



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 1: 1-2

Summer 2024

"Greetings From Babylon"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, we are starting a new series this morning, (I think I announced that last week, but you can see it, obviously, from the bulletin). We're going to be in a series, that will take us through the summer on 1 Peter; a great book, five chapters—but you know, I always say this, "A great book, I love this book." They're all great, and as you get into them they become your favorite book.

This is a wonderful book, the first letter that Peter wrote. And we're going to look at the first two verses this morning, the introduction to the book. A brief introduction, but one that is packed full of theology, truth, and good exhortation, (or at least the implications of it are);

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood;

1 Peter 1:1-2

So if I could summarize that, and this would really summarize the instruction that he gives here, it is 'God has chosen you from all eternity to obey Jesus Christ', (which

means to believe in Jesus Christ and have His blood applied to you—meaning the saving work of Christ is applied to you by the Spirit of God.) And there are great implications of that and encouragement for this group of people—and for all of God's people through the ages.

Peter then closes with a brief prayer,

"May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure." (vs2b)

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the book of 1 Peter, but we thank You for these first two verses of 1 Peter and the great truth that they reveal, and what they state about Your sovereign grace and the implications of that, as we will see. Which means, You're with us; we have been on Your heart for all eternity. You will not abandon Your people, as we pass through a difficult world; You will bring us safely home into our eternal rest.

And so, Father, we pray that You would teach us these things, remind us of things that many of us have heard and taken great encouragement in, many great truths. And may we understand the implications of that, and how it applies to us, and the encouragement that we should have. We have a sovereign God. You are a sovereign God, and You are in control of our lives, and all of the circumstances of life, the difficult ones as well as the pleasant ones. So LORD, we look to You to bless us with an understanding of this text, how it applies to us, and to be encourage by it. May we be encouraged by that.

We thank You for the time we have to study together to consider You and the great truths that are revealed in these two verses; but Father, we also have this privilege as priests. Every one of us is a priest in the church, and we have the responsibility and ability to pray for one another and to intercede as a priest does—and we thank You for that privilege.

Bless us now, LORD, as we continue in this worship. We pray You'd bless the singing of our next hymn, and we pray that You would use it to prepare our hearts for

a time of study and worship together in 1 Peter. We look to You to bless, and pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) The English poet, Alexander Pope, wrote,
"For modes of faith, let senseless bigots fight.
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

That sounds good, but that is an unchristian statement. 'Modes of faith', which is creeds, (doctrines), is important. Yet among many Christians today, there is a divide over what is called the *credenda*, and the *agenda*. The *credenda* are the *doctrines* to be believed. The *agenda* are the *deeds* to be done. And sometimes, in the spirit of the poet, Mr. Pope, we hear statements like, "Doctrine divides, but love unites."

It's a false divide, of course. There is no disjunction, there is no opposition between the two—both are necessary. Love without doctrine becomes sentimentality. Doctrine without love is cold orthodoxy. Creed should always be followed by conduct.

We see that implied or emphasized all through the Bible; and there's no better example of the two joined together than the book of 1 Peter. It's been described as, 'very simple in outline, and very practical in content.' Dr. Edwin Blum, in his commentary on 1 Peter, wrote that it has, what he called, "a distinctive pastoral tone"; so it has a lot of *agenda*.

One of the book's major subjects, or concerns, is 'steadfastness in time of suffering.' And the apostle gives inspired advice to help the weary to persevere. But for all of its good, practical content and pastoral counsel, it also covers the *credenda*—the creed, or doctrine, that gives the basis and the very motivation for our conduct.

So *theology* is emphasized throughout this book. One of the key words of 1 Peter is "God". It occurs 39 times in 5 chapters. Nothing is more theological than that. Peter gives clear, straightforward teaching on the person and work of Christ: On His

atonement, His sacrifice on the cross, and how the lost are saved by God's mercy alone. God's sovereignty permeates the book.

The devil is in the world, and Peter will talk about that, (he mentions that later, (5:8), that he walks about “like a roaring lion”), so this is a dangerous place in which we live—but this is the LORD's world. The devil may be, “the prince of this world”, (Jn16:11), he may be ‘the god’ of this world in the sense that that's who men worship, but nevertheless, this is God's world and He rules—and He strengthens us daily for the fight and the conflict that we must face. He's sovereign.

