

Introducing an Old Fisherman

Profiling Christians, Part 1

I Peter 1:1a

Discussion Guide

Main Idea: This sermon served as the introduction to I Peter. We see that God's grace had transformed Peter and it is God's grace that upholds the believer through persecution.

Text: I Peter 1:1a; Various texts

Discussion Points:

The Apostle Peter is writing to believers who are experiencing serious persecution. Peter's audience is not unique, in fact, throughout the history of the church persecution seems to be more normal than not. Pastor Davey opens and closes this sermon with a challenge to us regarding the growing opposition in American culture to Christ, the church, and the gospel.

- When you consider the moral decay of our nation, what emotional response do you have and what does this response say about your view of God?
- Think of a Christian that you know personally who has a testimony of joy through hardship or mistreatment because of their faith. Explain the impact they have on those around them. Do you think your testimony would be the same? Why or why not?
- Based on this message, what reasons could you give for this being a very exciting time for the work of the gospel?

As the epistle opens, Peter says that he is *an apostle of Jesus Christ*. Pastor Davey spends some time highlighting the importance of the title *Christ*, being attached to the name of *Jesus*. Stephen makes the point that Peter actually reinforces his reader's faith by effectively saying, "Jesus is still the Lord of the universe – the only Messiah able to save mankind. He is indeed, Jesus Christ."

- What are some implications of Jesus being the Lord of the universe?
- Based on these implications, why do people/nations oppose Him and why do they find His followers so offensive?
- The scripture says *there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)*. Does this statement seem hard to understand given the fact there are so many other religions in the world? Why or why not?

Discussion Guide cont.

Pastor Davey says that if we only had the picture of Peter we see in the gospels, it should be surprising to see him described as an *apostle*. What we discover is that Peter is a lot like most of us with his surprising successes and stunning failures. What we also will learn is that the growth he experiences is the result of the never-failing grace of God. This has a tremendous impact on how Peter writes his letter.

- Jesus knew what Peter was going to become even though no one else saw it. Does this give you hope for your own spiritual development?
- In Peter's letter he emphasizes the need for prayer, the importance of humility, and the need for clear thinking all which stand in stark contrast to the way he lived in his earlier life. Name a specific area where you have seen this type of growth in your own life. Also, name one area where you would like to see this type of growth.
- Give a specific example of how a failure in your own life resulted in development of your character. To what do you attribute this growth through failure?

Gospel Connection:

There are at least two important reminders in this message. First, those who have submitted to the gospel of Jesus Christ have been identified with Christ in His final victory and have nothing to fear. We are to embrace that victory and live in light of it. Second, the gospel of grace is not limited to salvation from hell but it goes on, determined to grow us into the image of our Savior. The gospel then applies to every moment in every day of our life.

Personal Implications:

- Think:** Set aside time this week to think about specific evidences of God's grace in growing you spiritually. Also, think through specific opportunities you have to be a light in the darkness around you.
- Pray:** Ask God to give you true joy in the face of hardship and opposition. Ask the Lord for confidence in His control over all things.
- Do:** Find ways to become even more connected to the body of Christ. One way is to invite a fellow believer into your life to help keep each other accountable, encourage each other, pray together, and help each other grow.

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Profiling Christians, Part 1

I Peter 1:1a

The year is A.D. 64. Arsonists have set fire to the imperial city of Rome. By the time the fire is brought under control three of the fourteen districts into which the capitol city is divided has been burned to the ground.ⁱ

It isn't a coincidence that the property most affected is the same area where the Emperor Nero wants to build a new imperial palace – and historians have long believed he was, in fact, the arsonist.

But to avoid suspicion, his propaganda machine begins spreading the news that Christians ignited the flame – those strange people who never fit in; that strange gathering who worshipped a dead carpenter – those unpatriotic people who would never swear allegiance to the Emperor, or go along with the moral degeneracy of the Empire; those people who wouldn't make room for the pantheon of Roman gods and goddesses.

Persecution against Christianity up to this point has been local, random and unorganized. But now it begins to coalesce. Christianity was facing a new crisis. Their world is changing – and they are no longer welcome.

About this same time, an old fisherman turned church-statesman reaches for his quill and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, he begins to write. He knew Christians would be asking questions – the question that many are asking today:

- how do you respond when people think you're strange for worshipping differently, or even dogmatically;
- how do you react when government officials penalize you for your beliefs;
- how do you work with employers who demand that you make concessions or else;
- how do you move on after a spouse rejects you because you will not reject Christ;
- what do you do when you realize that although your life isn't being threatened, your career is.

