

1 Peter 1:1-2 – Elect According to the Foreknowledge of God

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We are starting a brand new book study today, which is always kind of exciting, I always kind of like getting into a brand new book. We are in 1 Peter today, so open your Bibles, please, to 1 Peter as we are going to make our way through this book. I have to tell you, I've been looking forward to teaching through the letters of Peter probably because it's so easy to relate to this man.

And by that I mean relating to his mistakes and blunders that are all recorded for us for posterity in the gospel accounts. Isn't that lovely? How would you like to have made all those mistakes that Peter did and then have them recorded for all time? Yours are probably relatively unknown, but Peter's not so much.

That is kind of what makes him a lovable character, and that's what I think makes him kind of relatable. He often did and said the wrong thing. And then other times, what came out of his mouth was positively inspired and sometimes he would say things, it's like, "Peter, wow! (high tone)"

And then it's like, "Peter, wow. (low tone)" But I think the other reason that we all love Peter so much is because we see in his life that God doesn't call us because we have our act together, or God doesn't love us because we've got all of life dialed in and working perfectly. We see in his life that God calls us to a relationship with Him because He loves us and because He chooses us. And that is really such an important kind of thing to remember. Do you recall how Peter himself was called? You remember, Peter was a fisherman, and you know that has a lot of implications along with it, but his calling is recorded for us in Luke's gospel.

Let me put it up on the screen. It says:

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Luke 5:1-11 (ESV)

"On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and (they) were washing their nets

(so they're probably sitting on the shore there). *Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."* (Moving on, it says,) *And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!" But at your word I will let down the nets."* And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink (And I like this part, it says,) *But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they'd taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, *"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."* And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."

What an incredible sort of a situation you know. I appreciate and relate to Peter's response to seeing the power of the Lord manifested in such an incredible way, just to drop to his knees and say, "Lord, I don't deserve to be with You. I don't deserve to be around You."

Some interesting facts about Peter that you may or may not know; his name is mentioned in the gospels more than anyone except Jesus, second to Jesus. Isn't that amazing? Interestingly enough, no one speaks in the gospels as often as Peter and Jesus spoke more to Peter than to any other person. Interestingly enough too.

He was a man of very deep conviction. He was a man of very robust faith at times. But we see in the gospel accounts that sometimes his passions got the best of him. But, of course, that is what creates in the life of Peter, so many amazing examples for us, of just life, what to do and what not to do.

You'll remember it was Peter who asked to meet Jesus walking on the water to come to Him, walking on the waves. You'll remember it was also Peter who started to sink when he got his eyes off Jesus and onto the wind and the waves. That will preach, let me tell you. There's a lot of lessons right there.

But you will remember it was Peter who correctly acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, when all the other disciples were silent on that question. When Jesus was saying some rather hard things to the people, and the crowds began to leave because of it, Jesus asked the disciples if they were

going to be leaving too. It was Peter who spoke up and said, “Lord, where are we going to go? Only you have the words of eternal life.”

It was Peter who rebuked Jesus for even mentioning the fact that when He went to Jerusalem, He would be arrested and crucified. It was Peter who boasted at the last supper that he was ready to die with Jesus that very night and, as Jesus was being arrested, you will remember it was Peter who took a sword and started swinging it, cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest, and then later denied even knowing Jesus when questioned by a servant girl. It was Peter who ran to the tomb along with John when they heard that the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. It was Peter who dove into the water and swam to shore when, after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples while they were fishing. And it was Peter who was arrested by Herod and, the night before his intended execution, was released from jail by an angel, and the adventure goes on and on.

Peter, what a great guy. I'm looking forward to meeting him. I'm pretty sure there's going to be a line though of people waiting to talk to Peter. Do you wait in heaven? Do you wait for anything in heaven? I've always had a hard time figuring that one out.

I mean you know, but anyway, as we get into this letter that we call 1 Peter, we're going to discover that the people that Peter was writing to were going through a lot of intense persecutions and, because of that, they were pretty confused and discouraged. And that is why Peter was writing this letter, and he's going to explain throughout the course of this letter how believers ought to respond during times of persecution, during times of difficulty, when we are suffering for our faith.

And he's going to remind us in this letter that suffering is something that we should expect, we should never look at it and think that it's weird, or out of place somehow. So, his primary message throughout this letter is going to be very simple, and it might even sound kind of trite, but his message is just trust the Lord and obey Him every day in the little things, regardless of what's happening in your life.

