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1 P E T E R

2 P E T E R

FIRM

A CCNE Life Group Guide

1. Living in the Last Days

February 4th | 1 Peter 4:7-11
Prayer, love, hospitality, service.

2. Share the Sufferings of Christ

February 11th | 1 Peter 4:12-19

3. Grace to the Humble

February 18th | 1 Peter 5

4. 2 Peter Intro

February 25th | 2 Peter 1:1-4

4. Be Like Jesus

March 3rd | 2 Peter 1:3-11

1. Living in the Last Days | 2/4/24

1 Peter 4:7-8 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgement and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

The source of many anxieties in our hearts and our minds is our desire to sustain the status quo, but Peter nips those worries in the bud. The end of all things is at hand. There is no sense in worrying.

He shifts attention to a different activity, organizing our judgement and our spirit for prayer. Where others are concerned with themselves, we unburden our bodies, minds, hearts and souls from anxiety.

The end of all things is always at hand in the life of a believer. If not the return of Jesus, then our own end is but a moment away at all times. Our peaceful acknowledgement of reality allows us to courageously face the difficulties of life.

Peter continues to list fervent love, grumble-free hospitality, and service to the best of our ability as ways to live in this open-handed acceptance of the end of things as we know it. Christian Eschatology is less a specific understanding of the final events, and a hearty faith in the goodness of God permeating each moment, whatever may come.

This trust releases us to fervently love, and follow our Lord's example of suffering love. So many people need another just to journey along their path with them, as Jesus does for us.

This courageous faith sets us up to be outrageously welcoming to those around us. Our tables and living rooms can become the greenhouse of peoples lives, where they are fed and nourished with love and truth in a way that isn't common to the world.

God has specifically equipped us to be able to meet the needs of the people around us, and our faith in his eternally sustaining love for us allows us to surrender ourselves to the needs of those around us.

The last days are upon us. These are the days we've been made to live open-handedly transferring the love of our Father to the people in need of his love around us.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**We're called
to serious
and watchful
prayer.**

**Fervent love
and complaint-
free hospitality
are hallmarks of
believers.**

**God has
gifted us to
serve the
world.**

**Key passage:
1 Peter 4:7-11**

In light of the coming end, our death, or Christ's return, we are to pray.

How would you assess your prayer life? Where do you sense resistance to Peter's call to pray?

How might we all help one another to pray watchfully?

Our identity in Jesus is a living stone, royal priesthood, a chosen people, and yet foreigners and exiles.

What does it look like to live from that identity?

Why isn't that easy?

Prayer, love, and hospitality shape us to be the people God made us to be.

How have we been gifted for the service of the world around us?

Are we doing this?

2. Sanctified through Suffering | 2/11/24

1 Peter 4:13 To the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ keep on rejoicing; so that at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

This is the story of our savior. Willing suffering, according to the will of God, resulting in exultation in the day of his glory being revealed.

To suffer is anathema in our culture. No one should suffer at all. We sacrifice life, liberty and happiness to “Not-Suffering”. So it’s quite a leap to move from this cultural milieu to Peter’s ice-bath of suffering.

1 Peter 4:19 Let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator.

If you believe in God it’s natural to trust him during the good times in your life. Believing becomes unnatural—or rather supernatural—when you are suffering. Can you still believe that God’s will is good, and he is working in your life when things you don’t want to happen are happening? Do you believe that he is a faithful Creator even when life hurts?

Judgment is the accurate exposure of reality. God will judge, and the truth will be known, and this in some way validates our suffering. Entrusting our souls to a faithful creator is a practice that does not happen once when we say a prayer, but over an extended period of time as we continually and habitually entrust ourselves to God in trust that he is faithful.

Earlier in this passage Peter uses the phrase “those who obey the gospel of God”. What does that mean in the context of suffering? I believe that it is this dogged commitment to trust in God. Ruthless trust, Brennan Manning called it. A belief that love will triumph over suffering and death, because Jesus already has the victory, and it is from that place that we are able to live out our obedience to the gospel even in suffering.