The Letters of the Apostle Peter could have been written to us today. The truth is . . . they are. And are they ever needed!

Perhaps only in recent months, the average Christian has begun to read the newspapers and follow the news and watch the decisions of legislators with a growing sense – a growing recognition that suffering for the sake of Christ isn't new . . . in fact, it will become normal. Being mocked and maligned and misunderstood and marginalized is certainly new to the American Christian . . . but our world has changed. We have now entered an era in our history where to be comfortable, culturally acceptable and at the same time, a committed Christian – is more and more unlikely.ⁱⁱ

Which means this – in the words of one author – the day of the casual Christian is over. It will no longer be possible to drift along, hoping that no tough choices will have to be made. It will now cost something to be a follower of Jesus Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ

He goes on to write, Never before in American history has it been so important for the Christian to be connected to a believing church body; participating with other believers in worship, encouragement, instruction, prayer, discipleship training and gospel outreach, because the darker the night, the more important every single candle becomes.^{iv}

Perhaps only in recent months, the average Christian and the average believing church in America is finding more sympathy and more respect and more concern and even more kinship with believers in China, Turkey, Sudan, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan Indonesia and Russia.

But the basic question asked by the believer living in the 1st century and the 21st century remains the same – How then shall we live? How do we respond? What is our disposition and reputation and demeanor?

A mission agency that monitors the church in the People's Republic of China asked thousands of believers what drew them to faith in Christ (especially when it could mean demotion, persecution, marginalization – and even imprisonment). Many answers were given, but the one answer that was given most often – was the joy

in the lives of believers with whom they came in contact – such joy that made them envious . . . and then curious . . . and eventually receptive.^v

So as we study the letters of Peter and read the newspaper and watch the news reports at the same time – if we end up panicking, or angry, or resentful . . . we’re not heading in the right direction.

Peter will write in this first letter . . . in the face of testing . . . keep on rejoicing (4:13); if you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed – that is, you are filled with a sense of satisfied joy (4:14).

As we open Peter’s first letter today, there is never any question as to why Peter wrote it; if you’ll turn to ***1 Peter and chapter 5***, he spells it out in ***verse 12. I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.***

In other words, you are people redeemed by grace; you belong to a gracious God; and I’ve written you, so that in the midst of your changing world, you won’t lose sight of His grace or stop living out the gospel of grace.

Now turn back to ***chapter 1 and verse 1***. It reads simply, yet profoundly, ***Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.***

The original construction could be rendered, “Jesus Christ’s apostle”. In other words, Peter was sent out – which is what apostle means, in general terms – he was being sent as an agent on a mission having been personally commissioned by Jesus Christ.^{vi}

In more specific terms, an Apostle was among that group of men who had been disciplined by the Lord and had seen Him after His resurrection.

It’s worth noting that Peter and the early church adopted both the human name of Jesus and combined it with the Messianic title – the Christ. For us today, Jesus Christ goes together like a first and last name – they are inseparable. And rightly so.

But Christ wasn’t a name, it was a title – a title that meant Messiah – the anointed One – a reference for the One who would die for the sins of the whole world.

When the church was formed on Sunday, on the Day of Pentecost, this earliest of creeds, their first confession of faith was this – Acts 2:36 – Jesus is the Christ. They knew Him first as Jesus, the man; but they came to understand that He was God incarnate – their living Messiah – the Christ.

By the time Peter writes this letter, Jesus and Christ have become inseparable names of our Lord

Jesus Christ. It’s interesting that the Apostle Paul is the only writer to ever reverse this order – he will often refer to Him as Christ Jesus.

You see, for the other Apostles, Jesus came first and then their understanding that He was the Christ – the Divine Messiah – came second. But to the Apostle Paul, his experience was reversed. He came rather suddenly into an awareness of God the Son as he traveled the road to Damascus to hunt down some Christians.

Acts chapter 9 records how the sky suddenly blazed with light and he fell to the ground and heard the voice of God saying, “Why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord” – kind of like saying “Who’s up there?” And the voice from heaven, that must have nearly stopped his heart from beating, responded, “I am Jesus.”

So for all the other commissioned apostles who had followed Jesus, the teacher, and came to know Him over time as Jesus the Christ; Paul, who hadn’t met the Lord prior to His crucifixion, came to know Him first as the Divinely Anointed Christ and then as Jesus.

Now what Peter is saying in this opening phrase is critically important, especially when his readers are going to encounter persecution for claiming that Jesus was none other than the divinely anointed Christ – the true and living Son of God.