It was a very simple message that Peter wrote this letter to give to the people, but an important one nonetheless. Now, we're going to read here just the first couple of verses of this letter, and then we'll pray and ask the Lord to speak to us from those.

Verse one of chapter one, it says, *“¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”* (ESV)

Let's pray, Father, as we dig into these just two verses this morning from 1 Peter, we really pray that you'd help us to understand what they say, and we come to you, Lord, with a complete and total reliance on You. Lord, we desire to hear from You today, but we understand that apart from Your Spirit imparting clarity, that these things remain closed to the natural mind, and so we pray, Father, that You would speak to each and every person through Your Spirit and enlarge our understanding and open our hearts to hear Your voice. For we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our savior. Amen. Amen.

So, Peter begins with his own introduction here, simply saying, *“¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* And we know Peter was an apostle, but I want to remind you again that he was a fisherman by trade. And what that means is that he probably had very little of any kind of formal education, at least whatever was offered by his father, who was also a simple fisherman that he needed to pass along to his son for his son to be a fisherman. And that probably wasn't a huge amount of education and yet Jesus chose him to be one of his closest followers and ultimately an apostle.

Remember, the word apostle means “one sent out.” So people ask me quite often, do we still have apostles today? I mean, if we're going to use the literal translation or meaning of the word apostle, then that would, that applies really, to kind of to missionaries, they're sent out to take the gospel, and that's what an apostle would do. Now, there's something unique about the apostles of the Lamb, Peter and the others who walked with Jesus, who wrote scripture. We don't believe that if somebody carries the name apostle today, that they have the ability to write things down that are revelatory. In other words, that would add to the revelation of God's word. We believe that the Bible is a closed book from the standpoint that it's no longer being added to. It is the means by which we judge what someone is saying, in fact. And if Revelation is an open book then, suddenly, our ruler, our ability to determine what is true based on the Word, goes out the window.

Because somebody could say,

“Well, I've got a new word. I've got a new word from the Lord, it's never been given before.”

“Well, there's no way to test that, you see.”

And the Bible tells us to test everything, and you can't do that if you throw the ruler out and the Bible is our ruler. And so, in that sense, there would not be modern day apostles from that specific perspective.

But I want to focus just a minute on the fact that Peter was a man chosen by God. Jesus chose him to be a follower and then to be a pillar in the church. This uneducated fisherman who had a lot of rough edges and a lot of issues, I mean, he had the gall to rebuke Jesus. You know, that's a weird one. And God called him.

And sometimes we look at these people and we think, “Well, they were something really special.” Let me remind you of something that Paul wrote to the Corinthians. I'll put it up on the screen. 1 Corinthians chapter one, he said:

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1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (ESV)

“...consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise (at least) according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world (in order) to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”

I love that passage because that reminds me that even, you know, a dope head like me, can be called by God. And remember, when you think about your calling, just think, well, why did God call you? Why did God call you? I'll tell you why, so nobody could boast. That's why he called me, because there's nothing to boast about in me. It is only through Him.

And those descriptions that Paul gave there in that passage are certainly true of Peter. He wasn't a wise man by worldly standards, he wasn't powerful, he wasn't of noble birth, just like you and me. But God called him nonetheless. And then when we get to the end of verse one, Peter lists the recipients of the letter and he basically gives it by their region. He says: *“To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion”*. And then he mentions where these people were living and where this letter was specifically going; *“Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”* These were all Roman provinces, they make up what is largely modern Turkey today, and let me put it up on the screen as a map.

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Map of Roman provinces.

Up in the upper right hand corner is that area, essentially where these people were living when Peter was writing this letter. That map perhaps will help you to kind of fix, get a fix on their location, relatives to some others. Makes up the northern portion of Asia Minor which, as I said, is mostly modern day Turkey today.

But, I want you to notice also how Peter describes these people to whom he's writing. He uses two interesting words here in the ESV; "*elect exiles*". Did you catch that? He says, you guys who are elect exiles. Well, we know what "exiles" means, especially you've been hearing a lot in the news. I know about the invasion of Russia into Ukraine and there's people who are being exiled. We call them refugees, of course, but an exile is someone who's literally forcibly made to leave their homeland, and that's the word that Peter uses here to describe these people. He says: "*exiles of the dispersion*" and that means people who've been dispersed. It's fairly easy to understand.