Keep on rejoicing, then, as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that one day, when everything is revealed, you will be counted with that crazy bunch who believed in Jesus through to the end. Trust him. He’s faithful.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**Trials and
suffering are
an expected
part of life.**

**In Jesus we can
celebrate our
suffering since
we know it has a
purpose.**

**We can trust
suffering
through our
faith in God.**

**Key passage:
1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Discuss the most formative times in your life,
were they easy or hard?**

**Is there a time you have suffered for Christ? For
taking a stand for righteousness?**

**Is there a time when suffering was brought on
by yourself?**

**In what ways might we need to learn to
celebrate suffering more?**

How can we do this well?

**How can we help our brothers and sisters
around us do this well?**

**Mostly we want to avoid suffering, but how
would we interact with it if we trusted
suffering?**

**Looping back to the first topic, how might we
better remember the formative role our
suffering has played in our lives?**

3. Grace to the Humble | 2/18/24

Chapter 5 brings us to the closing section of Peter's letter to this church. He closes the loop on several themes that he has discussed throughout. Partaking in Christ's suffering and glory, humbly serving one another, trusting God, being alert for evil.

Peter asks the elders to care for the people God has put around them by living exemplary lives that teach their people.

1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

This call to suffering servitude is just an extrapolation of the call to be like Jesus. We are to do the things he did. In fact, the word translated "clothe yourself" means as with the apron that slaves would don to perform their work, just as Jesus did when he washed the disciples' feet.

To conclude his letter to the church on how to live as the people of God in the world, Peter brings to mind the suffering and service of Jesus to fuel their imaginations as these Christians encountered a hostile world trying to snuff out their lights, and trample their salt.

This humble service that Jesus offered us is exactly what is required for people to live in the harmonious love of the Trinity. "I in you, Father, and [the church] in me," as Jesus said.

Whether we have a prominent place, or are young and searching to become established, or maybe we feel we don't have much to offer, Peter calls us to put on some humility because God gives grace to the humble.

It is through humility that we draw near to God, and resist the devil, it is through humility that we are freed from evil.

Peter signs off by encouraging everyone to "Stand Firm" in the grace of God. It is God's grace that only comes to the humble that can be the foundation of our eternal lives.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**Elders: Know
Jesus, love
his sheep,
please Christ**

Consider what good Leadership in the Church should accomplish.

How do Peter's points instruct leaders to accomplish what Jesus set before them.

**All Believers,
Including
Elders:
Be Humble**

How do you view or have you experienced humility? Remember humility isn't about humiliation or thinking less of self but thinking of self less. It's about submission to God and others.

Humility is serving others, casting your cares and anxieties on Jesus. What cares or anxieties can you take to Jesus?

**All Believers,
Including
Elders: Be
Watchful, Be
Hopeful**

Are you aware and alert regarding how Satan may want to attack? How do you stand firm against his attacks?

What role can hope play in defense against the enemy of God and his people.

**Key passage:
1 Peter 5**

3. Standing Firm on Faith | 2/25/24

Stand firm. The series continues with 2 Peter. Standing firm through suffering may be a good summary of 1 Peter.

What is it that we're standing firm on? Well, 2 Peter opens with a glorious attempt to capture the infinite goodness and grace of God our Father and Jesus Christ that makes life in him possible.

1 Peter 1:3 for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

True knowledge of Jesus goes beyond the mere informational to the deeper and more experiential interactions with God in our life. When we listen for his leading in our lives we're doing far more than just 'the right thing' we're building a knowledge of Jesus that grants us everything pertaining to life and godliness.

What a phrase! What do we stand firm on? The knowledge of Jesus in **everything**. His constant character stabilizes our fleeting minds and hearts and souls. His eternally good-nature is our bedrock foundation.

1 Peter 1:4 Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.

Our deliverance from the burden of a life standing on sinking sand comes through this knowledge of Jesus. His unchanging grace in all 33 years, his unfailing love, his faithful words, the knowledge of him sets us free from the world, and allows us to partake in his divine nature!

Peter kicks off his second letter with a bang, reminding all who know Jesus just how much treasure they have found in their savior, and the extent to which it is, and can be their foundation.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**We have
faith in the
Person of
Jesus**

What does it mean that Peter says we have “like” or the “same” faith? How is this an encouragement to you?