So in this opening statement, Peter actually reinforces their faith by effectively saying, “Jesus is still the Lord of the universe – the only Messiah able to save mankind. He is indeed, Jesus Christ.

And beloved, what is it that is becoming more and more offensive to our changing world? This early creed! This basic confession that we hold to today – it is becoming more and more offensive that you and I would actually believe that he alone is our Living Lord. That He’s more than just another prophet or teacher; we believe that ***there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).***

And so Peter opens with the most condensed doctrinal statement – the shortest creedal confession you can ever utter – Jesus Christ. The Man, is our God and Savior – our Messiah.

Now there’s something else in this opening phrase . . . which is all we’re going to get to today, in case you were wondering. It is the startling display of God’s grace that would allow you to read the name of Peter, next to the title, apostle.

I mean, if you decided to read through the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and then stopped reading after you finished the Gospel of John – and then later on decided to read some more and picked up your New Testament and turned to I Peter, you would be amazed to discover that Peter was an apostle.

You could just as easily expect a letter from him to open with the words, “Peter, the man who denied Jesus Christ . . .” “Peter, the man who failed to keep his solemn promise to Jesus Christ . . .” “Peter, the man who used to be one of Jesus Christ’s closest followers.”

Instead, you read, **Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ**. So let’s find out how Peter got from where he was, to where we find him here. In fact, I’m going to propose to you that *who* Peter was – and the growth he experienced – will have an incredible impact on what he writes in this letter.

His past life – his past failures and disappointments – make all the more vibrant and significant and precious his letters to Christians in every country and in every generation.

So let’s back up for a moment and ask the question, Just who was Peter, the Apostle? Picture in your mind a fourth grade student who is constantly raising his hand in class, even though he has nothing to say. And many times, what he says, shouldn’t have been said.

If you read the Gospel accounts, you can easily understand why pastor and author, John MacArthur, described Peter as the Apostle with a foot-shaped mouth.^{vii} It was true.

I’ll never forget Howard Hendricks saying in seminary class that Peter opened his mouth only to change feet. Peter was the disciple who rushed in where angels feared to tread.^{viii}

He was inquisitive and impulsive and daring. While we often fault him for sinking beneath the waves, we too easily forget that when Peter saw Jesus walking on the water, Peter was the only disciple to climb out of the boat and walk toward Jesus, while all the other disciples were hanging on to their seat cushions that served as flotation devices.

While we fault him for denying the Lord in that courtyard, he was still the disciple who followed the Lord into that courtyard.

No disciple speaks as often as Peter does; and no one is spoken to by the Lord as often as Peter. No disciple is corrected more often than Peter – and

Peter is the only disciple to have tried to correct the Lord – which was not a good idea. No one verbally denied Christ more publicly than Peter and yet no disciple confessed Christ more boldly, than Peter.^{ix}

J. Allen Blair wrote decades ago that probably no other person characterized in scripture appears so impetuous, unstable, and distrustful, and yet at the same time so bold, fearless, and devoted.^x

And by the way, all of the above are among the reasons why we love Peter the Apostle. Paul intimidates us . . . Paul, the brilliant attorney, has most of it buttoned down. Peter, the fisherman, is unpredictable . . . he seems to be able to balance every surprising success with an equally stunning failure.

And we love him for that . . . we warm up to him so easily, because we are just like him. He’s so clearly flawed . . . he has so much to be forgiven – as everyone else, by the way . . . but it’s just so obvious with Peter.

Now, when Peter was born, his given name was Simon – or Simeon, in Hebrew. His father’s name was John and we know that he had a brother named Andrew.

He grew up in a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee and developed a fairly successful fishing enterprise with his brother Andrew. They, along with two other brothers, James and John worked the business. All four men would leave their business and follow after Jesus.

We know Peter was married because his wife often traveled with him in his ministry trips, according to I Corinthians 9:5; it’s possible they didn’t have any children, which would have allowed her to be involved more directly in his travels.

We also can conclude that his fishing business was lucrative enough for them to own their own home in Capernaum (Mark 1:21) and the home was large enough to accommodate his wife and his mother-in-law – whom Jesus healed when she had become ill with a high fever (Mark 1:29-34).^{xi}

Now when the Lord meets Simon, he immediately nicknames him Peter – or Petros, in the Greek language; Cephas in Aramaic.

