Text: 1 Peter 1:1-2
Title: Saved Sojourners
Truth: Peter is writing to Christians in this world to remind them that our outsider status and suffering is part of the true grace of God for us.
Date/Location: November 15, 2026 at FBC

Introduction

Peter's first letter starts with two verses of introduction. It is structured in the normal way: From, To, and Greeting. The apostle Peter is the author; the recipients are scattered pilgrims of the Christian faith, and the greeting is multiplied grace and peace.

I believe that we can profit by focusing on two particular things. The first is the life and example of Peter. The second is the situation of Peter's audience and how it is like our situation.

I. Author, v. 1a

A. The author is the apostle Peter, the most famous of the original twelve disciples. He is first named in all the lists of the disciples, but he would not agree to the way that he has been elevated to a place of primacy in the minds of some people.

B. His humility. Luke 5:8 reminds us that Peter had a very deep awareness of his own sinfulness. He calls himself a fellow elder (1 Peter 5:1), emphasizing his parity with other pastors. His motto would be "Not I, but Christ" and "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). "I am just an unprofitable servant" (Luke 17:10). He would acknowledge the treasure of the gospel is in an earthen vessel (his body) so that it may be evident that it is God's power, not his, that works in him (2 Cor. 4:7; see Acts 3:12, 10:26).

C. Some of his biography. Remember Peter confessed Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). But Peter denied Christ just before the crucifixion. He wept bitterly about that sin (Luke 22:62). God saw his broken and contrite heart and Jesus restored him after the resurrection (Mark 16:7, John 21:15-23). Peter got off track with the Jew-Gentile issue (Galatians 2:11-21). But he also preached mightily (Acts 2) and escaped prison and brought the gospel to the Gentiles. Finally, he was called by God to

be a special emissary to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-8—and remember Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, Rom. 11:13, 2 Tim. 1:11).

D. How the Lord used Peter. The Lord Jesus appointed Peter as an apostle, a witness of the His resurrection (Acts 1:22, 4:33). He was charged, with the other apostles, to provide the revelatory foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), have a certain authority in the early church (Matthew 16, 18), and to have a spiritual gift to work miracles such as healing the sick and raising the dead in order to authenticate the message he brought as being genuinely from God (2 Cor. 12:12, Heb. 2:4; Acts 5:15, 9:40).

E. Peter is a great example of what God can do with a man who wants to serve Him. Think about this: God can do that with you too. Have you ever felt like a rotten sinner, an idiot, a fool? Like you've done some things that were totally immature? Fess up and turn away from that and ask God's help. When you are broken like that, consider the principle of Jeremiah 18:1-4. God can help you to live with divine wisdom and power. Acts 2-5 and 10-12 demonstrate that Peter was a transformed man, used in vast ways by God to advance the gospel. God can do that with me and you as well. Just trust Christ (Mark 6:5-6). When you are broken, remember Christ appeared to Simon Peter especially (Luke 24:34). Christ does not forget or forsake!

II. Audience

A. Peter writes to people whose life circumstances are far from ideal. They are scattered pilgrims.

1. Peter is writing to a number of churches located in what is modern-day central Turkey. Your Bible maps will show you where Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia are located—roughly where the oval is on the map below. The apostle Paul planted churches in Galatia and wrote an inspired letter to them (Acts 13-14, 16:1-8; Galatians 1:2).

2. The readers were believers (see verse 2 for more on that). The were scattered throughout the locations mentioned, and they were sojourners—they were temporary residents, "staying for a while in a strange place" (BDAG, s.v. παρεπίδημος). Their

citizenship was not primarily earthly. It was heavenly (Matt. 13:38; Phil. 3:20).



3. This leads us to an interpretive issue: is Peter writing to Jews or to Christians in general? The word for "scattered" or "dispersion" is "Diaspora." You might recognize that word as one used to refer to Jews or Jewish believers scattered outside Palestine. In modern usage, the *Diaspora* refers to Jews or Jewish communities outside of Palestine (e.g. John 7:35), from way back in 586 B.C. when the Babylonian captivity began. In a narrower sense, the term is used in James 1:1 to refer to Jewish Christian believers that are scattered throughout the world outside of Palestine. Peter uses the term in a broader sense, to refer to Jew or Gentile believers, citizens of heaven, residing in and scattered throughout a foreign land (the earth) while they wait to return to their homeland (heaven). The audience is therefore not exclusively Jewish. This is indicated in verses such as 1:18 and 4:3. Some of them may also be scattered as a result of persecution which has driven them from their original homes to new places.

4. Scattered pilgrims. If you are a Christian, you too are a sojourner. Cultivate a mindset like a foreigner. With regard to time and place, possession and situation, you are a temporary resident, a stranger, not entirely welcome in your world. Your money and stuff is on temporary loan, even your most prized possessions.

5. This outsider status foreshadows what Peter will write about in the upcoming chapters, how Christians do not fit into the world and how we will experience sufferings ordained by God, yet we still ought to praise God because of His grace toward us in salvation.

B. Peter writes to people whom God has chosen.

1. The doctrine of election is this: that God chose certain individuals, before the foundation of the world, to salvation in Christ, including salvation's blessings and obligations. The key verses are 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. The blessings are obvious—salvation, eternal life, forgiveness from sin, a heavenly home, a new nature, a new life, the indwelling Spirit, etc. The obligations are included as well—the person must repent and believe the truth.

