



獨特的國民

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

LIVING IN HOPE
STANDING IN GRACE

在盼望中生活，在恩典中站立

KiNDRED 2022

KiNDRED
主裏一家親

STUDY GUIDE

DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP . EVANGELICAL CHINESE CHURCH . UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“Grace is God loving, God stooping, God coming to the rescue, God giving himself generously in and through Jesus Christ”. -John Stott

SERIES INTRODUCTION

First Peter is a letter written to encourage a slandered and marginalized minority living in the midst of the Roman Empire. They live in a world but are not of the world. They dwell in the cities, but as sojourners. They look, speak, and dress like everyone, but they pass their days on earth as exiles waiting for their inheritance. Peter will assist us by affirming our Christian Identity, guiding us in our relationships within and without the Christian community, with Jesus as our model. We are reminded that we can endure the present by zealously looking forward to our glorious inheritance Jesus has already secured for us.

Peter seeks to encourage believers in Asia Minor in the midst of suffering to stand firm as they consider the blessings of being in Christ, who is the primary example of one who suffered well and now has received glory and honor. If they also continue in their good conduct, become the true household of God, and don't revert to their old idolatrous practices, they too will receive the crown of life. They need to have hope as exiles (1:3-2:10), live faithfully as exiles in the world (2:11-4:11), and stand firm until the end (4:12-5:11). Their ultimate enemy, that roaring lion, stands ready to devour them, but they have the conquering, suffering Shepherd at their side. In Christ, ethnic distinctions are a matter of the past. In Christ, God has created a new humanity and a new ethnic group called Christians. Their spiritual identity takes precedence over their ethnic identity.

Pastor Aaron Williams, UPC

A NOTE FROM THE STUDY GUIDE TEAM

This guide is testimony to the benefits of the Kindred community as we were privileged to craft it with a team composed of members from each of the partner churches who worked together on last year's team for the first time. Last year we were still learning one another's voices as we did our work. We shared a common foundation in Jesus Christ and a common desire to produce a guide that expressed our unique voices but our relationships with one another were forming along the way. This year, we began our work knowing that we could trust, rely upon and be honest with one another. We are grateful to have been provided notes and reflections on each of the texts prepared by the Kindred pastors listed below. We hope your group discussions of the questions we settled upon each week will draw you closer to Jesus and closer to one another just as crafting them has drawn us closer together as a micro-community in the kingdom of King Jesus.

Our Team

Angelique Collins, DIF
Jim and Kristie Garras, UPC
Xiang (Sean) Liu, ECC

Kindred Pastors Providing Notes

Pastor Alex Cui, ECC, week 1
Rev. Mary Bogan, DIF, week 2
Pastor George Hinman, UPC, week 3
Pastor Solomon Liu, ECC, week 4
Rev. Mary Diggs-Hobson, DIF, week 5
Pastor Aaron Williams, UPC, week 6

SERMON REFLECTIONS EACH WEEK

Note: Unlike the past few years where all the Kindred congregations heard the same sermon – this year each congregation will hear a sermon based on the same text and theme but preached by different pastors. We recommend that groups take some time each week to share what each member heard in the sermon they heard preached. In doing so, the richness of this variety will be a blessing to the entire group. It is left to the facilitator to determine whether it is wiser to have this discussion before or after considering the week-specific questions in the study guide.

1. What was your main take-away from the sermon you heard on Sunday?

2. What new ideas did you hear in the sermon you heard on Sunday?

3. Did you feel called to take specific action as a response to the sermon you heard and, if so, how have you acted upon that call?

For Further Reading

Rodney Clapp, *A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*

Rodney Clapp, *New Creation: A Primer on Living in the Time Between the Times*

James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of the Earliest Christianity*

Dennis R. Edwards, *1 Peter, The Story of God Bible Commentary*

Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter, Tyndale New Testament Commentary*

Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination, Theology and The Origins of Race*

Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *The Letter from the Birmingham Jail*

I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter, IVP New Testament Commentary*

G. Campbell Morgan, *Handbook for Bible Teacher and Preachers*

Helen Pocock, *More Precious than Gold, An Easy English Commentary on the first letter of Peter*

Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*

John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

SMALL GROUP AGREEMENT

We commit as a Small Group to follow these five practices as we grow together:

- Study the Word: We are transformed as we reflect and respond to the scriptures together. God's Word prunes us and shapes us into people who will bear fruit.
- Worship the Lord: Worship is our grateful response to God's relationship with us. In small groups, we can worship by sharing how God is working in our lives, praying together, even responding to God together.
- Care for Each Other: By caring we can be a healing agent of the Lord. Listen with love. Pray for each other.
- Love Our Neighbors: "...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25:35. God invites us into His work by considering how we serve and love people beyond our group.
- Relate As Friends: Celebrate life together—cheer each other on in our spiritual growth and life milestones.

