

1 Peter Chapter 1 v 18 - 21

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[0 : 00] First letter of Peter. This is part of God's Word we've been studying the past few weeks.

Old Testament in the morning, New Testament in the evening. Good to be balanced, isn't it, in our study of God's Word. Good. We're going to read from verse 13 of chapter 1 into chapter 2 and verse 8.

It's quite a large passage. We've already covered the end of chapter 1, but we're going to dip in and out of that and into chapter 2. Really, particularly because of us sharing the Lord's Supper, as we will do in just a little while.

And hopefully the theme of God's Word will lead us into that helpfully and thoughtfully. So if you have a church Bible, one of the new ones is page 1217.

Page 1217, 1 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 13. Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

[1 : 19] As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

For it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

For you know that it was not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him.

And so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth, so that you have sincere love for one another, love one another deeply from the heart.

[2 : 31] For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For all people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the fields.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, the living stone, rejected by humans, but chosen by God and precious to him. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For in Scripture it says, See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

[3 : 51] Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. And a stone that causes people to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.

They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. If you'd like to turn back then in your Bibles to 1 Peter, and to that passage we read just a few moments ago.

And while you're going there, I'm going to go and get me notes, which I forgot. So I'll just be a second. Let's briefly pray together as we come to God's Word.

We ask, O Lord, that you would quieten our minds and our hearts. Lord, you would help us to concentrate upon what you have to say to us. We ask that you would reveal to us something more

of Jesus in his loveliness and beauty and grace.

We pray that indeed you would cause our hearts to rise up in love and affection and adoration of him. O Lord, this is our prayer. And we ask that by your Holy Spirit you would accomplish these things, even through the lips of men, and for the glory of God.

[5 : 07] Amen. Amen. Every now and then on the news there will appear information concerning an auction of something which belonged to a very famous person.

And usually those things that are sold are not all that expensive themselves. They may just be ordinary, everyday possessions. But because a celebrity, a famous person, historical figure, owned them or used them or had part of them, then they become immensely valuable.

Take just a simple piece of paper. However, if it happens to have a sketch on it by da Vinci or the lyrics of a song by Elvis Presley, that little piece of paper which in itself is valueless becomes tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of pounds.

It's valueless in itself, but it's elevated because it is attached to, connected to, someone who is thought of as unique and special.

When we think of blood, all blood is valuable. Human blood is valuable. It has, of course, within it the power of life and death.

[6 : 21] The loss of blood is death. The gift of blood can mean life. Here in chapter 1, verse 19, we are told that we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

In fact, even in our hymn, we sang there, verse 3, Blessed through endless ages is to be the precious stream. And that word precious, if you picked it up, recurs on several occasions through that reading.

First of all, the precious blood. And then chapter 2, verse 4, Chosen by God and precious to him. A precious cornerstone, verse 6.

And to those who believe, verse 7, precious. Precious. Everything about the Lord Jesus Christ is precious. Valuable. In one sense, special.

But above all, of course, there is his precious blood. Nothing more precious. Nothing more valuable. Nothing more priceless.

[7 : 28] And of course, when the apostle Peter here speaks of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the precious blood of Christ, he's speaking particularly of the shedding of that blood, the spilling of that blood, at his sufferings and his death and crucifixion.

Here, later in, earlier rather than Colossians, chapter 1, verse 20, making peace through his blood shed on the cross. And we have that incredible picture painted for us by John, particularly, that after Christ had died, a spear was driven into his side, and from his side flowed, we're told, a stream of blood and water.

So why is it, and this is what I want us to think about this evening as we come particularly to the Lord's table, why is it that the shed blood of Christ is so precious to God, and why is it so precious to us?

Because in both instances, as we read there, that Jesus Christ is precious to God, the living stone rejected by humans, but chosen by God and precious to him.

But also, verse 7, now to you who believe, this stone is precious Christ. So what is it that makes the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ so precious to God?

[8 : 47] Well, of course, it is the very blood of the Son of God, isn't it? It is the blood of his own dear eternal Son. We have a hint, of course, of the Lord Jesus Christ being one with God before the world was made.

Here in verse 20, he was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Speaks of him existing, in that sense, having life before the world was made. But earlier on in that chapter in verse 3, we have the very title of God as being God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the very Son of God, in a way that we fully cannot understand, a way that we fully cannot comprehend. But we know that his love for the Father and the Father's love for him is indeed great. Now, anything that belongs to a child of ours, we count as special. It may be just that scribbled crayon drawing that we stick on the fridge when they come from play school.

[9 : 57] When they're three years old, it becomes a precious work of art, doesn't it? Some people, of course, are very sentimental about things that belong to their children. They keep their very first shoe with which they took their first step or their first tooth that fell out or a lock of their hair.

They won't throw those things away. They'll keep them, even when that child has grown to have children of their own. It becomes so precious because it belongs to our child.

But, of course, there's nothing so precious to us as the blood of our children, if we can put it that way, because we know it is their very life. Nothing more precious to us than when they fall and hurt themselves or are injured.