2. Election is a doctrine that must be understood against the backdrop of human depravity and inability (Eph. 2:1, Rom. 8:7-8). God's choice was not based on any foreseen merit or other conditions in the believer. In other words, it is unconditional, in accordance really with God's good counsel and pleasure (Eph. 1:4-5, 1:11). Those not chosen are passed over and allowed to go their own way, which ultimately ends in eternal separation from God and punishment for sins not placed under the blood of Christ.

3. Did God simply look down the corridors of time to see who would choose Him and then elect that person? No. Romans 3:11 tells us that no one seeks God. When Peter says, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," he does not have in mind simple prescience, that is, knowledge of facts ahead of time. The idea of foreknowledge in the Bible is far richer than that, though it includes that idea (2 Peter 3:17). It also includes God's favor and loving-care toward the person foreknown (Jer. 1:5)—it is people-oriented, not fact oriented (Rom. 8:29). It includes foreordination, the idea of predetermination. The same word for foreknowledge is used in 1 Peter 1:20 regarding Jesus' death established before the foundation of the world (Rev.

13:8). If you are a follower of Jesus, God has indeed set His love upon you personally and specifically.

4. Should we object that this doctrine is unfair, I remind you that the only fair outcome for us would be that we pay for our own sins for all eternity, and that Jesus not have to die in our place. Thank God that He made a way for us to be saved, and then made sure we would be able to have access to it through His gracious choice.

5. Some people inquire, "How can I know if I am elect?" If you have truly repented of your sin and believed in Christ Jesus, you are in that blessed number. If you have not, there is no way to know. A person who will be saved in three years from now looks no different than a person who will not be saved ever—both are children of wrath and under just sentence by God already (John 3:36, Ephesians 2:3). It is not our business to know who is elect. That is God's business. Our job as Christians is to preach the gospel and the job of a non-Christian is to believe in Christ.

C. Peter writes to people whom the Spirit has sanctified and is sanctifying.

1. When we get to the next items that Peter mentions, there is a question as to whether these items have to do with initial salvation or afterward in the Christian's life. A case can be made either way, but I have become convinced over the years since I first studied 1 Peter that Peter is not thinking about a difference between initial salvation and God's ongoing work in the Christian's life. He is simply speaking to people who have been saved and are experiencing the ongoing work of God.

2. God works through His Spirit in "sanctification" to set apart the person. Through the gospel, God's Spirit convicts the person and calls him or her to be saved. This involves initially setting them apart as holy, an idea called by Christian teachers *definite sanctification* or *initial sanctification*. The Spirit of God continues to implement God's design in election by purifying His people so that they live less in sin and more in holiness. This is called *ongoing sanctification*. The root of this word has to do with setting one apart, but in addition to being set apart by God

for a relationship with God, sanctification sets us apart from sin. Finally, the Spirit of God will produce in God's people *glorification* or *final sanctification* so that

D. Peter writes to people whom Christ has saved to be obedient to the faith.

1. They are initially obedient to the gospel by trusting in Christ in accordance with God's command to do so (Acts 6:7, 17:30; Rom. 1:5, 16:26).

2. Initially obeying the faith but failing to live as a Christian would show that faith is dead. God saves His people to be good people (Titus 2:14), that is, to obey the gospel in a "bigger" way than just an initial step.

E. Peter writes to people whom Jesus has cleansed by His blood.

1. Upon obedient faith, God cleanses the new believer through the blood of Christ. This continues throughout the believer's life (1 John 1:7), but it happens the first time at salvation. This is really where one is converted to Christ.

2. "Sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" means that God applies the atoning benefit of Christ's cross-work to our souls and thus forgives and cleanses our sins. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22), and sprinkling of that blood refers metaphorically to the application of its benefits to the individual. It takes us back to the sprinkling of blood in the Old Testament in Exodus 24:1-8 and Hebrews 9:19.

So this is what happened to the scattered sojourners—they were chosen by God, heard the gospel and were drawn to God, obeyed the gospel, and were cleansed from their sins. This is the starting point of Peter's letter, setting the ground rules of how we understand everything else in the letter.

III. Greeting, v. 2b

A. Peter's letter starts in regular Greek style—with the "from," the "to," and the greeting. The greeting is a combination of modified Greek and Hebrew greetings. It includes *grace* which is a variation of the typical "Greetings" in a Greek letter (see Acts 23:26 for an

example). It also has *peace*, which is the Greek version of the standard *shalom!* in Hebrew.

B. Peter's greeting is a prayer that the believers would experience a multiplied amount of God's favor and peace through Jesus Christ. They already have been richly blessed by God's grace and peace and mercy and love. But more of those things in our lives is far better than more of a lot of other things. Let us pray the same for each other today.

Conclusion

Peter presents Christians as ones dwelling in a foreign land, but chosen and transformed by the Triune God. God the Father chose them, the Spirit drew them in and set them apart, they believed the gospel and continue to obey the Lord, and God sprinkled them with the blood of Jesus in cleansing them from sin. That's what Christianity is.

Peter is writing to that kind of people in the first century. They experienced a difficult existence, partly due to the way of the world and partly due to their faith. But they were privileged to be chosen by God, purified by the Spirit, obedient to God's word, and cleansed by the blood of Christ. Do you fit that description? Even if you are suffering trouble, the work that God has done and is doing in your life is an expression of the true grace of God.

I am beginning to see that one of the main tools that God uses to get our attention and cause us to grow in the faith is those very those trials and pressures of our sojourn. I want to think that we can learn and grow well by hearing good teaching and thinking about the things of God. But we have a strong tendency not to listen until we are pushed to do so, to finally realize the grace of God that He has bestowed upon us.

We can bless God because of all this, and rejoice, despite the suffering that following Christ brings.

MAP