

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

MAY 29 - JUNE 2, 2023

Sermon Series 5.28 - 8.13

# FORGED

## IN THE FURNACE

# MONDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:10-21**

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The book of 1 Peter was a letter written by a disciple named Peter to believers in the churches in Northwest Asia who were experiencing persecution for their faith. (Peter Davids) Perhaps to encourage them in the midst of such darkness, he calls all those who believe in Jesus to live as God's holy children, knowing they are set apart to *be holy as God is holy* (1 Peter 1:16). This is good news to us today, for we too are God's children and call God *Father* (1:17).

To say that those who believe in Jesus share a common Parent is also to say that we are brothers and sisters with one another. This is how we should live, as one family, treating one another with love. And yet, too often, we do not live this way. Rather than treating Christians who differ from us as family, we can tend to avoid those whose worship style, tradition, or theology differs from ours. Our lives, no doubt, look quite different from those of the Christians whom Peter was originally writing to, and yet even they are our brothers and sisters. God, our Father, unites us with saints in other churches throughout the world and throughout history.

On Communion Sunday we are reminded of this truth. We come to Jesus' table and find that there is a place for everyone. This is the table not only of our Lord, but also of everyone who has called, does call, and

will call Jesus Lord. This is our family table, where we gather with one another to eat, drink, and remember. In all our diversity, in all our individuality, as we share one table, we are one family through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

Besides 1 Peter, what scriptural evidence exists to support the idea that all believers are God's family? How does hearing the term "family" change your view of the church? What is one way you can act with love toward a fellow Christian this week?

## PRAYERS

### For Three Angels Haiti

Pray for one of Three Angels' Angel House orphan, Bethsaïda. Baby Bethsaïda came to Three Angels in the last year, needing surgery to remove blood clots from around her brain. It will need to be done in the US. Pray that sponsors will step up to support her surgery and that God would provide excellent medical care, prompting a full recovery.

# TUESDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:18-19**

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Who am I? That is a question that we all ask at some point. Sometimes we answer that question with our occupation (I am a teacher, a teller, an accountant), with our relationships (I am a mother, a friend), or the things we are good at (I am creative, an athlete, a good listener). Other times we point to our nationality (I am an American), our gender, or our ethnicity.

In 1 Peter, we find us another way to answer that question—I am a child of God (1 Peter 1:14). Peter writes that no matter where we come from, no matter our background, occupation, nationality, gender, or ethnicity, this one thing defines who we are. In fact, our identities as children of God were bought at a much higher price than any earthly wealth. We were redeemed and changed through the power of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

This is the identity Peter hoped to encourage in the Christians to whom he was originally writing. Whether they were from a Greek or Jewish background, they were to understand their heritage differently now. Now that they were believers, they were to live no longer in the ways of their ancestors, but according to the ways of their Father, God. Where their ancestors, culture, or ethnicity determined their identity before, they are now to understand themselves as an elect and distinct

people group—the elect people of God (1 Peter 1:1-2). And as the people of God, they are to live differently than the world around them.

This is an important lesson for us today. No matter what we are tempted to find our identities in (our country, our job, our relationships), we are to put aside all other identifiers and labels and cling to this one. Who am I? I am a child of God.

## QUESTIONS

If you were asked to describe who you are, what would you say? Does this passage from 1 Peter change your answer at all? How can you live more fully into your identity as a child of God?

## PRAYERS

### For Three Angels Haiti

Baby Angela is another Three Angels orphan. She was born without a fully functioning digestive system; she has had two surgeries already and a five-month hospital stay. Like little Bethsaïda (yesterday's prayer subject), all of Angela's medical costs are borne by Three Angels. Pray for a successful surgery, full recovery, and generous donors stepping in to help with the associated costs.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:14-16**

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When we were expecting our first child. I prayed that it would be a little boy and that he would look just like his daddy. And when the day came, I was overjoyed! There he was with the same dimple, the same birthmark, and the same eyes as his daddy. As our son got older, it became obvious that he had the personality of his daddy too— outgoing, friendly, talkative. Some of the similarities between my son and his dad are genetic and others are encouraged by how much time they spend together. My son is glued to his daddy and so he picks up his dad’s mannerisms, sense of humor, and way of speaking. These similarities are obvious, even to those who have just met them. As the saying goes: *like father, like son.*

As we have already discovered, 1 Peter teaches that we, as believers in Jesus, are God’s children. But it goes further than that. Not only are we God’s children in the fact that we are a part of God’s family and we find our identities in God, we are also God’s children in the way that we are called to resemble God. We are to have the same characteristics as God and to live the way God lives. When someone looks at us, they are supposed to notice the similarities. Peter puts it this way: “*Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do*” (1:15). We are to spend time with God, abiding with God, remaining in God so that we pick up

on the ways of God. The more time we spend with God, the more we will be like God until the resemblance is undeniable. Like Father, like son (or daughter). May it be so.

