

EXILES - CHOSEN

SMALL GROUP NOTES 29/01/19

Martin Segal (Canterbury)

Geoff Maile (Whitstable)

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 1: 1-2

SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

From these first verses we can get an overview of the purpose of the letter of 1 Peter. It was written by Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, whose journey with him sets us an example of passion, but also encourages us with how completely God can redeem our failures.

At the time when Peter was writing, the church was going through huge persecution, with Emperor Nero deliberately targeting and torturing Christians to death. Peter's message is essentially one of hope in the face of trouble and he draws our attention to four elements of the Gospel that bring hope, comfort and courage to the believer:

1. The foreknowledge of God – his eternal covenant with us and plans and purposes over our lives. Our pain today is temporary, but our eternal hope is permanent.
2. The sanctification of the Spirit – God is committed to our maturing and holiness. Hardships are not God's punishment, but he can use them for his glory and our growth
3. Obedience to Jesus Christ – Living in the light of the saving work of Christ means we bow our knee in submission to him; the purpose of our lives is not to be successful, comfortable or popular, but to trust where He leads us, full of hope and joy in our eternal future.
4. Sprinkling with His blood – Jesus suffered and promised us that we would likewise suffer. But through this suffering we are guaranteed that grace and mercy will multiply, because of the work of Christ on the cross.

QUESTION FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. This series is called Exiles because we are reminded throughout 1 Peter that, as believers, our ultimate home and the place all our longings will be fulfilled is in eternity with God. How does this affect our lives now?
2. In verse 2, Peter describes his readers as the 'elect exiles of the dispersion'. What comfort can we take from being chosen and known children, in the foreknowledge of God?
3. In what ways do you think the gospel can grow our faith and relationship with God in the face of suffering?

Take some time to pray with each other over any hardships people are facing.