Peter is not speaking of simply an intellectual knowledge but of an experiential knowledge of the person of Jesus. In what ways can you know Jesus that way today?

**Our faith
gives us
power and
provision**

Consider the great and precious promises for believers. What does it mean to partake in the divine nature or to escape the corruption to come?

Peter speaks of God’s divine power giving us all things...how should this frame how you view God’s provision for your daily life in Him?

**These precious
promises carry
us through the
present into
the future.**

When you consider all of these truths that Peter proclaims in just 4 verses, how do you think he is going to try and encourage his audience in light of the persecution they are facing and the impact of the false teachers? Hint: Read the last few verses of the letter... (2 Peter 3:14–end)

**Key passage:
2 Peter 1:1–4**

4. Becoming like Jesus | 3/3/24

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

Be With Jesus

Our journey down the Peter's pathway to Christlikeness, begins by being with Jesus. What are some of the ways that you try to be with Jesus.

Sometimes it can be hard to imagine that Jesus is with us all the time, how might we incorporate Jesus into more of our days? Frank Laubach played what he called "a game with minutes" where he turned his attention to God once every sixty seconds! Any other ideas?

Become Like Jesus

Becoming something new is a process. Have you noticed changes in your life since you first met Jesus, or even more recently. Sometimes it can be difficult to discern growth, have others mentioned it to you?

Jesus was thoroughly certain of God's love and calling for him, and God loves us as much as he loves Jesus, do you believe that? Can you? Believing this is a required part of becoming like Jesus.

Do the Things Jesus Did

Jesus did a lot of things. A few good ones to think about would be hospitality, do you create space to encounter people and extend a welcome into the kingdom.

Another would be preaching the gospel, this one is a verbal extension of the world according to the love of God to people who don't know that love.

And then thirdly, Demonstration of the gospel. Jesus embodied the Gospel, in word and in deed.

**Key passage:
2 Peter 1:3-11**

5. Becoming like Jesus | 3/10/24

Aware of the brevity of a human life, Peter commits himself to put the fundamental things of God before his sheep.

Jesus left his sheep in the care of Peter. Care for baby Christians is the mission of all Jesus' disciples. Teaching others to do the things that Jesus taught us to do.

The conviction that Peter had was that he was not long for this world, and we see him drill down on his focus. He becomes more intent on the fundamental principles of the gospel as he nears death. Why is this?

Without a foundation, a house falls. Peter knew that the most important part of any "sheep's" life is what it is built upon. He also knew that reminders were constantly necessary for him, and he knew they were needed by his people as well.

Experiencing Jesus with his own eyes, Peter was able to pass along the real formative elements of the Gospel to the believers around him that looked to him for guidance. Peter described seeing Jesus transfigured, and hearing the voice of God announce, "This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased."

2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts

We may not see Jesus physically, but as believers we certainly see him working in our lives in ways that provide us with "everything we need for life and godliness".

So, Peter says, life's short, I'm going to do something worth doing, and for Peter it was reiterating the foundational principles of life with God. He became focused on doing what God called him to do while he was on the earth.

The prophetic word of the gospel shines as a light in dark place, let's allow ourselves to be guided by Jesus' words, and allow them to direct our steps.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

The Word of God Lives.

The church was built on the work of Jesus and the Word of God is the authority still today. The written word of God testifies to the Living Word of God.

Are you submitted to the authority of the word of God today?

Are you seeking to live your life surrendered to the Word of God?

The Word of God Endures.

Amazing experiences can produce incredible emotion, but that emotion will fade. We can't continually pursue emotional experiences to sustain our faith, we must mature and learn to be nourished and sustained by the word of God.

Do you find yourself seeking emotional experiences to boost your faith?

Do those experiences last?

The Word of God is Super Natural.

Man's words, though often powerful and articulate are ultimately natural or common. God's word is super natural and has the power to save and transform.

What is your intake of man's words versus the word of God?

In what ways has the word transformed your life super naturally?

