

# the Royal

## MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE

**"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9**

### **Week 28 Letters, Chapter 3**

Pastor Miles continues our sermon series in the epistles by looking at Philipians 3. This week in our small groups we will follow a similar format as we did last week.

What we will focus on this week are the following:

1. Examining the 5 epistle observations as stated by Pastor Miles in the bulletin this week.
2. Review the sermon text of Philipians 3, by looking at the Read, Reflect, and Respond he filled out for us during the Sunday Sermon.
3. We will continue in our "Read, Reflect, and Respond" by using 1 Peter 1 as our text. We will look at the three major themes of the entire epistle that Peter highlights in chapter one. The three themes are blessings, duties, and trials.
4. In the "Reflect" section we will discuss what everyone observed as an overview by reading the chapter.
5. In the "Respond" section we will examine each of the three themes individually that are supported by a few verses in the chapter.

Because 1 Peter is an epistle focused around how Christians respond to trials, we usually stop there. But the epistle is filled with so much more, that we do not want to lose the entire meaning and focus of the epistle. So by highlighting the three major themes in just the first chapter, we can be set up to read the rest of the epistle with a new lens. By reading it with a new lens, we can the deeper meaning of what the author was trying to convey. Have a great study!

Isn't it fun studying Scripture!!!!

In Him,

Rock Church Small Group Team

## **Part 1: Opening/Recap Weekly Challenge/Small Group Sermon Discussion**

### **Opening**

- Open in Prayer
- Worship (optional)
- Recap Week 27 Homework
- Small Group Sermon Discussion

### **Recap Week 27 Weekly Challenge**

- 1. Recite Galatians 1:10.**
2. Discuss experiences practicing them Study.

### **Small Group Sermon Discussion**

#### **1. Review the 5 Epistles Observations**

1. Epistles make up 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament (NOTE: All New Testament books are epistles except for the four gospels, Acts and Revelation).
2. Epistles were letters written to either a group or an individual for a specific occasion.
3. Epistles were written to address issues in the 1<sup>st</sup> century church.
4. Epistles usually address one of four issues:
  - Behavior needing correction.
  - Warning against false teachings.
  - Misunderstanding between author and audience.
  - Encouragement.
5. Epistles cannot mean to us now what it did not mean to them then.

#### **2. Review Philippians 2 from the sermon as a group.**

**READ** (Phil. 3:1-10) **Discovery:** Press on in pursuit of God's supernatural version of ourselves.

**REFLECT:** How bad do you want Jesus' fellowship (3:10), Jesus' righteousness (3:9), and Jesus' power (3:10).

**RESPOND:** Forget what is behind and reach for what is ahead (Phil. 3:13).

## Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – 1 Peter 1

### Read 1 Peter 1

The contexts of epistles are generally simple to understand. By doing simple pre-observation methods, we can determine the who, what, why, when, and where of every epistle. Just like we learned in the sermon review section, most of the New Testament is letters to a group of Christians, or individuals, during the 1<sup>st</sup> century. As simple as getting the basic context is to do, it is equally important we get as much information as possible to make sure we are clear of the author's intent of every letter. Epistles are so crucial for modern-day Christians to teach us biblical truth, but they were not written to us, so we have to be diligent in finding out who the author wrote it to and for what purpose. Below we will look at 1 Peter 1. We will briefly examine the context of the letter, so that when we read the letter through, certain terms and concepts make a little more sense:

#### 1 Peter 1 Pre-observation

- ▶ The epistle was written by the apostle Peter between 64-67 AD.
- ▶ Although state persecution from Rome didn't occur until the reign of Domitian in 81-96 AD, there were unofficial persecutions occurring all over Asia Minor. The most notable persecutions occurred under the Emperor Nero around 65-67 AD.
- ▶ Nero had burned down Rome with the hopes to rebuild it. However, he burned down the libraries, coliseums, museums, etc. The city was in an uproar, so to protect him from the blame, he placed the blame on the Jewish sect called Christians. This created a frenzy of persecutions including:
  - Lighting Christians on fire while on a cross, illuminating the streets and coliseums (cf. 1 Pet. 4:12).
  - Feeding Christians to lions in the middle of the coliseum as entertainment for the Emperor and the Roman people (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8).
- ▶ The epistle is broken down into three main themes:
  - Blessings (cf. 1:3-2:10)
  - Duties (cf. 2:11-3:22)
  - Trials (cf. 4:1-5:11)
- ▶ Peter wants the believers whom he is writing to understand the blessing they received from the cross of Christ. That by His suffering we are truly free (1:7-9). Once we understand this wonderful truth, we should naturally be acting like those that are mature in the faith. Not showing fault before non-believers so that we can prove ourselves as honorable before men (2:12). His conclusion is that even in the midst of trials we are to persevere in our faith. The trials should not be a surprise to us, but expected in some form or another (4:14-16).
- ▶ 1 Peter 1 as a group.

Peter uses chapter 1 as a thesis for the rest of the epistle. The following questions are focused around the 3 themes listed above (blessings, duties, trials).

### Reflect 1 Peter 1

1. After reading chapter 1, go around and highlight verses that support Peter's outline of blessings, duties, and trials?

## Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – 1 Peter 1 (continued)

### Respond 1 Peter 1

1. Go around and discuss how verses 3-5 are an encouragement for you. How are these simple verses a blessing for us? If they are not viewed as a blessing, why should they be?
  
2. The NKJV states in verse 13 to “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace...” What are practical ways that we can:
  - A. Gird up the loins of our mind?
  - B. Be sober (minded)?
  - C. Rest our hope fully upon the grace?
  - ▶ Girding up our loins means to be ready and prepared for any act of service, whether in act or deed.
  - ▶ Though to be sober does mean to be free from intoxicants, the emphasis is on the alertness that comes from being sober-minded.
  - ▶ Resting our hope fully upon the grace is in the imperative mood, meaning this is a command for all believers to do.
  
3. Most of us probably won’t endure trials like these Christians did in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, but we will still endure trials. How do you view these trials?
  - ▶ Consider verses 6-7 and compare the responses to the question to these verses.

## Part 3: Weekly Challenge

- ▶ **Scripture Reading Guide:** Go through the devotions that correspond with each day. These are given to everyone in their lesson plan every week. (November 22 – November 28)
- ▶ **Scripture Memory:** “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” **1 Pet. 1:13 (ESV)**
- ▶ **Bible Study Tool:** Navigate through [www.blueletterbible.com](http://www.blueletterbible.com) and discover the great resources available for free for your personal gain.
- ▶ **Spiritual Formation Practice:** Each week we will introduce a “spiritual discipline” that each person can try to adapt to their personal devotion. This week is the **Discipline of Study.**

The discipline of study has been repeated week after week because in order to understand anything in its entirety, the discipline of pursuing it has to become an essential habit. Scripture is no different, and studying the various parables is even more crucial to study. Author’s intent of writing a historic document is always hard to grasp, but is possible to get to a clear understanding of.

So for the “Letters” and even to the end of the Royal series, we are going to really focus on study. We really want to challenge you to grow in the study and knowledge of the Word, so we can grow closer to Him.