

DEEP SIX STUDY

March 21st, 2021

Jesus in the Letters – “A Surprising Resiliency”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: The Apostle Peter is everywhere in the gospels – displaying great faith, then great failure. Always the first among the disciples to step forward in faith, but never seeming to get it right. After his final failure and desertion, though, Jesus meets him with *unbelievable grace*. That grace taught Peter a surprising resiliency – a resiliency he shares in his two letters to Christians in exile from their homeland.

1. Exiles: This Isn't Your Fight (1 Peter 1:17-21 NIV)

- Peter writes to exiles facing persecution – although not so much the deadly persecution other believers faced in places like Rome, but the persecution of “not fitting in.” These were exiles living a counter-cultural life that was in obvious opposition to the culture and religion around them.
- In the midst of a culture they were tempted to either give in to or to fight, Peter reminds them that it isn't their fight; they are simply to remember who (and whose) they are, and to live their lives for the glory of another kingdom – the Kingdom of God.
- The source of most of our stress and anxiety in life is because we put our trust in *plans and people* – and they inevitably let us down. Peter reminds us to make plans and love people, but put our trust only in God and his promises. Do that, and we'll always have a home – an eternal home.

2. Eschatology: This Isn't Your Finish Line (2 Peter 3:3-4, 9-10 NIV; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NIV)

- “Eschatology” is simply the study of the doctrine and teachings about future events – specifically, the anticipation of “the day of the Lord” when Jesus returns to earth.
- Although “the day of the Lord” is often described elsewhere in the Bible as catastrophic and apocalyptic, Peter reminds us that it will simply be a time when “everything will be laid bare.” When Jesus comes back to establish his eternal kingdom, his “fire” will reveal and remove everything that is broken, evil, and unjust about the world, leaving only the good and beautiful.
- The “works” that we do as Jesus' followers will also be revealed, and those that are done for mercy, justice, generosity and love will endure forever; the rest will be “burned up.” “Our job as Christians isn't to burn stuff up; our job is to build things that won't burn.”
- As exiles for God's Kingdom, our purpose is to build that kingdom here on earth by loving and serving those around us – even those who may persecute us – and by declaring the truth of the gospel through our work and words.
- This life isn't our fight or our finish line – we won't know or see the full impact of our work for the Kingdom of God until the King returns to reveal everything and make everything right. Remember who we belong to, and don't give up!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Jeremiah 29:10-14; Matthew 25:31-40; John 3:16-18; Philippians 1:9-11; 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Videos of the Week: [1 Peter](#), [2 Peter](#) and [The Day of the Lord](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. As a 21st-century American Christian, do you feel like you're living in exile? Why or why not?
2. As we're faced with the dual temptations of either giving in to the culture around us or fighting to overcome it, why is it so important to remember that we're really exiles who are called to serve another Kingdom altogether?
3. Why do "plans and people" invariably let us down? What's the remedy for that?
4. Reread 2 Peter 3:9-10. What does Peter mean when he says that "everything done in it [the earth] will be laid bare"?
5. Why do you think Jesus will have to "destroy" everything when he returns? Isn't that bit extreme?
6. Peter's basic admonition to the Christians he writes to is to "live with the end in mind" – to live their lives with the purpose of building God's Kingdom and growing his family. What would it look like if we "lived with the end in mind" today?