In fact, the first two verses of the book are highly theological because they deal with the subjects of divine election and the Trinity—the one God who exists in three Persons. But the purpose is practical, to remind the readers who they are; they are, ‘strangers in the world, but saved by God.’ Each member of the Trinity has His part in our salvation. So, they have the assurance by that very fact, that God, and the three Persons of the Godhead, are involved in their salvation and their triumph in their salvation. They have the assurance that that God is with them always.

Well, that's our text: It's the greeting of the book; it is short and more than a formality—and it tells us a lot about the book of 1 Peter. It was written in the typical style of ancient letters which, unlike our letters that end with our signature, their letters began with the author's name, which is quite logical. It makes good sense for you know from the beginning who wrote this letter. As the title of the book indicates, the letter was written by Peter, who identified himself as the Peter that we know from the Gospels, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” (vs1).

Now, I mentioned that, ‘we know him from the Gospels’, but there are modern scholars who question that Peter was the author of this book, suggesting that the book is too eloquent and sophisticated for a simple fisherman to have written. It's also argued that this book fits into a later historical situation—more like the latter part of the first century, or the early part of the second century, with the persecutions of the emperors

Domitian at the end of the first century, (AD 81-96), or Trajan at the beginning of the second century, (AD 98-117), both ruling, well after Peter's death.

One of the regions that the book is addressed to, (or written to), is Bithynia, where there was persecution during the reign of Trajan. But that's no proof that the suffering mentioned in 1 Peter referred to that specific event. Almost from the beginning, persecutions threatened the church wherever it was.

The Book of Acts demonstrates that, from the arrest of Peter and John in chapters 3 and 4, to the deadly persecutions of the church by Saul of Tarsus. In fact Saul, (Paul), testified to that in Acts chapter 26, verse 11, (he actually testified more than once in the Book of Acts), but there he stated, " 'As I punished them...' (meaning the Christians), "...often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme. And being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.' " (Damascus being one.) And he arrested many of them—he killed many of them, and had that on his mind, I'm sure, all of his life.

There were always periods of persecution—so that Christians never felt very safe wherever they were. In fact, the historical context of the book fits very well within Peter's life and the reign of Nero, who caused the first official persecution of the church by the Roman empire.

As for the book being, "too eloquent for a simple fisherman to have written", there is no reason to think Peter didn't know 'good Greek', or couldn't write that Greek well. Greek was the 'lingua franca' of the day. Today it's English: Wherever you go in the world, from Holland to China, everywhere people speak their native tongue and English. Well, it was the same in the first century with Greek; they all spoke Greek—they understood it.

The Sanhedrin, of course, (the Jewish court), did call Peter and John, "uneducated and untrained men", when they were brought in, (in chapter 4, verse 13, of the Book of Acts), but what they meant was that they were not trained in their rabbinic schools. In fact, they were "amazed", (ibid), by the fact that, 'These men, who were not trained in our schools, were so confident, and so bold, and so eloquent.'

Well that was as great change that took place in both of those men, especially Peter: Men who just a couple of months earlier were cowards, deserted our Lord the night of His arrest, and Peter, himself, denying the Lord—and here they are now boldly standing before the very people who terrified them earlier. And now they're courageous and they're speaking the truth, speaking their faith without fear at all.

Now that's what a connection with Christ will produce in a believer: The more we are exposed to His Word, the more like Him we will become. So, we can have understanding that is greater than that of our teachers—that's the consequence. And that's what the psalmist encourages, and says, in Psalm 119, verse 99;

“I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.”

We'll know more than our teachers if we continue in the Word of God; and the apostle Peter is a good example of that. He was full of knowledge and wisdom: The knowledge of the Word of God and the practical wisdom of experience that comes with walking daily with the LORD and meeting the experiences of life—and through that being challenged, but through faith and obedience, passing through them and becoming more and more mature. He's an example of that.

Peter actually dictated the letter. He says that in chapter 5, verse 12, where he mentions “Sylvanus” as the one through whom he wrote. And so, if there were grammatical errors that Peter, as a fisherman committed, well, Sylvanus may have cleaned up any grammatical irregularities, (and that could explain the beauty of the letter).

But verse 1 gives Peter as the author, and one of the commentators, E. G. Selwyn, observed that the book has, "The distinctive character of an eyewitness of the events of Christ's life." That fits the apostle—and we have no reason to doubt his authorship.

