

We said last week that the Christian life is hard.

There are often things that make us want to throw in the towel and quit.

We learned that in those times, we must:

Remember God's Presence

Remember God's Promise

Remember God's Power

It is so hard in fact, that many refuse to even try it.

Matthew 19:21-22 "Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property."

It is so hard that **some seem to try it, but leave when it gets too hard.**

John 6:65-66 "And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."

It is so hard that **to make it to the end, it takes extreme commitment.**

Luke 21:16-19 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. "Yet not a hair of your head will perish. "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

The purpose of this book is to encourage two things.

ENDURANCE & OBEDIENCE

**Peter desires to encourage us to endure,
Because obedience without endurance accomplishes nothing.**

**He also desires to encourage us to obey,
Because endurance without obedience is a committed sinner.**

These are the two most fundamental qualities of faith.

Saving faith obeys, and saving faith endures.

Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

**It is this same obedient endurance the Holy Spirit wants from us,
And so He inspired Peter to pen this letter.**

**This letter is not a suggestion, this letter is a command, a
As seen by the way Peter introduces himself.**

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,"

Peter could have identified with his readers by calling himself a bond-servant,

Which he does in his second letter.

He could have sympathized with his readers by calling himself the imprisoned,

Which he was on several occasions.

He only refers to himself as an apostle

Because it is his authority that he wants you to remember.

**This letter is not a suggestion from a concerned Christian,
This letter is a command from God.**

And he is writing this letter to a specific group.

It is this group that he identifies in these first two verses.

#1 SPEAKING TO THE SCATTERED

1 Peter 1:1a

"To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"

Peter called his readers **"scattered"** because that is exactly what they were.

The Gospel had been costly for them.

They were facing extreme difficulty because of their confession of the Gospel.

The word for **"scattered"** is (diasporas),
It was a word that would stand out to his Jewish readers.
It is where we get our word **"dispersed"**.

Throughout the Old Testament, there was a great dispersion mentioned.

**When God's people would be scattered throughout the world,
And they would wait for God to redeem them.**

Isaiah 11:12 "And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."

Isaiah 56:8 "The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

This dispersion was something that had been prophesied.

By the present time, the term dispersion was very much a derogatory term.

Any time a Jew left Judaism to follow another religion they considered him part of a dispersion. This was what the Pharisees spoke of.

John 7:35 "The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?"

However, these Jews had misunderstood.

**The true dispersion would be when God's children would be scattered
Because of persecution. And it was happening.**

John 12:42 "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;"

John 9:22 "His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue."

This is precisely what Jesus said would happen.

John 16:1-2 "These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."

The time for dispersion was among them.

**They were being scattered because of their faith.
It was not safe for these Jews to confess Jesus Christ.**

**Imagine if confessing Christ meant you had to flee.
Would you still confess Him?**

**Peter is writing to those who were paying the price for following Jesus,
And make no mistake about it, following Jesus is costly.**

Matthew 10:34-36 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD."

Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

It is hard to be a Christian, it is costly to be a Christian.

Maybe Christianity has been a **struggle for you as well.**
Maybe you've never been **forced to flee**, and maybe you have.
Maybe you've never **paid a price for your faith**, and maybe you have.

**If you are realizing the cost of following Jesus,
Then this letter is addressed to you.**

He is speaking to the scattered.

#2 SPEAKING TO THE SELECTED

1 Peter 1:1b
"who are chosen"

The **NIV** calls them **"God's elect"**.
Those who have been **"elected"** or **"chosen"** by God.

And this is a wonderful truth.

I don't think Americans really believe suffering is Biblical.

**Despite the number of times Jesus mentions it,
Our initial mindset when someone suffers
Is that they must have done something wrong.**

Even in Peter's day,

**It was tempting to look at those who were scattered
as though God had forsaken them because of something they had done.**

THAT IS NOT THE CASE.

**They aren't suffering because they have been REJECTED by God.
They are suffering because they have been SELECTED by God.**

Obedient Christians truly are "The Rejected Selected".

They are selected by God and so they have been rejected by the world.

**It is the fact that they have been selected
That causes the world to reject them.**

John 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

**If He hadn't selected you and chosen you and called you out,
You wouldn't be rejected by the world.**

Matthew 10:22 "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."