Petros, or Peter, means “stone” or “rock”. It was as prophetic a name change as any – for Jesus Christ will take this impetuous, unstable, unpredictable, emotionally driven man, and make him rocklike – stable and steady.^{xii}

What I want to do with the time remaining, is watch some of it happen, in fast motion. I wanna

drop into several scenes – and we’ll take a quick photograph – sort of like a quick Instagram, and then we’ll move on.

I’ll give you a caption to write underneath each photograph. You’re going to have to turn quickly, because we have a lot to uncover.

The first snapshot is found in *Luke 9* – and the caption is the word, **Nonsense**.

Here’s the setting; the three inner core disciples, Peter James and John have hiked up the slopes of a nearby hill, about to become known forever as the Mount of Transfiguration. When they get to the top, the Lord begins to pray and Peter and other two disciples fall asleep – which is their normal pattern.

Suddenly, Peter wakes up to discover that Jesus is talking to Moses and Elijah – and their garments are shining like the noonday sun – and Peter, of course, shows – one author writes – magnificent disregard for the situation; ignores the fact that nobody is talking to *him* and he blurts out – in *verse 33*, ***Master it is good for us to be here – let’s make three tabernacles, or tents, one for You, and one for Moses and one for Elijah.***

Which, by the way, reduces Jesus to the level of Moses and Elijah – which religions of the world have been trying to do for centuries – making Jesus just another prophet; then Peter tries to make some sort of permanent dwelling place for them . . . which is all utter nonsense – and then God the Father basically interrupts Peter by saying, - and I’m guessing, but I think God the Father is raising His voice just a tad; ***“This is my beloved Son . . . listen to Him.”***

Which is a nice way of saying, “Peter, stop running your mouth and listen!” Nonsense.

Another snapshot is in *Matthew 16* where you can write the caption, **Insightful**, underneath this scene.

The Lord is asking His disciples who people think He is. Some say, ***John the Baptist, verse 14, others say Elijah, but still others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.*** And now comes the major question on this examination of faith – ***and Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16. Simon Peter answered – and you might be thinking, “Oh no – not Peter” . . . You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”***

Jesus goes on to declare that only God the Father could have provoked such revelation *into* the heart and *out of* the mouth of Peter – the rock – and upon the bedrock of Peter’s confession of who Jesus is, the church will be built. What insight from Peter – what a mountain top for this growing disciple of Jesus Christ.

The problem is, only two verses later, Peter, filled with insight, becomes Peter, filled with arrogance. ***Verse 21. From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, “God forbid it Lord . . . this shall never happen to You.”***

Can you imagine? ***Peter took Him aside.*** What did that look like, “Lord, would you step over here for a moment . . . listen, this talk of dying, this will never happen to You, trust me, I’m the disciple with great insight.”

From insight to arrogance. And Jesus calls him ***Satan, a stumbling block*** to the Divine plan of redemption – why? – ***verse 23 – your mind is captivated by your own interests and not God’s.***

In other words, Peter rebuked Jesus because Jesus evidently wasn’t going to fulfill Peter’s expectations. This wasn’t Peter’s plan! Peter expected Judaism to be reformed and revived. Jesus could see the end of Judaism and the beginning of the church age. Peter expected nice little fish dinners by the sea-shore; Jesus envisioned the marriage supper of the Lamb. Peter saw synagogues packed with Jesus teaching; Jesus saw the nation screaming for his crucifixion. There were not crosses in Peter’s expectations; no nails, no corpse and no sealed tomb either. Peter was looking forward to one miracle after another – Jesus was looking forward to defeating death and the grave.

It is little surprise that you can then turn to ***John 13*** and write underneath that snapshot the words **Self-confidence**.

John 13 is where Peter tells Jesus, “Look, everybody else will leave you, but I will never deny You . . . I’ll follow You even to the death.”

Five chapters later, at ***John chapter 18*** you can write in the word that you have come to know Peter by – the caption can simply read, **Failure**. Three

denials . . . and the rooster signals Peter's crushing defeat.

It doesn't take long for any of us to take our eyes off the Lord and focus on our expectations . . . our plans . . . our own self-confidence . . . and it isn't long after when our promises lie crumbled and broken at our feet . . . in the dust of regret.

William Carey, the man we call the Father of Modern Missions – used wonderfully by the Lord in India for decades – wrote these words in his journal during days of inconsistency and failure: this entry is marked, 1794 and it reads, "My soul is a jungle, when it ought to be a garden; I can scarcely tell if I have the grace of God or not; I am, perhaps, the most inconsistent, cold creature that ever possessed the grace of Christ. If God uses me, none need despair."^{xiii}

That's Peter . . . if anybody was finished with him, it would be the Lord. Peter had stunningly, so quickly denied Him . . . and soon after that, Jesus died.