Meetings: day of week _____ from _____ am/pm to _____ am/pm

We agree to help create a welcoming, safe atmosphere for fellowship by....

- Maintaining confidentiality
- Listening well to one another, giving each person equal time to speak and be heard.
- Affirming each other and not correcting someone's comments.
- Speaking respectfully of others.
- Providing advice or accountability only if invited to do so, and then gently.

Name: _____ Date: _____



WEEK 1

The Benefits of a Living Hope 1 Peter 1:1-12

“...you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith... may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:6-7 NRSV

INTRODUCTION

Peter addresses his letter to a dispersed, exiled suffering people – Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered through the Roman provinces of Asia Minor. Peter begins by calling this oppressed and fragmented people to an identity given not by the ruthless, dominant empire of Rome but by Almighty God. This identity is rooted in God’s only Son who took on human flesh and willingly and knowingly chose a path of suffering and death to guarantee this hard-pressed people an indestructible inheritance. And Peter challenges believers to find joy and hope even as they suffer because for them awaits an even greater reward reserved by God for those who persevere.

PRAYER

Father God as we begin our Kindred study together open our hearts to your Holy Spirit and to one another. Grant us ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to understand what you have for us. Amen.

READ 1 Peter 1:1-12

DISCUSS

1. How do the letter recipients’ identities and their situation relate to us today?
2. How does knowing that you are chosen affect how you view yourself as a Christian?
3. What did Apostle Peter point out to his readers about the hope believers have in present suffering and hope for the future?
4. What distinguishes the benefits that God offers from the things the world offers?
5. How can you carry out your mission right where you are at this moment? Think of a ‘do now’.
What can you do today?

PRAYER

Jesus thank you for the gift of the hope we share in you. As we face the ups and downs of the week ahead, remind us of your presence with us in our daily lives and the hope we have in being yours forever. Amen.

WEEK 2

A Mentally Tough Holiness

1 Peter 1:13-21

“...as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” | Peter 1:14-15 NRSV

INTRODUCTION

Are we really peculiar people or simply precious people who are sympathetic towards those who suffer? Have we succumbed to the patterns of this world to avoid or minimize personal suffering? Do we have a tough-minded holiness or mission-minded hollowness? Have we let ourselves off the hook through a lens of justified suffering? The pursuit of justice demands that we walk in the shadows of death. Are you willing to have “troubles in this world”?

Peter both comforts, confronts, and challenges the heart, mind, and soul of a peculiar people to remain hopeful and stand firm. Peter is, in essence, saying: “Jesus paid the cost for an eternal priceless relationship with you.” Jesus is The Why of your Why and How of your How! Your peculiarity is to be costly for the priceless relationship with Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we bow our hearts and minds before you now in grateful thanksgiving for the price you paid for us. Guide us to a better understanding of how we might live our lives as grateful servants of you, our King and Lord. Amen.

READ | Peter 1:13-21

DISCUSS

1. What mindset does Peter want his readers to have? What does he invite us to think about?
2. To be holy can be defined as being set apart for God. How are you separate from the world and its goals?
3. Who have been peculiar people (exhibiting costly faith) in your life?
4. How can we, the Kindred churches, pursue justice and righteousness with our minds set on God alone?

PRAYER

Father God grant us the courage to keep our eyes fixed on you as we work toward your kingdom values of justice and righteousness today and in the days ahead. Amen.

WEEK 3

A Peculiar People

1 Peter 2:1-10

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9 KJV

INTRODUCTION

Across the many provinces of Asia Minor and from many ethnicities and cultures, God has called into existence a new society, a new race, a new ethnicity – not bound by bloodlines but diverse in every way except the singular claim of God on their lives in Jesus Christ. To come to Jesus is to come to a new (peculiar) identity, a new (peculiar) society, and a new (peculiar) purpose. We are joined to a new society as living stones are set in place beside the one great living stone, Jesus. The image is of a temple where God dwells and acts graciously to reconcile people to himself and one another. But Peter uses the word for ‘household’ instead of ‘temple’ because he’s thinking of a new family. God dwells in a new multi-ethnic, multi-cultural family – we are kindred.

PRAYER

Father thank you that as we listen and share with one another your unseen hand is building and shaping us as living stones into a living temple in which you live. May we be a people who glorify you in the way we love and care for one another. Amen.

READ 1 Peter 2:1-10

DISCUSS

1. What new identity is given to us, the peculiar people, called by God from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, and what is the profound meaning of this new identity?
2. What does God call us, the peculiar people, to do?
3. How do you find the strength to go against the current popular culture? How does our culture as Christians strengthen us?
4. How have you tasted the kindness of the Lord and how is your life changed by it?