**Key passage:
2 Peter 1:12-21**

6. Standing Firm | 3/17/24

A long time before Peter was writing this letter we call 2 Peter, he was sitting with Jesus and walking with Jesus, and learning from Jesus. Jesus is reported as having taught the sermon on the mount and concluded with a word picture to help people grasp the gravity of his teachings.

The person who did the things Jesus taught them to do would be like a person who built their house on a solid foundation of rock, and when storms came it would stand firm, and not be moved. The person who did not do what Jesus said would be like a person who built their house on a foundation of sand, when storms raged the house would come crashing down.

In our Stand Firm series we've examined extensively the things that Peter has called us to do, and to stand firmly on, but now he calls into question some people who are calling us to stand firm on things that are unstable.

2 Peter 2:3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.

Covetousness is a term no longer familiar in our modern culture but it refers to a strong desire to obtain something. Biblically, covetousness referred often to idolatry. There is a connection between our strongest desires, and our worship.

Just as Israel was drawn aside by their strong desires, and lured into pagan worship, and idolatry, so too we can be led by our covetousness to be deceived by the words of false prophets.

Peter warns us that these false teachers will enslave us by the very things that Jesus came to set us free from. The way he tells us to identify these teachers is by evaluating the way they interact with their desire. If they are led by them, they will be destroyed by them, and if you are led by these teachers you too are led by your desires, and will be destroyed by them.

In the end, as we observe the sinking sand that these false teachers stand on, we are reminded of the glorious rock on which we may stand firmly, free from our covetousness, trusting in the words of Jesus. He has freed us with the words of life.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**False
teaching is
destructive.**

Verses 1–3 concern the destructiveness of false teachers.

What did you learn Sunday about false teaching?

Have you ever been led astray by false teaching? How was it revealed? How did you know? What did you do?

**False
teachers are
depraved.**

What principles does Peter give us to be paying attention to in order to identify false teaching today?

In what way do you need to guard your own heart against the things that lead away from the truth?

**False teachers
deceive
themselves and
others.**

Deception is a formidable weapon of the adversary. What can believers do to combat deception, and stand firm?

**Key passage:
2 Peter 1:19–2:22**

6. The Lord is not Slack | 3/24/24

The immensity of the truth that Peter continues to set right before the hearts and minds of his beloved church beggars our comprehension. It's unbelievable, as we say. But the scoffers say the same.

Since the beginning of time there are some that forget in favor of their present day perception of reality that God has ordered this good world, and he holds it together. God's stayed hand displays patience, and it is a sign of the consistent and faithful nature of God's character.

Reaching back to the prophets of old, Peter describes creation from Genesis 1, when God organized creation, and the flood from Genesis 6, where God disordered his world. Leaning on thoughts prevalent throughout the prophets, Peter claims that today the world is preserved by that same word. It is the word of God that binds reality as we know it—holding until all things will be judged by the fire of his presence.

2 Peter 3:8 But beloved do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day.

Harkening to his savior's ancestor David, and Psalm 90, Peter digs deep into theoretical and poetic abstractions of God's perception of time, to try and convey the truth of God's faithfulness.

Standing firm on the truth of God takes practice, particularly practice in times of trial. Those who have trusted God and been sustained by him are a great help to those in need today.

It can be difficult to see God moving—he is invisible after all!—but we learn to know that he is acting on our behalf by trusting. Trusting in the words of the prophets of old, trusting in the words of our brothers and sisters in Christ, trusting in the words of the Scriptures.

God operates differently than we do, so faith in him requires more than just surface level observation. He requires trust which comes from the heart. We must not forget that he is good. We must know who he is to remember what he will do.

**Sermon points
and discussion
questions.**

**God's word
is true, given
as a guide.**

**History
clearly
reveals
God's work.**

**God's will is
patient,
merciful, and it
perseveres.**

**Key passage:
2 Peter 3:1-9**

How can our view of God's character affect our view of his word, work, and will?

How does God's word guide you?

Where could the Bible's eternal perspective influence your life more?

When we question God's timing we are questioning His word and His will.

Do you know that God's delay is for our sake?

Do you believe that God's timing is perfect?

What are your stories of God's timing?

Can you think of examples in the Bible of God's timing being perfect for his people?

After discussing these questions, what is your view of God's character through his word, work, and will?