That's it . . . I mean, look, even if the Lord rose from the dead, He'll find somebody else . . . some other more worthy Apostle to write inspired letters to churches. He'll leave Peter out.

But that isn't the end of the snapshots, is it? In **John 20**, we're given a life-changing photograph – you can write underneath it the caption, **Eye-witness**.

The news has reached the disciples that the stone has been rolled away and the tomb is empty.

Peter and John start racing toward the tomb and when they arrive, **verse 6** tells us that they went in and ***saw the linen wrappings lying there and the face cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up – or folded – it could be rendered, in a place by itself.***

The grave clothes aren't torn apart by a resuscitating Lord; they aren't ripped to shreds by grave-robbers stealing the body. They were lying there, literally, ***still in their folds***.

Imagine, by this time, the spices that had interlaced these strips of cloth that had been wrapped around the body of Jesus, had begun to harden – and they are still lying there in their folds; what that means is that Peter and John are struck by the fact that these linen wrappings are still in the form of a body, no doubt slightly sunken in; like an empty cocoon. And then John's careful reference to the face-napkin, inches away, folded neatly.^{xiv}

One New Testament author commented that, in the ancient world, when royalty ate a large meal, they would often pause from their courses and rise from their couch and walk in the garden. If they took the napkin, wiped their mouth and wadded it up, it meant they were finished and would not return to eat. But if the napkin was folded neatly at their seat, it meant they were coming back.^{xv}

Peter saw the napkin – and why so carefully placed there? Because Royal Jesus was not only alive, He was coming back.

If there was any doubt, Mark records the words of the angel who delivered the news of Christ's resurrection as women came to anoint the body of Jesus; Mark's gospel records the angel saying, ***Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter (Mark 16:6).***

Almost as if to imply that Peter doesn't think he belongs with the other disciples . . . we know he's gone back to fishing . . . make sure you tell him too!

And in **I Corinthians 15:5** these precious words from Paul that inform us that Jesus made a special resurrection appearance to Peter.

He wasn't discarded . . . his failure had not been final . . . he was now an eyewitness. And that changed everything.

The next snapshot is on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2, where Jerusalem has swelled into millions of Jews from all around the world.

Peter is the main spokesman of the day and you could write underneath his public sermon the word, **Courage**.

Denying nothing, Peter, declares in verse 23 that the nation has murdered the Messiah; the world has ignored the Son of God; repentance and belief in Jesus – ***verse 36, is both Lord and Christ***. He is both God and the anointed Messiah. And He is the Christ is their only hope.

And three thousand people believed . . . and the church is born.

There are other snapshots and other captions to write . . . But the last snapshot I want to show you is this first letter from Peter. It's been more than 30 years since he'd come face to face with a man who had the audacity and authority to change his name.

And this man, the God-man, had changed so much more than Peter's name.

Here's this old church fisherman – this old church-statesman – a fisherman turned shepherd – he reaches for his quill . . . and you can write underneath this snapshot the caption, **Grace**. Peter will never forget the grace of God.

Let me ask and answer a few questions and our introduction of this letter is finished.

1. The first question is this: did Peter learn the importance of prayer – transparent, open prayer?

I mentioned how the Lord prayed on two different occasions while Peter slept. And the Lord warned Peter of his future failure and denial, and the Lord even said to Peter in *Luke 22:31 – Peter, the devil wants to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.*

I find it interesting that even though Jesus prayed for Peter, Peter still failed; but Jesus prayed with the perfect understanding that Peter's cowardice wasn't the conclusion; in fact, we learn from this that prayer doesn't always prevent failure – in fact, failure can be used in God's providential development of someone's character and life.

But Peter did learn the value of prayer . . . and he will write in this letter, *Casting all your cares upon the Lord, because He cares about you (1 Peter 5:7)*

2. Second question: did Peter learn how easy it is to fail and how damaging self-confidence is?

Did he ever . . . he will write in this letter, *Clothe yourselves with humility . . . God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5-6)* Listen, beloved, Peter writes, watch out . . . don't be overconfident, but reliant . . . as you remain *alert, the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:7).*

3. Question #3: did Peter replace hotheaded reactions with calm, clear thinking?

You may remember that Peter was the disciple who took out a sword in the Garden of Gethsemane and sliced off an ear of a man in the crowd; he's the man who promised the Lord uninterrupted faithful success.