It's this next word that I think we need to deal with, and that is that they are "*elect exiles*." If you have a New King James Bible (NKJV) that you read from, you've got the exact same word; it uses the word "*elect*." However, if you have a New American Standard Bible (NASB) or an NIV (New International Version) on your lap, your Bible says "*chosen*," and that's a good translation too, because that's essentially what elect means definition-wise, it means they who are chosen.

And it speaks of all of us who are in Christ and have been chosen by God to be children of God. And this is the message of what we call election, from the word elect or, if you will, predestination.

But I want you to notice what this election is based upon, it's in verse 2. So, if you look with me in your Bible, here's where he says you are. He's writing to these elect exiles, and we are elect as well, but notice what it is based on: "*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*." And, this is such an important statement for us to understand election, for us to understand this idea of predestination.

Peter explains that the reason you were chosen beforehand, and you were chosen beforehand, is because God knew beforehand that you would come to Him. In fact, you guys know God doesn't have to wait for anything. Wouldn't that be nice? God doesn't have to wait for anything, any piece of information, anything to happen. God is not waiting in heaven. God is outside of time. That's a weird thing for us to wrap our minds around because we're prisoners of time, but He is not. He created time and God is not a prisoner of anything He created, God is not a prisoner of anything. And so, being outside of time and not limited by the passage of time, He knows all things and doesn't have to wait for anything as far as to know it.

And so, did God always know that you had come to Christ in faith? Of course He did. And so, according to that foreknowledge, you are elected. You got it? According to His foreknowledge. I like to think of election or predestination as seeing our salvation from God's perspective. We don't get to see things from God's perspective unless we're shown that kind of a perspective, right?

Everything's from my perspective, everything. So, and I know what it's like from my perspective. I remember when I was like 15 years old, I remember hearing the gospel. I'd gone to church all my life and really never heard the gospel, but I was like 15 years old, and we've been invited to this evening thing at this nearby town. And there was, it was sometime in the early 1970s, and there was this band that was playing kind of Christian music and it was all kind of new to me and they stopped playing the music during this concert and one guy got up and just started talking.

And, he started, and I remember this just like it was yesterday, he started talking about the things Jesus said while He was on the cross. He started talking about the statements Jesus made while He was on the cross. And, he got to that statement, "My God, why have you forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34) And I remember hearing that for the first time at age 15 and thinking it was like (mind explosion gesture), it was a mind blowing sort of an experience for me because I understood for the very first time that His forsaken condition on the cross was for me and it blew my mind.

And I remember that very weekend in the quiet of my own bedroom, I was sitting on the floor and I remember just looking up and saying, "I accept. I receive." See, that's salvation from my perspective. It took me about 10 years to learn how to walk with the Lord, but that's another story altogether. But that's salvation from Paul's perspective. I remember how old I was. I remember where I was at the time. I remember hearing the gospel.

But every once in a while, God allows you and me to see our salvation from a different perspective. And that's what he's doing here. He's lifting us up out of our own situation, out of your own personal experience and saying, “here's how I see you; this is how I see you. I see you as Mine from the foundations of the world because, you see, I don't have to wait for anything. I didn't have to wait, Paul, for you to turn 15 and go to that Christian concert, and hear the..., I didn't have to wait for that. You had to wait for that. I didn't have to wait for that. And I always knew, and due to My foreknowledge of that event, you were elected, you were set apart, you were predestined.” Please understand, predestined doesn't mean fixed. Okay? It just means “I knew” and “I elected you before the foundations of the earth.”

And that's what it means to be chosen. It means that our names were written in the Lamb's book of life before we were even around. He knew you, He knew your name, and He wrote it down before you even came onto the scene. Do you know, it's interesting, you know where we get this idea of this whole thing about our name being written in the Lamb's book of life?

It's in the book of Revelation, but it's related to a negative kind of a statement that is made there. Let me show it to you from Revelation 13, it says:

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Revelation 13:8 (ESV)

⁸and all who dwell on (the) Earth will worship it. (And that's, that is the beast or the antichrist), everyone whose name has NOT been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slain.

So, it's interesting, isn't it, that it's a negative statement being made about those who are going to worship the antichrist during the great tribulation. But it reminds us that those people who will do that, their names were never written in the Book of life from the foundation..., like yours, like your name was.

