

**1 Peter 1 v 1-12      Sunday@7 21.5.17**

In a book by Max Lucado titled, "Six hours one Friday". He tells the story of how he and his boat survived a hurricane. An old friend of his told him to take his boat out into deep water, drop four anchors, one at each corner, and pray that the anchors hold. Max and the boat survived the storm, but he says that he learned one important lesson, all of us need an anchor to hold us through the storms of life.

That anchor was his faith, but what have you put your faith in? The word Faith means trust, belief, dependence, confidence in. It comes from the Latin word *fidem/fides* which means trust. So where is your faith, where is your trust? is it in your car? your home? your work? your finances? They're earthly things, they'll be no good to you when you die and your flesh goes to the earth either by burial or cremation. Put your faith in the only thing that is sustainable for us past this earthly place. Put your faith in Jesus Christ who died and shed His blood for us. The son of the one and true living god. In this letter Peter knows how important it is to have faith, a faith that we can anchor deep with, a faith that will hold us strong through all the trials and hardship that life will throw our way.

When Peter wrote this letter, he was writing to the Jewish Christians who were experiencing persecution because of their faith. He wrote it as an encouragement to them with the hope that they will receive the eternal life that Jesus has promised, and also to challenge them to continue to live their lives in a holy and spirit filled way. Those who suffer for being Christians become partners with Christ in his suffering, we must remember that Christ is both our hope in our suffering and our example of how to endure suffering faithfully.

In verse 1 of this letter, Peter writes to the followers of Christ who were living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. For those of us who are not great on Biblical Geography, it's roughly the area we know today as Turkey.

Peter was writing to Christians who had been scattered far away from home, some because of persecution, some because of circumstance. Peter was writing to encourage people who were lonely, afraid and discouraged. These words that Peter wrote so long ago are an encouragement to us today. Listen to these words from 1 Peter 1 verse 2: "God the Father knew you and chose

you long ago, and His Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace."

There are three things this reading brings out: 1. God the Father **CHOSE** you. 2. God the Holy Spirit **CHANGES** you. 3. God the Son **CLEANSSES** you.

### 1. God the Father **CHOSE** you.

Ephesians 1:4 tells us, "Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes."

That is an amazing verse. We have been chosen, you have been chosen, I have been chosen. Chosen, simply because of God's love for us.

That's awesome, He chose us knowing all our faults, difficulties, all the times we would let Him down, but he still wanted us to be with Him. He knocked on our door and chose us.

God chose those whom He knew would believe and trust in Him. God has given us freewill, yet He knew those who would willingly repent and turn to Him.

You and I, and all who have faith in the one true God are loved and chosen to be the people of God. 2 Timothy 2:19 reminds us, But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness."

Choosing to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour changed our lives, and those who knew how we were may think that now we are a little odd..

The preacher and author A.W. Tozer wrote these words: "A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen. Talks every day to Someone he cannot see. He expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order that he might be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, and goes down in order to get up. He is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and is happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, and gives away so he can keep. He sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge."

I'm pleased I am a little odd... well, maybe more than a little, if being a follower of Christ makes people think I'm a little bit odd, then, Alleluia.

but that's what having faith is about.

In verse 5, Peter writes "And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see." In Paul's letter to Philippi chapter 2 v 12b-13 he writes, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure".

Have faith in God who is our strength and refuge, our cornerstone, our rock, our way to eternal life. Life with Christ is not about us, it's about Him. It's not about us, it's about growing and bringing people into God's Kingdom.

(Short testimony from Tina)

If our faith is based upon things of this world, then our faith will perish. Many kingdoms have come and been destroyed. Nations have been established and then vanished. Empires have risen only to fall later. All that is left is the ruins we see in museums. Only the Kingdom of God has remained the same over the last 2000 plus years. Our faith is to be fixed in heaven and not on things of this world. That is the only way that we will know our faith will remain permanent.

Don't let the actions or words of others drag you down. Don't listen to those who discourage you, close your ears to the negativity. Don't let the web of the enemy draw you into them, don't listen to folk who try to rubbish what you do in His name Him. But stand firm in what you believe and live faithfully for our wonderful God.

Our faith should be unfading. In Romans 12 the Apostle Paul encourages us to let our bodies be a living and holy sacrifice to God. He says: "This is truly the way to worship God. Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." If our faith in God is strong, and set deep in our hearts we should be happy and Joyful. In verse 7 & 8 of this passage Peter says, "so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy". I look around at some folk in our churches and think. I wish.

Being in the fellowship of other believers should be uplifting, encouraging, wiping away all tears. Is not being in fellowship with other believers amazing, inspiring, exciting? Then let's get excited, for His sake.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, and the faith we have now will see us through to the last days.

Our faith must be anchored on the timeless nature of Christ. How do you know that a faith in Christ will hold up during the storms of life? Why should I trust Christ? Because this is no ordinary faith, it is a tested faith. Countless people have placed their faith in Christ and found that their anchor holds fast.

All of us have faith, but will YOUR anchor of faith hold you in the storms that come your way? Is YOUR faith constant, or based on the newest fad?

Base your faith on scripture. Base your faith on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the eternal life to come. The time to anchor your hope and faith to Christ is now, before the storms show up.

If you are in Christ, you are chosen, changed and cleansed.

God loved you then, loves you now and will continue to love you.

Despite your faults, despite your imperfections, God knows you and He loves you.

God chose you.

God has called you.

God has selected you.

God has a plan for you.

God wants you to discover the destiny he has ordained for you.

The Holy Spirit lives in you.

He has changed you, is changing you and will continue to work in you and through you.

Amen.