What is interesting is, he wrote the letter from Babylon. At the end of the book, in chapter 5, verse 13, he wrote, "She who is in Babylon...", that is, ‘the church who is in

Babylon', "...chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son Mark." (1Pet 5:13). Most commentators believe that '*Babylon*' is a symbolic reference to Rome.

There is a tradition that that is where Peter went at the end of his life, and that's where he died a martyr. Mark was also there at the time, with the apostle Paul; we know that. And there is some doubt that Peter was ever in Babylon; we have no record that he was, outside of this. Even so, there is no reason for Peter to refer to Rome cryptically as '*Babylon*'. All the other place names that he gives are literal—that is, he addressed these different parts of Asia Minor literally. He didn't give mystical names to them.

And the book isn't of the same kind of literature that, say, the Book of Revelation is, *apocalyptic* literature, which is filled with metaphors and figures of speech. All the other places that Peter addresses here, as I said, are literal and this is a book that is not filled with figures of speech. So because it is straightforward, I think there's no reason to think that he could not have gone to Babylon and that we shouldn't take this literally at face value.

In fact, I think there's some reason to believe that he might have gone to Babylon on the Euphrates, (and not Babylon on the Tiber). There was a large Jewish population there at the time; and Peter was an 'apostle of the circumcision', (of the Jews) and it may be that he had gone there to evangelize them. I'm sympathetic with that view, personally. I like it, but I can't be certain of it, and I don't think any of us need to be certain of it. It's probably best to leave this, leave the place of origin of the letter, as an open question.

What is indisputable is its destination—it was to Asia Minor. It was sent, "...To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (vs1b). You can look at a Bible map of Asia Minor in the back of your Bible, or in a book that you may have, which is modern Turkey and you'll see all these areas laid out and where they were located. Some are places where Paul preached, (Paul would have been there before Peter, if Peter had gone to these places), and some were places where Paul was forbidden to go.

We see this in the Book of Acts, and you see this particularly in Paul's second missionary journey. He preached in Asia where Ephesus is located on the west coast of Asia Minor. He was prevented from entering Bithynia and Pontus in north Asia Minor, and possibly prevented from going to Cappadocia in the eastern part of Turkey. The Gospel did get to those places later, (in God's time and way), and perhaps Peter was instrumental in that. We don't know.

Well, in verse one we are introduced to these places and these people, (these saints); so, who are they? They're described as "*aliens*", (or *sojourners*), "scattered throughout" the region. Literally, verse 1 is translated, "elect sojourners of the dispersion." That might suggest that they were predominantly Jewish Christians to whom Peter wrote, (since the word, *dispersion*, (*diaspora*), is the term for Jews who were living outside of the land—outside of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee).

In that case, these would have been largely Jewish congregations, surrounded by unbelieving Gentiles. The whole letter is filled with Old Testament references and allusions that would have been very familiar to people attached to the synagogue. So that suggests to some that these were predominantly Jewish believers to whom the letter was written.

On the other hand, the Old Testament was 'the Bible' of the first century, regardless of the character or the nature of the particular congregation; and that's what the congregation would have heard while the New Testament was being formulated and developed. And so that wouldn't exclude Gentiles as being the predominant group either.

In fact, chapter 4, verse 3, strongly suggests a Gentile audience. Peter wrote to them in chapter 4, verse 3, "For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatry." Well, that's generally taken as support for the idea that the majority of the Christians in these churches, these congregations, had been converted out of paganism rather than out of Judaism.

Now that's not altogether convincing, because Jews of the first century, (the last century B.C. and the first century A.D.), struggled with Hellenism and confronting the Greek and Roman cultures. And so, that was probably especially difficult for Jews living in the diaspora surrounded by Gentiles.

Well, probably what we have here are congregations to which Peter wrote that were mixed, both with Jews and Gentiles, probably predominantly Gentiles.

But that's the case with many of the churches of the first century that began 'out of the synagogue' for that is where Paul would first go and preach. So these churches would begin with Jewish congregations, but then, very quickly, the Gentiles would come in, and would become the dominant group.