Isn't that fascinating? It's pretty crazy. But here's an interesting thing to keep in mind, like I said, while the Bible says we are chosen, it also says that we must choose Him. So, you have to understand it from both perspectives. I want you to check out John chapter 1, verse 12, where it says:

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John 1:12

...too all who did receive him, (that's what you do, you receive him to those) who believed in his name (that's what you do), he gave the right to become children of God.

And, in this particular passage, you'll notice there's nothing about Him choosing us because that's not the perspective that's being shown here. That's being shown in the other passages, the talk about the fact that we are elect and predestined. That's what He's, that's the point they're trying to make in those other passages. In this passage, it's salvation from your perspective.

You have to receive Him. You have to believe in His Name, and then He gives you the right to become children of God. Notice “then” that's a time word “then”. But God doesn't wait for “then”, He doesn't have to wait for “then”, He doesn't have to wait for anything. And so, your name was written down before “then” even happened. I hope that makes sense because it's a very, it can be a very challenging thing to understand. I mean, people have tried to wrap their mind around this for many years, this whole idea that we've been chosen by God and yet we have to choose Him.

And I need to tell you, if you haven't heard this already, there are a lot of Christians who say that it is an impossibility. They will say, “You know what? It's not possible for God to choose you, and that's why you're saved and yet you chose God and that's why you're saved.” That's impossible. Those are mutually exclusive things. They'll say they're contradictions and they'll just tell you right to your face. You're either chosen by God or you chose God one of the, one of the two. And then, of course, they'll recite all of the verses that back up what they believe and they'll ignore the others. And that happens a lot.

And, because people see these as incompatible ideas, they've created these two camps. So people who don't like the idea of thinking of both of them as a possibility, can join these camps and they can express their respective beliefs. And, as you can well imagine, one camp focuses exclusively on the issue of sovereignty and election and predestination and God's choice. And that's that camp right over there. And then, the other camp on the other side focuses on man's free will and they focus on all the passages related to free will. And what they're doing is there, one of them is focusing on salvation from God's perspective, and the other one is focusing on salvation from man's perspective, and each one denies that the other exists.

And it's the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen because it is a thing that people get caught up in this debate of which one is true. And, because they maybe are

only hearing one side without really having studied through the whole counsel of God's word, they feel like they got to join a camp, got to join a camp. Because somebody will come along when they really haven't heard, read the whole Bible and they'll say, "Well, you know, don't you? That God chose you and you really didn't have anything to say about it. It was all His choice. You couldn't have, you couldn't have said no even if you tried. He chose you. It was done, it was done. It was a done deal. You had no choice in the matter." And they're kind of like, and then they'll say, "Let me show you the scriptures." And they'll focus on all the scriptures related to sovereignty and election and stuff. And people are going, "Yeah, you're right."

And so he said, "Are you going to join our camp?"

"I'm in! Give me the membership card. I'll take the tattoo. I'm in."

And then they spend the rest of their lives defending their camp. And anybody who says different, well, they're just deceived. Then it can go the other way too. I get to somebody before they have really thought through and studied through the word of God related to these things, and I get them focusing on the free will of man. It's all about choosing, all about what you do.

"You want to join our camp?"

"Okay. I'm in. And, from here on out, I live to show that the other camp is wrong. That is my goal in life."

And it's really sad. And the reason it's sad is because both of these ideas are revealed in the Bible, and you don't have to join a camp at all. All you got to do is just believe the Bible and what it teaches. It says that you are elect before the foundation of the world and it says, "*to all who received Him*", "*to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.*"

But can I explain to you why people tend to form camps in the first place? I'm talking about the ones who form the camps. It's because they just simply can't comprehend how both ideas could even be possible. That's why.

I've had people even say to me, "There's no way I could possibly comprehend the idea of having been chosen by God and also having chosen God myself."

And my response is, "Are you going to let that stop you from believing what the Bible says just because you can't understand it? Seriously, are you literally going to place the revelation of God's Word below your own human intellect?"

In other words, are you going to judge what God's Word says based on whether or not you can unpack it or understand it?"

If I'm going to start rejecting ideas simply because my pea size brain can't make sense of it, I'm going to end up with a pretty small Bible because, I got news for you, I've taught through this whole thing, and there's a boatload of stuff I can't figure out, I cannot comprehend.

You've heard me say this many times, "This passage shows the Trinity." You saw that didn't you? In those first verses, where He says that we have been elected "*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ (the Son)*". You saw that, right? The trinity is right there.

"Explain to me the Trinity. Pastor Paul can you explain the Trinity?"

