

A Father of Faith

July 2, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "A Father of Faith" and focuses on First Peter. Thank you to Ed, Paul, Tim, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is First Peter 1, 1 to 9. Happy birthday this week to Renee and to Peter.

Welcome, Prayer, Announcements

Good morning everybody. I bring greetings from Ireland back on Friday. The longest day of my life. I was up for 22 straight hours coming home, but anyhow we arrived. We're still recovering from our trip. Great experiences, great landscape, great hikes close to the ocean in lots of places and it was just really fine to be away, but we're glad to be home too. So welcome to all of you here today. We see our Great Lakes friends and students have finished their school year and are away.

A couple of announcements this morning. So, birthdays Shirley has a birthday and Sellina as well and anniversaries Gloria and Jon. How many years? 59. Wow. Congratulations and John and Glynnis are also celebrating an anniversary of this week. I have some prayer requests. Many of our students are traveling this weekend. We pray for their safety. A bunch of them have graduated this Friday. I think there was 46 graduated, something like that. Pretty big number and we wish them well.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven we are thankful for this time that we can be together. That as we gaze around the room at each other we can find encouragement from the presence of each one, for the struggles that we have had in our lives, for the blessings that you have been to everybody's life. And that one of the blessings that we have in each other is our faith in you, our love for Jesus and for the Holy Spirit that has promised to us as we live our lives. We pray Father today as we join together and praise for you as we sing and as we pray and as we commune that you might be with us and bless us in this wonderful time together. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Communion

Does anyone remember June 6th 1999 in Belgium? No? Shocking. It was an average day at a Belgium high school and everything was going as per normal. When lunchtime came around the Belding's, all high school students come into the cafeteria and they had on site their bottles of Coca-Cola. Does that ring a bell? Anybody? Students start purchasing bottles of Coca-Cola, they start drinking, but complaints start coming in. Students feel nauseous. Some of them feel like they're going to throw up. Some feel a little weak. Some start feeling breathing problems and the list keeps going. They start coming back to the cafeteria folks and the cafeteria folks say, "Oh, something's wrong with this Coke." So they stop selling it. Local news picks us up the next couple days and then a couple more schools in the next couple days start experiencing the same things over and over again. It gets more and more notice in the local press and soon people start calling into the poisonous control hotline in Belgium asking about other Coke products. And oh, could this be the source of my... and soon within a week over the entire country reports start pouring in of various health effects because of Coke. But more than that, all Coke products. So not just Coke, but also what's the Coke... what's the water? Dasani water, Fanta, every Coke product? Investigators start looking into this. What's going on?

Of course these various products are made different factories, so there doesn't seem to be a link anywhere. And they start, you know, they start thinking, "Well, this may be a moment of people hearing something, believing it, having potentially real symptoms, and then the hype just cycling upwards." They do actually find the original instance in that original high school, the mixture of the gas that makes Coke bubbly was slightly off and therefore it had a slight odor to it. And whether that resulted in actual causal illness or just led to people thinking they were ill, no one knows. But within a two-week span, the government at the time in Belgium actually banned all Coke products in the entire country.

You see, there was a doctor in Brussels who called the hotline and asked the hotline, "Has anybody connected any Coke product with this particular serious illness that I'm dealing with with one of my patients?" The nurse on the hotline said no, but nonetheless that entry went into the database. As someone inquired about this serious illness in connection to Coke, and then the minister responsible for public safety, the next week got up in front of everybody and said, "We've even had this in connection and the cycle." It got so bad that the Coke in the company, Coke in Belgium, actually dumped millions upon millions of their product down the drain. They issued a blanket wide, came out and said, "We're so sorry we let the country of Belgium down. We're going to fix the problems, took full blame." And then within a couple months, of course, everything was back to normal.