There's nothing that grieves us so much, nothing that moves us so much with compassion and with love and with tenderness for our children. We count them to be the most precious possession, they themselves.

Who of us, if our home should catch a blaze in the middle of the night, would for a moment think to leave our child in their room so we could take the widescreen TV? Nobody would, I hope.

[11:09] Of course not. The child would come first. Everything else, whatever it was, would be left behind. If that's how we feel, if that's how we are moved, if that's how precious we consider the life of our children, then how much more then is the blood of the Son of God precious to the Father?

How much more does he love his Son? That love which was shared so perfectly in the Godhead throughout eternity, that love which has such a depth and intensity that no human love can compare with it or come close to it.

Nothing in all creation can hold a candle to the love between the Father and the Son. So no wonder the love of Christ, the love of God and the preciousness of the blood of Christ is such.

Remember when Jesus was baptized according to Mark's account of that incident, as Jesus came up from the water, out of the water, voice from heaven thundered, You are my Son, whom I love. With you I am well pleased. The blood of Christ is precious to God because it is the blood of his one and only Son.

[12:37] The blood of Christ is also precious blood because of what we read here about it, that it is absolutely pure. Absolutely pure.

Remember that God spoke of his Son, with you I am well pleased. He was talking about the love of Christ, his love for Christ, which was because of his perfect obedience, his perfect pleasing of the Father.

When does our love intensify for our children? We love them all the time, of course we do, but there are times when we seem to fill up and overflow with love for them. When is that?

When they do things that please us, that cause us delight, that cause us joy. When they take that first step or speak that first word, even if they do say Dada instead of Mama. When they begin to act in kindness or share with friends, all these things, dwell up with us, a sense of what, it's not just pride, it's a sense of love for them.

There's a pleasure that's taken in the very person. And so it was with the Lord Jesus Christ that he always did what pleased the Father. He himself declared that in John 8 verse 29, I always do what pleases him.

[13:59] The life of Jesus was the only righteous, sinless life that was ever lived on this planet. Peter describes him as the lamb without blemish or defect.

He was the only one who had no sin, the only one who had absolute purity, perfection. There's a lot of talk, isn't there?

In one sense rightly so about the shedding of innocent blood in warfare. Children, women, civilians being killed, innocent blood. And there's a sense in which that phrase is right.

But of course, there was only ever one truly innocent person who ever lived and died. And that was our Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews in chapter 4, speaking of Jesus who was tested, tempted in every way just as we are, yet did not sin.

The one stand-alone mark on the humanity of Christ was that he was without sin. God looks upon the blood of his Son and sees it as precious because it is so absolutely, perfectly pure, untainted, unspoil, uncorrupted.

[15:13] Even in our own age, even with people's twisted understanding of purity, there is a lot to be said for it. A lot of value placed upon it when we think of a jewel, a gem, which has no flaw or mark within it, of metals being held in great esteem because they are absent of impurities, but pure gold.

Christ's blood was precious to God because it had nothing to pollute it. He had kept his Father's will. He had kept all the commandments of God in every single way.

Matthew chapter 5 verse 17 Jesus said, Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. The only person who did not sin was the only person who kept God's requirements, his law, his commandments to the letter in the Spirit. Not one other person has ever come close to that. No one is innocent but him. And of course it was in keeping God's commandments that the Lord Jesus Christ was brought to that place of shedding his blood upon the cross.

It was because of his determination to do his Father's will that he was willing to be sin for us, to offer himself as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins.

[16:52] Hebrews 9.14, the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God. You must never forget that. That Jesus going to the cross was the Father's will yet it was the Son's as well.

That Jesus going to suffer and to shed his blood was to keep the commandments and to fulfill the law. No one drove him, no one pushed him, no one twisted his arm.

But he offered himself as a sacrifice, the only sacrifice for sin. The blood of Jesus is precious to the Father.

And it's because of what the blood of Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross that we begin to grasp why he is precious to us and why his blood is so precious to us just as much.

He's precious to those who believe. Notice that Peter writes here. To those who do not believe, Christ is not precious, is he? He is to be blasphemed.

[18:01] He is to be trampled in the dirt. He is to be despised and made mockery of. He is to be ridiculed. He is to be held in contempt because men and women do not believe.

But to you who believe, he's precious. He's precious. He's precious because of what he did by his blood. He purchased our redemption.

That's the very sense, isn't it, of these sentences here in 1 Peter chapter 1. That word redemption and redeem speaks, doesn't it, of a purchase price being paid for our release, a payment of a ransom, or the settling of another person's debts on their behalf.

And yet that wonderful word redemption and redeem speaks about all that God has done for us in Christ, of all that has been purchased, all that has been paid for with his precious blood.

That was such an expensive gift, such an expensive and high price to pay. And notice again, this wonderful thing is that you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

[19:28] The blood that Christ shed the blood that was spilt, that precious, precious blood of far greater value than the fine ointment that Mary poured from the alabaster jar at his feet.

A greater value than anything in all the world, in all the gold mines of all the world. That precious blood was shed for our sake, for us.