Three times, the Apostle Peter will write in this letter, for the believer to be sober. It literally refers to avoiding drunkenness. However, each time it's used in the New Testament, it is used as a metaphor to being clearheaded . . . to having a calm and collected perspective so that you remain focused on what's most important.^{xvi}

The church needs this attribute now, more than ever. Calm, clear thinking on what matters most – and that's the gospel – and the Lord whom we represent.

This is no time to pitch a fit . . . or panic . . . or spend our time complaining over the loss of all we've known in this country. Let's not sing that we're standing on the Rock of Ages and then act as if we're clinging to a piece of driftwood.^{xvii}

Listen, beloved, one of the best lessons we can learn from 2,000 years of church history is that the church does not need to be appreciated in order to advance. The church doesn't need freedom in order to be fruitful. It doesn't need a seat at the table of power in order to sow the seed of the gospel.

If anything, and I would agree with one author, God is humbling the American church – whose hopes and petitions have been directed more toward Congress over the past 50 years than to Christ.

And that doesn't mean you can't petition Congress, or run for a seat in Congress or pray that somebody in Congress will put their thinking cap on. Exercise every right you have in this country we love.

But the Christian has absolutely no right to panic – or complain – or resent what is ultimately the Lord's purpose as He moves planet earth and every nation on it toward that final destination where the glory of the Lord will fill the earth like the waters of the sea.

Listen, sometimes in history, God gives a nation a leader who is better than they deserve.

The nation Israel didn't deserve the godly king Josiah, but the Lord raised him up and delayed His judgment. Josiah was a better king than the nation deserved.

Sometimes God gives a nation a leader who is far worse than they deserve.

It would be hard to prove that Germany deserved Hitler, or Russia deserved Stalin. It's as if God

reveals the potential pit of evil in a human heart and prepares a nation for the gospel of redemption.

And sometimes God gives a nation a leader that they actually deserve.

The people are immoral . . . decadent . . . deceitful . . . arrogant . . . spiritually blind . . . openly rejecting the gospel . . . willfully ignorant of the Bible . . . brazenly defying God's created order for gender and marriage.

Now I haven't attached the name of a congressman or a governor or a presidential candidate to any of that description. All I will say is that sometimes God gives a leader to a nation that that nation deserves.^{xviii}

But through it, the church refocuses on their mission; the church realigns their expectations; the church returns with greater passion than ever to demonstrate grace of God to the confused and lost,

who, without Jesus Christ – will be condemned forever.

Listen, the smoke from the burning of Rome is still thick in the air . . . Christians are preparing for greater persecution than ever . . . in fact, Peter will be executed in the wake of it all.

But picture in your mind a 75 year old man . . . a man with calloused hands and gnarled fingers from years of tending nets and cleaning fish and rowing with wooden oars – a man calmly writing to encourage the believer . . .

He writes with ink mixed with forgiveness and grace . . . listen, he writes in this letter, ***You can entrust your souls*** – literally, you can deposit into safe-keeping your hearts and your lives – and ***know that your faithful Creator will always be doing what is right.***

In a world gone wrong . . . He is making sure it will all turn out right.

The madness of Rome is under His Divine management; the chaos is under His control . . . and He is still in control today.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 8/21/2016 by Stephen Davey.

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i John Phillips, Exploring the Epistles of Peter (Kregel, 2005), p. 7

ii Adapted from Juan Sanchez, 1 Peter for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), p. 11

iii Adapted from Erwin Lutzer, Where Do We Go From Here (Moody Publishers, 2013), p. 39

iv Ibid

v Adapted from Lutzer, p. 36

vi D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter (BMH Books, 1992), p. 44

vii John MacArthur, Twelve Ordinary Men (W Publishing Group, 2002), p. 29

viii Ibid, p. 41

ix Adapted from MacArthur, p. 39

x J. Allen Blair, Living Peacefully When the World Won't Leave You Alone (Kregel, 1959), p. 9

xi Lou Barbieri, First and Second Peter (Moody Publishers, 2003), p. 15

xii Adapted from Hiebert, p. 43

xiii Quotes taken from S. Pearce Carey, William Carey (The Watchman Trust, 1923), p. 126

xiv Cleon Rogers Jr. & Cleon Rogers III, The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament (Zondervan, 1998), p. 226

xv Dino Pedrone, The Influence of Peter (Xulon Press, 2012), p. xiii

xvi Charles R. Swindoll, Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter (Zondervan, 2010), p. 133

xvii Lutzer, p. 26

xviii These three points adapted from Lutzer, pp. 26-27