What I want to suggest today is we live in a very complicated and murky world. That story has a lot of half-truths, kind of truths, effects that are real, effects that are fake, but people feel are real, health effects that real people really have, but are generated from something that wasn't true, at least provable true. One of the great benefits we have here today is we have something that we can say is a hundred percent true. Uncomplicated. There's no shading. There's no, "Well, it's kind of true here and kind of true there." What we remember this morning at the table, there's no table, metaphoric table, is that Jesus came, saved us from our sins, and that we will be with him one day. There's a lot more we can say, there's a lot more, sorry, we could say about that, but that truth, that set of truths is uncomplicated and always true. And to matter the swirl that goes on around us in this planet, and sometimes it's really hard for us to figure out, even as Christians, what is true and what isn't, or what shade of truth a thing is, we always know that we have this to hold back to. So, this morning as we take the fruit and the vine, I'd like to encourage us. I don't want to impede on however you personally connect with God in this time, but I'd love to suggest that perhaps a word of thanks. In today's world of complication and untruths, thank you Lord, we have this. We have this rock that we can build our lives on and be confident in. Let's go to God in prayer.

Dear Lord, thank you for all you've given us and all you've blessed us with. Thank you for this time. Lord, I want to thank you for your son. Thank you for the gift that you have given us through him, that sacrifice that was made on our behalf, both his blood, his body. Lord, thank you that we can have this anchor in our lives that holds us in place no matter the winds that surround. Help us to remember well. Help us to live like a people who have remembered. In Jesus name, Amen.

Reading

[1 Peter 1:1-9](#)

Good morning. Before I do the reading, I'd like to say something about it. Perhaps I overthink things too much. When I ever, whenever I try to say or do something good or godly, I wonder if people are

thinking about my past. Oh, Tim used to do this or that or Tim used to be this or that. I overthink. And I don't like it. I don't like that I do it. I don't like people to do it. I don't like anybody, but when we read this first Peter's message from first Peter, I think it's good to keep in context. This is the same Peter who denied Jesus three times. And this is the first time he sits down to write something good and godly to share with others. So I say all that just to help you to have another reason to listen to the words when he talks about grace and peace and all kinds of trials. Maybe up here. I don't know. It would have been for me. I think denying Jesus three times would be a, it's a tragedy. But this is the same Peter and he sits down to write this.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, the father through the sanctifying work of the spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood. Grace and peace be yours in abundance. [Almost worth repeating that.] Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ in his great mercy. He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into the inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this, you greatly rejoice. Though now for a little while, you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven gentleness of your faith of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him. And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. For you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. [May God bless his reading.]

Sermon

A Father of Faith

Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for being with us today. We're continuing our preaching series on the epistles. And today we're in First Peter. And in my mind, Peter is very much a father figure. He introduces basically the church. The day of Pentecost, Peter was there declaring the words that were spoken in the Old Testament. These last days, God said, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit and they will prophesy. And with that tremendous statement, the church begins. But Peter was a focus on all of this. So what I want to do today is just go through the book of Peter. And it's unique that I think Peter and John had a very unique friendship. Peter was probably the oldest of the apostles, John the youngest. And when you read John and you read First Peter, there's very much a connection that's there. You know, sometimes we just think of the apostles and we name them, but we never think of the connection that they had, the conversations that they had together, which maybe someday when we get to heaven, they'll say, well, we'll tell you all about the conversations. But here's what we have.

And I'm so glad that we have this book of First Peter, and especially if anyone's listening to this and not just here, but anywhere when you get this message, when you're having tough times, I mean, really tough times, difficult times. This is what Peter is sharing. Eighteen times Peter uses the word suffer. And that's getting the point. But he doesn't really talk about the suffering except that he mentions the suffering that is just part of his life. But most important, his faith in God, his faith in Jesus, his faith in

the Holy Spirit, and his faith with brothers and sisters wanting to be an encouragement, even though he has faced many, many sufferings. So it's interesting. In First Peter one in verse three, he says this, praise be to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I have an exclamation point. In his great mercy, he, God, Jesus has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And listen to this promise into an inheritance that can never perish, never spoil, never fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you. Just think of what God has given us through Jesus Christ and to through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed at this last time.

And then he talks about the suffering in all of this, we greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. So we don't really know. We don't have it in detail, but it appears that most of the apostles were crucified for their faith. Some suggested that Peter said he wasn't worthy of dying on the cross. So we said, if you're going to nail me to the cross, put me upside down. I'm not worthy to die the way Jesus died. Brutal, horrible cruelty of that day. And yet Peter says, it's okay. We're receiving the hope that is promised in Christ Jesus, no matter what happens to us. And some would even suggest, I don't care. When I close my eyes and I open them again, I'm going to see the face of Jesus. It's Peter who gives us this great, great, impetuous Peter, this great, great statements of faith. And so he's encouraging Christians who sometimes get caught up in things that they shouldn't be caught up. And so he talks about these things.