No, I can't. I can't tell you. I can't explain the nature of God. Don't even ask me to attempt to do that because if I could, you have to understand that means my brain is equal to the nature of God. Do you understand?

If I can explain certain aspects, it means that I am equal to those aspects, or at least my intellect is. And the fact that I can't explain how God can be one God in three persons means that He is greater than my intellect, and I am quite satisfied with that conclusion. In fact, I'm satisfied with several conclusions that I've had to make related to the Word of God, and simply say, "That's what the Bible says, and I accept it." Because that's what the Bible says.

"Well, why do you believe it?"

Because that's what the Bible says. That's what God revealed. I can't explain eternity to you, I can't explain that. It's never endingness. No, but that's not an explanation. That's a description. What, how can you explain eternity? No, you can't because we've never experienced anything like it.

So, when somebody comes up to me and says, "What I can't understand, I don't believe." Isn't that basically kind of just like the atheist, I mean, or the agnostic?

When it comes to God, you better leave room for some mystery because there's plenty to go around, believe me. Now, don't get me wrong, there's plenty that we know for sure, there is plenty in the Word of God. God has made sure that everything we need to know for sure we can know for sure.

We can know the way to be saved. We can know exactly how that works. He's given us a lot of great detail related to the coming days and the end of days, there's a lot we can know. But that doesn't negate the parts that we can't. I want you to read again, verse 2 with me, please. Because he says here, "²*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ, and for the sprinkling (by or with His) blood.*"

I want to just talk about these as we kind of close here. First of all, he speaks of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us. And sanctification is an interesting word because it really refers to two things at the same time. Sanctification means being set apart and it means being made holy. And it can mean both.

When you came to Jesus Christ, when you came to know Him as your Savior, the Holy Spirit sanctified you it set you apart as a child of God. And that means you're different, you're different from other people in the world. You're a child of God. You're made a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ and his finished work on the cross. Okay? Sanctified, set apart. Set apart for His special use. Okay? But there is also a process of sanctification that happens all our natural lives. I've been corresponding with this one gal who is kind of struggling with her faith and she's like, "Pastor Paul, I want to just grow up in the Lord today. I want it to be done. I want all this work that Jesus wants to do in me to be done today."

And I'm like, "I'm sorry. That's not the way it works." We will, as we walk with the Lord in this life until the end of our days, we will be in the process of sanctification. And that means He's just going to continue to work with you, convict you, speak to you, guide you, direct you, rebuke you at times, warn you, strengthen you, and bring you along as He is forming you into the image of Jesus Christ. And that's probably a good way to describe progressive sanctification; you are being formed into the image of Christ.

"Hoo!" (head spinning movement) It's a mindblower. And that's progressive, but then there's that positional sanction that you don't, that never changes. You came, when you came to Jesus you are set apart and you will be set apart always. But that happens through the Spirit, right? And the next thing he tells us is, why have we been set apart, "*for obedience to Jesus Christ.*" There it is right there. You've been set apart for obedience, to live your life for Him, to obey Him.

From time to time, Jesus would use the word "commandments" when He talked about obedience, and there's a lot of Christians today that really get caught up on that word "commandments" because they can't divorce it from the idea of

having to live by the Ten Commandments in order to be saved. And so, when they hear Jesus say things like, “*Obey my commandments*” (Matthew 19:17) they just, phoo! (finger spinning moving up movement)

You got to remember that the whole idea of commandments has taken on a completely different relationship to us after we come to Jesus Christ. This is so important, to understand obedience. Because so many people as Christians are looking for rules. “Just tell me the rules. Give me the rules. I want to know what the rules are for Christian, to be a Christian.” And they're thinking of their Christian life from an Old Testament perspective. “Give me the, if it's 10, 20, a hundred commandments, give them to me and I'll do my best.”

No, you see, that's not the way it works. Way back in the book of Jeremiah, when God was speaking through Jeremiah about the new covenant that is to come. And you guys know we're under a new covenant, we're not under the Mosaic covenant, we're under a new covenant. And God prophesied about the coming of that new covenant. And He said in Jeremiah 31:31, easy way to remember that, “(There is coming a new covenant. I'm going to, the day is coming) *when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with Judah.*” And He said some things about that covenant, He said, it's not going to be like the old covenant because, you know why? Because they broke My covenant, the old covenant. They broke it. And so, the new covenant isn't going to be like the old one. (Jeremiah 31:33)

And then He began to talk about the characteristics of the new covenant. He says, “This is the covenant I will make with them. After that time, I will put My law on their hearts. *I will write it on their hearts.*” (Jeremiah 31:33)

That's the dynamic of obedience as a Christian. We're not looking at laws, we're not looking at things written in stone. The law giver has literally become our very heart. He has moved in, so to speak, taken up residence in the side, the believer, and now He speaks personally to you. So, what is obedience? What are keeping the commandments of Jesus? Living the life of the Spirit, following the Spirit, being led by the Spirit.