So, this is the '*character*'—it's probably a mixed group of both that Peter wrote this letter to. And because they were Christians, they were "*aliens*", and they were '*strangers* in the world.' 'This world', Peter was saying, 'is not their home'. It's not our home, either. So really, what is most important here is not the ethnic makeup of the letter's recipients, but the spiritual condition. They are the elect. As Peter wrote, "To those...who are chosen", (vs1b),—that defines their relationship to God, just as "*aliens*", or, "*sojourners*" defines or describes their relationship to the world. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles they are elect, "*chosen*" by God for salvation, and *chosen* out of the world and so are no longer a part of this world, spiritually.

This is significant, very significant. The doctrine of election is one of the most important doctrines of Scripture—and one of the most disputed, even maligned doctrines, because people draw invalid inferences from it. It goes against our natural way of thinking; but we're not natural anymore—we've been changed.

One of those accusations against it, objections to it, is if election were true, then there would be no need to believe...in fact, no need to evangelize: 'We're elect—there's no need to go out and preach the Gospel. God's already saved you, right?'

Well, that's untrue. As we will see, the elect have been "*chosen*" to believe, "*chosen*" for faith. Faith is necessary, and faith requires the Gospel to be given. That's

how the elect are gathered, through the preaching of the Gospel. It's always impressed me that the doctrine of election is vilified among Christians—and yet it is so prominent among the Apostles. They weren't afraid of this doctrine, they rejoiced in it.

Paul told the Ephesians, (this is early in their Christian life; they're young believers; they're people saved out of paganism. They don't know much of the Bible, other than what he's taught them—and he taught them well for two, two and a half years), but Paul wrote to them and told them early on, in chapter 1, verse 4, that they were 'chosen by God', "before the foundation of the world." (Eph 1:4). Before they ever existed, when they were simply a thought in the mind of God, He "chose" them.

He told the Thessalonians, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation." (2Th 2:13). He spent maybe two weeks in Thessalonica; even taught them a lot of eschatology, (you see that in 1 and 2 Thessalonians), and he reminds them of the things that he taught them in just two weeks. But he obviously taught them election; "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation. (ibid).

Divine election is an important doctrine of the Bible. A student of Scripture can't avoid it—and shouldn't want to avoid it. I can't say it better than Dr. Edwin Blum who wrote, "In Biblical teaching, election is a central theme and a foundation of spiritual blessing. No believer should ever feel threatened by the doctrine of election because it is always presented in Scripture as the ground of comfort." Amen to that!

We see that especially here in 1 Peter, because as persecution threatened the churches Peter reminded them that they are God's elect, which means He loved them from all eternity. His love is unconditional. He *chose* them before they were in existence. He chose them when He knew that when they came into existence, they'd come into this world with fists clenched; they'd come into this world sinful and rebellious. And He had an eternal, purposeful love for them, in spite of that.

And so, while the world may have evil designs for them, (for these saints and for us), the LORD does not. His purpose is gracious; His purpose is merciful. He is with us just as He was with them during their pilgrimage through this world.

We're all on a pilgrimage. Really, I say that often; but the reality is, everybody is on a pilgrimage, elect or non-elect, believer or non-believer. Everyone is here for just a brief time; we're passing through. We're passing through, but the point of all of this is to say: While this 'passing through', this '*pilgrimage*' is full of trials and difficulties, and persecution, setbacks of one kind or another, the LORD is always with us. Election builds assurance and confidence in that. It produces gratitude; and in producing gratitude, it galvanizes action. No one who truly understands the doctrine of unconditional election can be indifferent to God's love, or indolent in the Christian life, (lazy, indifferent in the Christian life).

Regardless, though, the doctrine of election is plainly taught throughout the Bible. You cannot escape that fact. You read through all the Scriptures, you can't miss the doctrine of election; it's there. And it makes it very, very plain that salvation is all of God. Specifically, it makes it plain that the Triune God who chose us, redeemed us, and called us, is Almighty and is with us through the dark valley, and will see us through to the kingdom of Light.

Peter makes that very point in the first three clauses, or parts, of the next verse, (verse 2), by stating the united work of the three Persons of the Trinity in our salvation; They are united in it. He begins his letter by making plain to the church the divine origin, nature, and purpose of the church, and the church's life, its development—it's all of God.

He begins with God the Father and His choice of them, (His choice of us). It is according to His "*foreknowledge*". 'Ah! There's the explanation of election right there. It's not that difficult, it's not that hard. It's according to 'foreknowledge', of God looking down through time, and in each generation seeing who would believe, and choosing them! And so really, election is about us choosing God, not God choosing us. We choose Him, we choose to believe, and God ratifies that. Foreknowledge!'