PRAYER

Father God help us proudly carry this peculiar but glorious identity you’ve given us for all the world to see in the days ahead. Amen.

WEEK 4

Breaking the Cycle of Ungrace 1 Peter 2:11-17

“For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish.” 1 Peter 2:13-15 NRSV

INTRODUCTION

In this passage, the Apostle Peter beseeches believers to submit. Submission is a difficult concept for us to grasp, it’s counter-cultural in our society. Submission, relinquishing our rights to another person or institution, makes very little sense to our human nature, especially when we do not like them and disagree with them. Peter used to be a Zealot, and as a Zealot his purpose was to overthrow the governing authorities at his time, to disobey and rebel against the Roman Government. This rebelliousness is still present in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Peter drew His sword and chopped off one of the soldiers’ ears. However, Peter is now calling believers to submit. How was Peter able to do this? How are we supposed to submit? Because of Christ.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus give us the humility to be shaped, molded and redirected to be the people you desire us to be. Teach us how to submit in a way that identifies us clearly as your peculiar people. Amen.

READ | 1 Peter 2:11-17

DISCUSS

1. Submission is a rather difficult topic, why is it so counter cultural?
2. Identify a few different reasons Peter gives for submitting to human authority in this passage?
Which biblical reason is most encouraging to you when it comes to submission?
3. How does knowing our identity in Christ help us to submit to earthly authorities?
4. The Roman Government, the authority to whom Peter refers in this letter, was corrupt and unjust. How do you reconcile that with Paul’s statement in Romans 13:1 that there is no human authority except that which God has established?
5. How does our submission to authority connect to our witness for Christ?

PRAYER

Lord, continue to teach us to submit to authority in a way that honors and glorifies you and marks us indelibly as yours. Amen.

WEEK 5

The Hope That Is in You 1 Peter 3:8-17

“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.” 1 Peter 3:15-16 NRSV

INTRODUCTION

In this passage, we experience growing pains of the early Christians not only as they had to endure suffering and persecution at the hands of the Roman government and other adversaries, but also as they had to learn how to live together as one community that held true to their faith in Jesus amongst unbelievers.

Suffering for doing good and persecution for the cause of righteousness called for the early Christians to live based on the faith that they had in the hope that could only come through Jesus and not religious practices and rituals. While today's church looks very different from the first century church, God's Word never changes. Neither does our call as Christians to live out the hope that is in our hearts to continue doing good and what is right towards others.

PRAYER

Lord we long to become the people you call us to be. Unite us as we seek you through your Holy Word together. Amen.

READ 1 Peter 3:8-17

DISCUSS

1. What character qualities and behaviors does Peter recommend?
2. In verse 13 Peter asks, “who is going to harm you if you seek to do good?” How do you answer this question?
3. What role does having a clear conscience play in the credibility of how we treat one another as the world watches?
4. How would you respond to someone asking you to defend the hope that is in you as Peter suggests in verse 15?

PRAYER

God we are thankful for the indestructible hope you have so graciously given us through Jesus. Help us be ready to share that hope with those who so desperately need it. Amen.

WEEK 6

Standing in True Grace

1 Peter 5:7-12

“...after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.” 1 Peter 5:10 NRSV

INTRODUCTION

Peter brings his letter to a close on an emphatic note of Grace. He has grace running through his veins, but he didn't get there overnight. He had to learn some hard lessons over the years. He brings this letter in chapter five to a graceful crescendo, addressing the leaders and the entire congregation. Elders need to minister to their flock through this trying time that they find themselves in. Good shepherds don't lead from behind, but they must get ahead of the flock to care and tend to them. They are to shepherd them in the right spirit and with pure motives.

What is true grace? What does it look like? How does one stand in true grace? Why is Peter putting so much emphasis on grace when he's addressing a group of Christians who are going through a season of suffering? What is it that separates true grace from false grace? How do we live a grace shaped life?

PRAYER

Lord, help us better understand your grace so that we can be a people living in true grace. Amen.

READ | 1 Peter 5:7-12

DISCUSS

1. 1 Peter 5:6 says that we must “humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God”. What does true humility look like? What is the difference between self-importance and confidence in God? How does a person humble themselves?
2. In 1 Peter 5, we are called to be like God - we are representatives of the Kingdom of God to the world. God is the author of our own stories, but we are also a part of God's story and His plan for His people. How can you ensure that your life aligns with God's plans and His will?
3. As a marginalized people, Peter sought to energize and reinvigorate God's people by reminding them that their experiences served a purpose. How does this knowledge help you in your current situation? How does it help us to 'stand firm' in God's grace and what does this mean for you?
4. What will you remember from this season of study with your Kindred group?

PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for these brothers and sisters we have been privileged to journey with in this season of Kindred. May the bonds you've formed continue to grow as we become your peculiar, hopeful, gracious, Kindred people.

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