## QUESTIONS

In what ways do you abide with God throughout your week?

If someone was to take an aerial view of your life, would they notice a resemblance to a holy God? Why or why not?

## PRAYERS

### For Three Angels Haiti

Social turmoil in Haiti remains dangerously high. Many people, tired of the gangs of terrorists, have responded violently, adding to this country's turmoil and unrest. Pray that the Holy Spirit would wash over this troubled country, still people's hearts, and bring peace. Ask the Lord to raise up godly leaders, people who would do His will for the good of this Haitian people and God's glory.

# THURSDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:17**

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What does it mean to love God as your Father *and* to fear God as your Judge?

The first century Christians that Peter was writing to were facing persecution. They believed in Jesus and strove to live differently: treating one another as brothers and sisters and finding their identities as children of God. As a result, their lives began to resemble the holiness of God. To the culture around them, this made them different and weird. They were like *foreigners*, and this led to their persecution. As one commentator writes, “Because of their Christian faith, they were being marginalized by their society, alienated in their relationships, and threatened with—if not experiencing—a loss of honor and socioeconomic standing (and possibly worse).” (Karen Jobes)

Peter wrote to these new Christians to encourage them to keep striving to live holy lives, even amidst the difficulties they were facing. As followers of Jesus, they were *supposed* to be different from those around them. They were *supposed* to be holy as God is holy. But the difficulties they were facing presumably made them fearful of the governing authorities of their day. Peter’s letter begs the question: As God’s children, which authority should they live to please—the authority of their society or the authority of their Father, God?



Having already reminded them that they should be “*obedient children*” (1 Peter 1:14), Peter now points out that they do not belong to this world, for they are *sojourners*, living in this world only temporarily. Their true home is with God. What matters more, pleasing worldly authorities for temporary gain, or pleasing the everlasting God for eternal gain? This is a great question for us today.

## QUESTIONS

In what ways has following Jesus made you feel like a *sojourner* in this world? Can you think of a time when you had to give up worldly gain to live a life that honored God?

## PRAYERS

### For Three Angels Haiti

Our 300 Angel House students and faithful staff are challenged just getting to school or work at Three Angels Haiti each day. Pray for God’s protection, that He would keep them from harm. Pray that the 15 Angel House orphans, students, and 60 local staff members would be safe, untouched by surrounding violence. Pray that their faithfulness and joy amidst strife would attract others to Christ.

# FRIDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:13, 21**

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In the midst of hardship, Peter encourages believers in “Ancient Asia” (present-day Turkey) to remain obedient to the way God has called them to live and to put their hope not in hardships relenting, but in the grace shown to them when Jesus returns. What is this grace they will be shown? Peter earlier mentioned a never-ending inheritance (1 Peter 1:4) and salvation of their souls (1:5, 9). Let them not be distracted by worldly cares nor persecution’s worries. Rather, with good judgment and alertness of mind, let them resist anything that would derail their holy living.

“Hope” in this sense is not merely a good thought of the future. Hope here determines how they live now. This may seem burdensome until we realize that this hope is not something they must muster on their own. This hope is “*through Him*” (1 Peter 1:21). God has acted through Jesus, Jesus then empowering His followers to live rightly.

How does this translate to us? Most Americans do not face persecution in the same way as Peter’s original audience. Although we differ from our surrounding culture (and rightly so), we do not often face hardships for our beliefs (although it can happen). While the threat of persecution tempted these Christians to stray from holy living and conform to worldly ways, I believe our temptation is of a different nature altogether. Our culture promises prosperity for all who work hard for it. It tells us

that if you have wealth, it is because you have earned it; and if you don't, it is because you were unwise or slothful. This sets us up to believe that prosperity is the goal.

Could our temptation to stray from holy living and conform to the patterns of this world be the allure of “the good life”? Do we seek to live holy lives, or do we seek more comfort, more security? Does the longing for a better worldly life replace our hope for God's ending inheritance and salvation of our souls? Possibly. Whatever our temptation, let us not be distracted by the cares or stresses of this world. Rather, with good judgment and alertness of mind, let us resist anything that would derail us from holy living.

## QUESTIONS

Have you ever thought of hope as something that determined how you lived? What is it that you truly hope for? How might you hope more for the things of God than the things of this world?

## PRAYERS

### For Three Angels Haiti

Three Angels Haiti is entirely donor supported. The orphans in our full-time care and kindergarten through 8th grade students need sponsors. Please pray that God would stir hearts among prospective donors to sponsor one of these precious children who follow Christ. Ask God to continue His faithful, loving provision for this vital ministry.

## Sources

- Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1990).
- Karen Jobes, *1 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Ada, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2005).