No! That's not the meaning of "*foreknowledge*" here. Really, it has that meaning, but the meaning here in the context is that not of, 'seeing things ahead of time and looking ahead in time.' It essentially means '*fore-loved*'. It speaks of God's prior love for them, and His decree to choose them. 'To know', or, '*knowledge*' is a euphemism for *love* in the Old Testament; and here it's saying, He '*foreloved*' them.

We see that, I think, from verse 20 where the same word, "*foreknowledge*", is used speaking of the blood of Christ, and His sacrifice on the cross. Peter wrote, "For He", (meaning Christ), "was foreknown before the foundation of the world." (1Pet 1:20).

Now Peter didn't mean that God knew about Christ before the world was. He's always known about His Son. That's John chapter 1, verse 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Never did God the Father not know the Son. They are the eternal Godhead.

His meaning is that the person and work of Christ had a place in the eternal plan of God. Before creation, from all eternity, Christ was chosen as the Savior to shed His blood for us. And the meaning here in verse 2 is the same, that of '*foreordaining*', or '*foreloving*'—the two go together, the two ideas. For example, in Amos chapter 3, verse 2, God said to Israel, " 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth'." Now that's a literal translation of the Hebrew text; " 'You only have I known'." Now obviously, he, (*Amos*), doesn't mean that, 'of all the nations of the world, God only knew about Israel, that God was ignorant of all the other nations'. No, God is omniscient. He knows everything. He's planned it all, from eternity. In fact, He knows everything and can learn nothing, because He knows everything.

And here also in Amos, He didn't say, 'I knew something about Israel.' The *knowledge* spoken of is not essentially '*intellectual*' knowledge, it is *personal* knowledge. Amos means that God knew them intimately, personally, lovingly. So, it means, 'He loved from all eternity—*foreloved* them and chose them.'

That's reflected in the translation of the New American Standard Bible of the verse in Amos, " 'You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth'." That is the idea of it: 'He *foreloved* them and *chose* them'. And that is true of everyone that God has

chosen for Himself. He chose us from the foundation of the world—that is where our salvation began.

In fact, it didn't really 'begin'—it's always been the plan and purpose of God. It's an eternal purpose, which means, if you have believed in Christ, you have believed in Him because of His sovereign grace, which chose you and brought you to Him. *And that's not where His love for you began!* His love for you has *always* been there. You have always, for all eternity, been on the heart of God. And He loves you now, and will always love you. That's the implication of election. We didn't choose Him, He chose us—and because He did, we've 'chosen' Him. That's what the Lord said to His disciples in John 15, verse 16, "You did not choose Me but I chose you..." The initiative is always with God.

And His choice of us takes effect in our lives by the agency of the Holy Spirit, "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit", as Peter wrote. (vs2). It is the work of the Spirit in applying the work of Christ on the cross to God's elect that makes election our actual experience—that brings us into this personal relationship with God. He set us apart for faith; and in time He draws us to Christ through regeneration and faith, His elect. And then throughout our lives He does what is called, 'the work of sanctification', transforming us and making us more and more like Christ.

The end in view of election and sanctification, the goal, is obedience. Faith in Christ, to obey Jesus Christ, "and be sprinkled with His blood." (vs2). So, to narrow the focus, to condense that: "Chosen to obey." In fact, Gordon Clark suggested, "That is the general theme of the Book of 1 Peter: 'Elect unto obedience'."

The initial act of obedience is faith in Christ—believing the Gospel. That is obedience of the mind and will. And there follows from that, a life of obedience, in the work of sanctification—following the commands that the LORD has given us.

Peter emphasizes that in each chapter of this book. For example, in chapter 1, verse 14, he wrote, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts, (*which were yours*), in your ignorance." —'Don't go back to that former life!'

But to do that and participate in the life and service of God, and the destiny the LORD has set out for His people, we must first be purified of our sin and guilt. The holy God cannot connect Himself to that which is unholy. So we must be changed—we must be purified of our sin and guilt. And so, joined to God's purpose in election of obedience is that of *cleansing*. We were chosen to, 'be sprinkled with Christ's blood', Peter wrote. (vs2).

