebius (a 4th century historian) wrote “Mark wrote under Peter’s influence.”

A second century collector of early traditions (Papias) describes Mark this way: “Mark who was Peter’s interpreter, wrote down accurately though not in order, all that he recollected of what Christ had said or done. For he was not a hearer of the Lord or a follower of His; he followed Peter, as I have said, at a later date and Peter adapted his instructions to practical needs, without any attempt to give the Lord’s words systematically. So that Mark was not wrong in writing down some things in this way from memory, for his one concern was neither to omit nor to falsify anything he had heard.”

Greet One Another with a Kiss of Love (vs. 14)

See Rom. 16:16, I Cor. 16:20, II Cor. 13:12 and I Thess. 5:26

This was a cultural tradition that faded away by the 13th century.

So What?

Peter had some amazing friends that truly mattered to him (Paul did as well. See Rom. 16, II Tim. 4 and Philemon vs. 23).

There are FOUR important friendships/relationships we need:

1. A Teacher/Mentor/Model

This is someone we trust explicitly. We want to listen to them. We allow them to hold us accountable. We seek advice from them. In our Christian life, these are the people who help us hold a “long obedience in the same direction.”

Notice the relationships between Paul and Timothy or Titus.

2. A Kindred Spirit/A Cheerleader

This is someone who “gets us.” They are a close friend with whom we can be ourselves. They are easy to laugh with. Hours fly by as you share life together. There is a commitment to be there for each other, through thick and thin.

Consider the relationship between Ruth and Naomi.

3. A Muse/Prophet/Challenger

More than a teacher, this friend inspires us. They encourage us to believe in our aspirations. This friend is more interested in what you could be than what you are right now. They see God’s best for you and encourage you to be obedient and responsive towards HIS goals for your life. They pray diligently for you.

Look at how Jesus spoke to Peter the night before He died: John 22:24-34

4. Someone for you to Mentor

The value of deep friendships/relationships does not just flow in. We also need to pour ourselves into others. We learn more as we teach. We care more as we share a passion.

Consider how Barnabas invested in Mark on that first missionary journey. As they traveled around preaching the gospel, Barnabas (and later Peter) spent hours teaching, training and encouraging Mark. These great men of God saw the value of empowering this young saint.

Let’s greet each other with a KISS (literal or not) of LOVE. We need each other.

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