It is when we take the name of Jesus upon us that we are hated.

**Take courage this is a beautiful truth.
It allows you to confidently minister wherever you are.**

**This hardship that you are in.
This difficult situation you face.
THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR.**

Esther 4:14 "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Maybe you are **difficult marriage.**
Maybe you **have unbelievers in your family** who make it hard.
Maybe you are in a **tough work environment.**
Maybe **God has asked you to do something difficult.**

**Take courage, you were chosen for this situation by God,
And He knew what He was getting when He chose you.**

Look at Paul's life.

Acts 9:15-16 "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 20:22-23 "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me."

1 Thessalonians 3:1-4 "Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know."

**This difficulty you face, this scattering,
Does not mean you have been rejected by God.
No, you have been selected by God to minister there.**

*You aren't rejected, you are selected,
And being selected brings responsibility.*

#3 SPEAKING TO THE SUBMISSIVE

1 Peter 1:2a

"who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood;"

Peter is talking here in detail about their choosing.

Who chose them then, how they were chosen, why they were chosen.

In this verse **the responsibility of 4 parties is mentioned** or alluded to.

1) GOD THE FATHER

"who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"

God looked ahead in time and chose you specifically to be His child.

Ephesians 1:3-6 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

**This should cause you to be thankful.
Of all the orphans, He chose you.**

2) GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

"who are chosen...by the sanctifying work of the Spirit"

**The Holy Spirit called you to salvation.
He also set you apart by making you different and equipping you.**

2 Thessalonians 2:13 "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."

The final party mentioned

4) GOD THE SON

"who are chosen... [to] be sprinkled with His blood"

**God chose you, the Spirit called you,
But it was Jesus who made it possible by paying your sin debt.**

Romans 5:6 "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

**The Father Chooses, The Spirit Calls, The Son Cleanses,
But there is one more participant alluded to.
THAT IS US**

WHAT DOES IT SAY WE ARE CALLED TO DO?

"who are chosen...to obey Jesus Christ"

**Being one of the rejected selected is certainly difficult,
But that doesn't mean you are allowed to quit.**

Obedience is expected.

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

Perseverance is expected.

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

**You may be scattered, but take courage, you were selected,
And you were selected to be obedient where God has placed you.**

This is the main theme behind this letter that Peter writes.

To those who are being **persecuted by non-believers,**

1 Peter 2:12 "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

To those who **live under unfair government**,

1 Peter 2:13 "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,"

To those who **work in unpleasant jobs**,

1 Peter 2:18-19 "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly."

To **wives married to godless husbands**,

1 Peter 3:1-2 "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

To **husbands with ungodly wives**

1 Peter 3:7 "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

Peter sums all of these up

1 Peter 3:13-17 "Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong."

**You may be scattered, but take courage,
You have been selected to be submissive to God
In whatever circumstance you find yourself in.**

Hardship is not a reason to be disobedient.

You have been chosen to obey.

#4 SPEAKING TO THE STRENGTHENED

1 Peter 1:2b

"May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure"

Peter knows how difficult this is, as does God.

That is why God gives special ability to help you. **He strengthens you.**

He gives **grace**, and He gives **peace**.

We all know what grace is.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Hebrews 4:16 "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Where do you find strength **to be obedient in the midst of persecution?**

Where do you find strength **to submit to an immoral government?**

Where do you find strength **to work in an immoral work place?**

Where do you find strength **to submit to an ungodly husband?**

Where do you find strength **to love an ungodly wife?**

You need the grace of God, and it is sufficient.

Peter also wants you to have peace.

Peace is confirmation that God is on your side.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

That calming conviction is vitally important.

**It is hard to be one of "The Selected Rejected",
but God gives grace and peace to sustain you.**

God has given you strength, now you must trust Him.

Luke 18:1-8 "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, 'In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man.' 'There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' 'For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 'I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'"

Jesus said, **when a person truly trusts God** and does what He says even in the midst of great difficulty that God **"will bring about justice for them quickly"**

The problem then is this:

"However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

You may be scattered, but rejoice you are selected.

And you are selected for submission.

And God has given you all the strength you need to obey.

Now, will you trust Him?

1 Peter 2:21-24 "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."