He says, it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, Old Testament prophets, but were serving us when they spoke of the things that they have now told you by those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. And then it says this, even the angels long to look at this, our salvation, angels thinking of us. Incredible. It's beyond. I don't know. Maybe the angels would whisper to the other angels. I see a lot of people down there and they don't look like angels to me. They're not acting like angels to me, but it's the purpose that's being said. Here's what Jesus has given to us. And Peter, who often doubt it, turns around to say, I'm going to share this faith with you. Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace been brought to you when Christ Jesus is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you as holy, so be holy in all you do. Imagine when Christ comes and we see him face to face. And then in verse 18, he says this for you know that it's not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you by our ancestors. But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish, without defect, he was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake, our sake. Through him you believe in God who raised him from the dead and glorified him. And so your faith and hope are in God. Just precious.

I don't know if when Philippians was written, if Paul was thinking about what Peter said, because in Philippians he says, for it's been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for Christ. It's not always going to be easy. Many of us read the story of Victor Frankl World War II when he was in a concentration camp and so many people died. And he doesn't sure why he didn't die, but he said these words and I think that's why he was kept alive. He said this, to live is to suffer, but to survive is to find meaning in your suffering. So we can suffer and people can hear about our suffering. People can come close to us in our suffering and they look at us and say he hasn't lost her faith, his faith. She hasn't lost her faith. Look, look at all the stuff that's happened to them, but they not only haven't lost their faith, they seem to have greater faith holding on. God said, I'll never leave you.

I'll never forsake you and they really believe it. And this is what Peter is saying. So he says, for you know it's not with perishable things such as silver gold that you redeem from the empty way of life handed down to you by your forefathers. No, he chose us before the creation of the world, which always blows my mind because I think in Genesis chapter one in the beginning, God created and here's Adam and here's Eve, but God already knew us. He already knew that we're going to be born in 19 whatever. He saw that. He was with us even before we came into the world. He's with us now. He'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us. And oh, that day when we see him face to face, yep, our loved ones too, but we see him face to face.

Jesus said at the beginning of his own ministry, he said, blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me, rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Jesus made these comments. Blessed are these who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of God and Peter encourages Christians in Rome to do good even when persecution comes their way. And then in chapter two, Peter talks about relationships, relationships between husbands and wives and so forth and no matter what there will be difficulties and sufferings, but it's okay. He says, whoever among you would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and lips from deceitful speech. Turn from the evil and do good. Seek peace and then pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil and who's going to harm you if you are eager to do good. But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed and not easy to do. But Peter says, do not fear their threats. Don't be frightened. And then these beautiful words, but in your hearts, acknowledge Christ as the Holy Lord and always be prepared to give an answer for the reason for the hope that is within you. But do it with gentleness. Do it with kindness. Do it with love. And then he says, and even with that, there'll be some suffering. But you know your victory. You know your future where you will be.

And so, in 1st Peter chapter 4, the suffering continues on and he talks about all of this. And then he says in verse 3, for you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans chose to do, living in debauchery and so forth. And they're surprised that you don't join them. We're not going to join them. And then he says in verse 8, above all, what's most important? Love each other deeply. Love each other deeply. Because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each should use whatever gift you have received from God to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various ways. If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. And if you serve, you should do so with the strength that God provides so that in all things, in all ways, God can be praised through Jesus Christ to him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. That's the end of the book. No.

I almost see Peter saying, I should stop there. But I can't. I gotta say some more stuff. And so he does. He says, don't be surprised if you have to suffer. In fact, let me just read this paragraph and just notice how often that word suffer is used. Don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal that will come upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in as much as though you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. And if you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. And if you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or a thief or any kind of criminal or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, don't be ashamed. But praise God that you bear that

name for its time for judgment to begin with God's household. And if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who don't obey the gospel? And then he says, it's not always easy. If it's hard, it's hard for the righteous to be saved. What will become of the ungodly if it's hard? But as Christians, we just now come to the point of thank you, Jesus, for today. Thank you, Jesus, for health, happiness. Thank you, Jesus, that we get to read your scriptures and learn more. Thank you, Jesus, for loved ones. And the list of thank you, Jesus, can continue year after year after year.

