

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday June 26, 2022. "The letters of Peter. Wisdom to a scattered people."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. As we move forward we've got some big things planned. Our children's area is expanding, and we are retooling our student ministry. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can check all that out through our newly upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

There's not a whole lot of connected content to go over. We've spent the month of June skimming through 1 & 2 Peter. The first week we learned that Peter wrote these letters to followers of Jesus that were scattered all around the Mediterranean meeting in small house churches. They felt isolated, disconnected, and struggling to figure out what it looked like to live like Jesus in a world that was antagonistic towards their faith. Not that these letters have anything to say to us today. Peter said two things. One, we should live as guests wherever we find ourselves. We recognize the world we find ourselves in is not our home, and we are just temporary residents here. Two, our lives ought to be exemplary in how we 'live' in another person's home, and we represent God in how we act. Not only do we remember we are just guests, but we are to live out this holy life to show that a life dedicated to God is a better life. Since we are but guests we don't force this on others. We respectfully and with kindness, live out a holy life, (because our God is holy), and others will see in us something better. Living a focused life like this helps us to handle difficult times and to make sure what we believe is fully aligned with the nature of God.

III Sunday.

Sunday we finished our walk through 1 & 2 Peter, and we wrapped it up with these letters trying to get people to not lose hope, and hang in there when it seemed Jesus wasn't coming back as quickly as they had been told. Many of us can slide into this escapism mentality where we just want to either isolate ourselves from a world we no longer feel comfortable in. Or even more extreme, we're just ready for Jesus to come back and not have to deal with the world. It's a tempting mindset that even Paul admitted he wrestled with. He knew what his future was going to be, how hard living in this world was, and he was just ready to go on and receive his reward. However, he also came to the realization that while he was here there was still work to be done. So, let's dive into that struggle a bit.

**Do you have any struggles with where the world is headed, and how are you dealing with it?
Is there a part of you that's just tired, (that's perfectly okay), and ready to move on?**

The primary teaching from the end of 2 Peter is learning to wait well. Knowing we are in this 'middle place', (no one likes being in the middle) of the now and not yet. It's that space between where you

were, and where you're headed. And it feels like not a real place. But Peter was trying to encourage these followers of Jesus to do good work while they waited. Let's talk about waiting a bit.

How are you when you have to wait?

What makes waiting difficult for you?

What helps you to wait well?

The scripture was Peter's final words of encouragement to these followers of Jesus what it looks like to wait well. We read **2 Peter 1:10, 3:1-18**. Read these and we'll dig through them a bit.

What jumped out to you about these passages?

What did you pull from them about this 'work of waiting well'?

Peter said some specific things that we can also use to help us live in a world that feels unfriendly to our beliefs, and how to be the best us while we do this work and wait for the full expression of this kingdom Jesus came to establish.

1. Admit and understand as 'normal' the times are weird.

We followers of Jesus don't do well when we find ourselves in a world that doesn't embrace what we believe and what we value. We have this bubbling up anger or resentment that people can't just do the right things or be decent people. Paul warned the church at Corinth not to place the expectation on non-believers to do the right thing. But we can't seem to help ourselves. We live in a broken world, people will make choices for themselves, and this is just how the world has, and will be until the end.

Why is this truth so difficult for us?

How can we live to not feel so much resentment towards a world that doesn't accept us?

2. Work hard to live as God's chosen.

All through these two letters, this was the primary message. Accepting the world is not friendly or an accommodating place for our beliefs and values. We develop this way of life filled with gentleness and respect, that CHOOSES to live separated different lives. This is so that we can show others the depth and width of God's love for them. It's not shaming or guiltting others into a relationship with God. It's that our lives are so compelling, and our peace is so deep, that others will be drawn to us and then our relationship with God.

What are the challenges for you to live as God's chosen in a world that doesn't desire this?

3. God cares for ALL people and part of this waiting is the work of helping redeem the world.

It's mentioned twice in these passages that we are waiting for this end time, because of God's patience to bring everyone into a saving knowledge of him. This is such a sobering truth. And this is why. Does our understanding of salvation include people we tend to struggle with, AND the patience to live holy lives to help them get to know God? I'm not even sure I have this desire. But Peter was reminding the people that we are waiting, because God's patience is calling us to do the good work.

What can help remind you that we are to be a part of redeeming the world?

IV Challenge.

No big summation or listing of all of Peter's points. The world is broken, God wants others to know him, and we are to be a part of this work by living holy lives practicing kindness and gentleness.

What are specific things you can do to form your daily life to be a part of this work?