

The First Letter of St Peter - *Encouraging words for our time.*

By Stephen RevRev

Session Five: imperatives for Godly living in hard times.

Passage: 1 Peter 2:13-5:7

Introduction

This letter of Peter is bursting full of imperatives, commands and exhortations, eg Be holy, Fear God, Love one another earnestly. So much so, it becomes a bit overwhelming and hard to hear what Peter might actually be saying. In this study we will try and discover the essence of his message.

READ the whole of 1 Peter carefully. **LIST** every imperative, command or exhortation you come across. There are more than 30. (*My Bible study partner is extremely dedicated and not only did this for 1 Peter but also for the Gospels of Mark and John. The results are fascinating*)

CLASSIFY your list into similar groups of imperatives. (You could write them out onto cards and sort them into piles) Try to **REDUCE** the number of groups to as small a number as possible. Maybe they can be into just three different sets?

CHECK your groups against the teaching and commands of Jesus in the Gospels.

APPLY. Which of Peter's imperatives is most helpful to you in your ability to cope in time of trial?

BONUS material. "The Descent into Hell" 1 Peter 3:18-22

This passage is possibly the most controversial passage in 1 Peter. Before we reach for the commentaries, let's see if we can unpick it?

It sounds similar to the words of Jesus:

*"Jesus began to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected..be killed and after three days rise again "*Mark 8:31

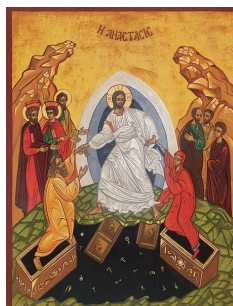
And also to the words of Paul:

"For what I received I passed onto you as first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day." 1 Corinthians 15:3&4

And the words of The Apostles Creed.

"...Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,dead and buried: He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead...."

I wonder if this is an early form of a creed? The reference to baptism is strange but could indicate it was part of an early baptismal creed? Going down, descent, and coming up, ascend. It is vital to our faith that Jesus really died and rose victoriously from the dead. This is depicted in the icon of the Anastasis (resurrection). Overleaf is a line drawing of this icon for you to print off and colour. The artists among you could try painting your own icon of the Anastasis? Please send us your pictures.



RESURRECTION