So, he says, cast all your worries, cast all your anxiety on him. Why? Because he cares for us. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. So, here's what you do. Resist him. Stand firm in the faith, because you know that your fellow believers throughout the world are undergoing that some kind of sufferings. And that the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you've suffered for a while, will himself restore you. He will make you strong. He will make you firm. He will make you steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. It gives me goosebumps when I read this every time. The power of Christ living in each one. And Peter, this man that was going to pull away from Christ, comes back and he says, no, I can never leave this because I remember what was said. And these last days, God said, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit and they will prophesy. They will proclaim the word of the Lord. They will live the word of the Lord. They will demonstrate the word of the Lord and they will be courageous in the Lord. And may that be true even for us. And so, he says to him, be glory forever and forever. Amen.

And then he concludes with a unique ending that is kind of strange. He says, she, who is Babylon? Pardon? What is that? Well, I think they're talking about Rome, that Christians were being persecuted in Rome. She, who is Babylon, chosen together with you, that those who even had persecuted Christians, Paul, who now becomes a Christian. Greet one another. You used to oppose one another. Greet one another. Greet one another with a kiss of love. And then he concludes, and I kind of see Peter writing this last word going, peace to all of us who are in Christ Jesus. And may the peace and the love of the Lord be with you all.

Closing

Well, today is Father's Day. And we've all had a father and we've all experienced what that father has been like. And I've noted in the last couple of days, lots of people posting things about their father. My cousin posted about her father, my Uncle Louis, and this cousin of mine was adopted by Uncle Louis and my great aunt. And she said, and so is a picture of my Uncle Louis, and she said, and she said, I was just so honored that they chose me to be their daughter. And she gushed love and honor and thankfulness for the fact that she was chosen by my uncle and aunt. And she made a statement that I've read many times. I've heard people say, I miss him every day. In another situation, a friend of mine, at the passing of his father, when I chatted with him, he says, I do not grieve my father. I grieve what it could have been. So somewhere in between this gushing love and respect for a father and the statement of saying, you know, I grieve what it could have been. I guess it wasn't as good as he thought it would be.

Parenting is an intentional prayerful process. Being a parent is filled with all kinds of feelings and all kinds of situations. It's a nameless series of decisions and conversations and love expressed. And as

Don mentioned today, to love each other deeply, helping children to become spiritual, responsible, caring, independent citizens is a task that's very difficult. I was an expert in parenting until I had children. And I can still remember the feeling when Chad was born of holding him and going, you know what, I have no clue about what to do or what to say. So it's an adventure in somewhat at times of an adventure in success and in failure. But being a father is an important role in life for all of our fathers. And to Paul and to Adam and to Kranti, may God bless you in your roles as fathers. And for the rest of us, if we remember our fathers, if they're still alive, it's a blessing that we know them and they're still with us. For those who have passed, we can remember usually some of the good things and some things that weren't so great.

I can still remember coming across this passage of scripture, it says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. Do not exasperate them to the point of resentment with the demands that are trivial, unreasonable, or humiliating, or abusive, nor by showing favoritism or independence to any of them, but bring them up tenderly with loving kindness and discipline and instruction of the Lord." And I remember reading that when I was about 14. And then one day when I was feeling exasperated, expressing that scripture to my father, I can tell you it didn't go too well. But that's the dynamic of not being, children being obedient and respectful. On the other side of it, parents not provoking their children to anger or exasperating them. May God bless you, fathers, as you continue to raise your children, hopefully in the Lord, to become responsible, caring, independent citizens of this world and citizens of the kingdom to come. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we are grateful that you are our Father. And that as we reflect on our earthly fathers, we have seen many of these characteristics that you have in them. And we are grateful for that, for their example and for their love and for their encouragement. And where they have fallen down, we forgive them. And we try in our own lives to try to be parents to the people around us and to the young people that we come into contact with and for our own children and for our grandchildren, that we might keep the cycle going. The love that you have shown us has been so deep and so important and so moving. And we pray, Father, that we might reflect that love to the little ones around us for the youngsters, for the young adults, for those people that we can come alongside in this life. We pray, Father, that you'll help us to this extent, that we might honor you, our Father, and that we might honor you as fathers to many. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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