And what that means, simply, is, 'that the Holy Spirit applied the death of Christ to the elect.' That's the Spirit's part in our salvation. Christ accomplished our salvation on the cross; the Spirit then applies it to His people all throughout the generations.

Now Peter spoke of 'blood as being sprinkled' because the act of sprinkling was an important part of the sacrifices that were made in Israel. For example, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest took the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies, and he sprinkled it on the mercy seat.

When Moses established, or enacted, the Old Covenant, in Exodus 24, verse 8, (the Covenant that God made with Israel, and the Covenant that would govern His relationship with Israel), Moses sacrificed the young bull and he, 'sprinkled its blood on the people'. He, 'sprinkled it on the nation.' That illustrated that, forgiveness, (and the relationship between God and man), can only be established by shedding blood; by *expiation*—'taking away sin', and by *propitiation*—'satisfying God's justice and turning away His wrath'.

We are forgiven and accepted by God the Father because we have been cleansed of our sin and guilt. Only in that way can we be made part of God's New Covenant people in a special relationship with Him. Christ's atonement, His sacrifice on the cross, has been applied spiritually to us who have believed, as the blood of young bulls was physically applied to the people of Israel by Moses.

The blood of a bull placed them in a *temporal* relationship with God. The blood of a Man, the perfect Son of Man, the Son of God, placed us in an *eternal* relationship with God that can never end. That's *credenda*—doctrine to be believed. It's all very theological, and all of it will be developed even further in the rest of the book.

All of this is just in the greeting of the book, the first two verses. But it shows us the basis of our confidence as "*aliens*", which we all are as believers in Christ, as *strangers* in this world. This isn't our home. We're pilgrims here; we are passing through. But the devil is here, so it is a dangerous place. But we have a relationship with God. He is our Father. He chose us to believe in His Son who died for us. And the Holy Spirit applied to us the blessings of His death by giving us life, faith, and sonship. The entire Trinity work in concert to bring about this glorious salvation.

Now that being so, would the Lord God, the Triune God, do all of that and not ensure that we would be victorious through the strife and the difficulties of this life?—No! He has ensured it; that is the clear implication and assurance that is given to these beleaguered saints here at the outset of Peter's epistle. They needed encouragement. What greater encouragement could be given than that God Almighty, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, has saved us forever—and is with us always. That was John Wesley's testimony on his deathbed; before saying, "Farewell", he said, "The best of all is, 'God is with us.' "

Now with that assurance, Peter closes his greeting with a prayer that the saints, scattered throughout the continent, would increase in their personal experience of God's benefits for them; he prayed,

"May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."

That's an expanded version of Paul's greetings in so many of his letters, "Grace to you and peace."

We need grace continually; we cannot survive spiritually without it. And *peace* here in this prayer is not reconciliation *with* God, not peace *with* God. —They had that; they'd been justified; they had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, this is the peace **of** God—this is, 'the calm in the storm.' And these people were in a great storm, (we'll see that as the book unfolds).

Peter wanted them to have that peace, fully. And they would, to the degree that they understood the good doctrine that he has just given them, and that he will expand upon throughout the book. But they needed God's grace to fully understand it, believe it, and apply it to their lives.

They were aliens under God's sovereign care, but headed for a heavenly country—every believer in Jesus Christ is, because of God's grace in election, redemption, and calling, (His irresistible grace). And someday we all will say, as Wesley did, "Farewell"; and leave this land of shadows and enter the country of Light and glory. Christ obtained that for us at the cross by His sacrifice.

Is that your hope? Have you believed in Him as God and Savior? That's the only way of salvation. So if you've not believed, then look to Him, trust in Him—and at that moment you will be saved, and saved forever.

(Closing prayer) Father, we thank You for that great truth that through the Person and work of Your Son, through the shedding of His blood, (which speaks of a violent sacrifice that was made for us, the final sacrifice, the last sacrifice that ended all of the slaughter of the bulls and the goats and the lambs and all of that), that through that sacrifice of Your Son, that violent death that He suffered in our place, we have salvation. You've atoned for our sin, something we could not do in and of ourselves. Thank You for the blood of Your Son that's been applied to us by the Spirit, all due to Your sovereign grace.

We thank You for the gift of life, and pray that we will live according to the implications of all of that, which is to live obediently out of love for You due to Your great love for us. Help us to do that. Enable us to do that. We need Your grace.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, amen.

(End of Audio)