Paul even goes on to explain, “he who's led by the spirit is not under the law.” (Galatians 5:18) When you're led by the spirit, you're not under the demands of an external, engraved in stone law because it's personal now. It's not “Thou shall not” or “thou shall”, it's “Paul, let me talk to you here, about my righteousness living through you today and the way you spoke to that person, or the way you dealt with that person, or the way you talked to your wife, or the way you raised your children. Paul, I want to talk to you personally.” It's personal.

It's personal. Obedience is very personal. A lot of Christians have a hard time wrapping their mind around that because they're looking for laws that are set in stone and, when God speaks to them about something in their life, they think that refers to everybody. In other words, "If God told me to do X, then everybody better do X. That's all I got to say." And they forget that the law has now become personal through a relationship, a personal relationship with Jesus, whereby the Holy Spirit is speaking to me about obedience. And He's speaking to you about personal obedience and that level of personal obedience might be different for the person sitting next to you. Not that there's changes in morality, but there are changes in the different ways that God speaks to the human heart.

And that's an important thing to understand. You have been set apart for obedience, but it's a personal obedience. It's not an Old Testament obedience. Boom, boom, boom! (side of hand against palm) It's not the way it works.

We need to follow the Spirit, we need to learn to listen to the Spirit, we need to be led by the Spirit. "Jesus, what do you want me to do here? Here I am sitting on this airplane, I'm next to this stranger. What do You want me to say? How can I glorify You? How can I share a little something that's going to encourage this person's heart or challenge their mind? How can I be obedient today?"

But you know what? I got news for you. That personal obedience thing, you will fall short of perfection when it comes to following the Spirit. You have already, and you know that.

And that's why Peter mentions at the last part of this, "*and for sprinkling with his blood.*"

Now, that phrase is reminiscent of Old Testament and the way the priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice to cleanse and to atone. But it reminds us that when we fall short, there's an ample cleansing that comes our way. You're never going to hear the Holy Spirit perfectly, this side of glory. Hopefully we're improving, we're improving on hearing from God, hopefully. But you know what? You're never going to do it perfectly. And God knows that. And He loves you anyway and He's never going to leave you, even though you're going to make mistakes and you're going to mess up.

And that's why Peter ends here, "*and for sprinkling with his blood.*"

Because there's this need for this ongoing work of forgiveness that we all have. John talked about this, let me show you, last passage. I'll show you 1 John 1:7, he says:

(slide)

1 John 1:7 (ESV)

...if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another (and look at this) and the blood of Jesus, His Son cleanses us from all sin.

And the Greek tense of that word “cleanses” is ongoing. It is perpetual. There is a perpetual cleansing that takes place in our lives. Thank you, Jesus. Right? Oh, man. Because otherwise I'd have gotten saved and then five minutes later I'd have been lost again. You know what I mean? It's like, “Jesus, I accept you. Then I sinned, oh, rats!” No, there's a perpetual cleansing, and I'm so thankful of that.

And so, anyway, that's what we get out of these first 2 verses of Peter's letter. So, let's go ahead and stand together and we're going to close in prayer.

As always, if you need prayer this morning, come on up and we'd love to pray with you. Father God, we open our hearts to you for just the Word that we've heard here today, to hear your voice, to take what we've heard today and really truly lay hold of it, to declare ourselves as children of God chosen from the foundation of the world who have personally received and believed.

Thank you for Your Word today, even those parts that we don't comprehend fully, we know that one day we will know even as we are known. But until that day comes, we're ready to leave room for some mystery because we believe, Lord God, and trust that You have shown us everything we absolutely need to know for sure.

And so, we commit this time to You and the things that we have spoken of from this scripture, and we ask you to just fill our hearts. We thank You for the perpetual cleansing that is ours through Jesus Christ. For it is in that Name that we pray, and all God's people said together, Amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.