Notice there again, he was revealed. Revealed why? Revealed to die and to suffer in our place in these last times for your sake. Why is the blood of Jesus Christ precious to those who believe? Because we know that he shed his blood particularly, specifically, essentially, for those who would believe upon him, for his church. In Acts chapter 20, Paul preaches and speaks to the Ephesian elders, he reminds them to shepherd the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Ephesians chapter 5, as Paul again gives instruction to husbands and wives, he says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

[20:39] It was for you and for I, for us, that this price was paid, this blood was shed, this fountain was opened in Christ's side.

And because, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ paid that redemption price for us and purchased us for God with his blood, it means that he has brought for us, with that precious blood, forgiveness for every one of our sins.

in Ephesians and chapter 1 and verse 7, in him, as Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, cleansing of our guilt, the removing of our debts, because we are people who are in great, great debt, great debt to God.

Sin is often spoken of debts in one of the translations of the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. We owe God our love, we owe God our obedience, we owe God as our creator and our master, our very lives themselves, but we give him nothing.

We hold back to ourselves all the gifts that he's given to us. We do not give to him the tithe, which is our everything. We are vastly in arrears in our payments of these things to God.

[22 : 10] Hanging over us is debtors' prison, eternal, everlasting hell. And yet Christ, with his precious blood, has cleared the overdraft of our sin.

He has delivered us from the sentence and punishment that such a backlog of evil requires. His blood is precious to us because he has brought us pardon for every sin.

There's nothing more that we can pay, nothing more that we need to give. He has paid for it all. And in that redemption, which has brought us forgiveness, we find, of course, that the blood of Christ becomes so precious to us because by that blood we have been reconciled to God.

In Colossians chapter 1 and verses 19 and 20, the apostle Paul writes these things. Through Christ, God has reconciled to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Reconciliation between two great warring factions, two enemies of one another. And that's what we were.

[23 : 31] For again, as we read on into verse 21, once you were alienated from God. Why? You were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. The peace agreement that brought us into friendship and reconciliation with God was written in the blood of Christ.

And there is precious. We have been brought near who were far. We have been brought in who were out. We have been made one with him who were cut off and separate from him forever.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is precious because it has reconciled us into a living and loving and eternal relationship with God. Notice how we're told in verse 21, through him you believe in God, through Christ you believe in God and so your faith and hope are in God.

To have faith in someone means to trust them, to depend upon them, to rely upon them. It means that we know that they are trustworthy and reliable. How do we know that God is trustworthy and reliable?

Well because of what he has done for us in Christ. Because he's kept his covenant promises. We know that he is trustworthy and he has proved his friendship to us through that amazing power that he has begun to work in our lives.

[24 : 56] For we are partakers of Christ's resurrection. God who raised him from the dead and glorified him. In like manner we've been raised from spiritual death to everlasting life.

And that has come through the precious blood of Christ. And because his blood was shed for us we have been brought into that relationship with God whereby he is our hope. He's not just our trust but he's our hope.

He's our hope for all the future holds. He's our hope for tomorrow. He has been faithful in the past and therefore we know he'll be faithful in all the days to come. He has promised us a resurrection body.

Resurrection life not just in this world but in glory with Christ as well. To be brought into relationship with God is not simply to be friendly with God but to be brought into all that he is.

Both now and for eternity. Christ is precious to us and his blood is precious. Finally dear friends because of what we have received everlasting life.

[26 : 09] There in verse 23 for you have been born again. Not just a phrase that Jesus uses when he speaks to Nicodemus. There it is in Peter. You have been born again.

Earlier in chapter 1 and verse 3. In his great mercy he's given us new birth. Once we lived that empty way of life handed down to us by our forefathers.

Once we had no life just an existence. Just a passing of time. Just a ticking of days of the calendar. Waiting in one sense until we got to our grave. But now we have received newness of life.

And that newness of life is what we've been considering in these past weeks. It's a holy life. It's a life living as a child of God obedient to his will. It's a life no longer conforming to the empty mindless pattern of this world and its ignorance.

But it's a life of love. A life of transformation. A life of power through the word of God. It is a life indestructible and imperishable into an inheritance laid up in heaven for us.

[27 : 16] And it's all possible and only possible because of the precious blood of Christ that has purchased these things for us. Let me ask you dear friends, as we come to the communion table, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's table, whatever we want to call it, let me ask you this, is the blood of Christ precious to you who believe?

Otherwise, what is the point of us taking of the bread and the wine? If it's not precious, if it's not a delight, if it's not something that we count of such immense worth and value?

Surely that's one of the reasons why the Lord Jesus instituted and gave to us this very action, this very activity, because he wants us to evermore think upon his blood shed for us, evermore to delight in the preciousness of the gift that he's given on our behalf, the precious blood of a precious Savior.

We're going to sing together now as we come to the table, 257, a lovely modern hymn that speaks of Christ Christ and the cross and the importance for us of what it is to think upon these things. And on the cross, on the cross, where the King of glory died, here is grace, here is love flowing from that wounded side. Let's stand as we sing. Thank you.