

SESSION 7: THE WAY OF THE CROSS PT2

FROM THE LAST SESSION:

What examples are there of Peter encouraging his readers to 'deny themselves and pick their cross'?

What were the five 'S's from the last session?



READ

The first two 'S's, *salvation* and *sanctification* are truths for us to believe and should transform our ways of thinking.

The last three, *submission*, *service* and *sacrifice* are characteristics of followers of Jesus and should be visible in our daily lives.

As we continue to make these five 'S's the basis of our healthy discipleship, we should not be surprised that a sixth, *suffering*, becomes part of our Christian experience.

Salvation

Peter goes into some detail to explain the great depths of God's salvation. He wants his readers to hold fast to it and to celebrate it, and to take their hope from it. He even tells them that angels long to look into it!

Peter talks about salvation in the past, the present and the future.

It has been said that God:

- has saved us from the punishment of sin
- is saving us from the power of sin
- will save us from the presence of sin

Discussion: Look at the following passages.

What can we learn from them about our past, present and future salvation?

Ch 1 v5

Ch 1v18-20

Ch 2 v2

Ch2 v10

Ch2 v24,5

Ch3 v18



A VERY IMPORTANT POINT. We live in a society that stresses the importance of the individual. In the western church, we often think about salvation in the same way. HOWEVER, look again at Ch 2 v5-12. Peter is teaching about how God is saving us now. But look carefully: he is not focussing on individuals. Rather, he is addressing entire congregations of believers.

Discussion: How can we experience the power of God's salvation as a church, rather than just as individuals?

READ

Sanctification

Our sanctification is closely related to our salvation. Sanctification means to set apart and prepare something for a special purpose.

In the Old Testament, anything used for worshipping God in His temple had to be sanctified by cleansing and sprinkling with the blood of a sacrificed animal. Peter refers to this at the very start of his letter.

Once an item has been sanctified it becomes acceptable to God and is set apart. It cannot be used for any other purpose. It has become *holy*.

All Peter's teaching about attitudes and behaviour begins with this. We have been set apart as God's special instruments to bring 'praise, glory and honour' to His Son. THEREFORE every aspect of our lives should reflect this. We should be holy in all we do because God is holy.

To be holy means there are things we must do, which non-Christians do not have to do and there are things which non-Christians might do, which we cannot.

Discussion: Peter's letter is full of examples of this, but for now, look together at Ch4 v1-11. How does Peter instruct his readers to fulfil both of these expectations?

FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

Peter also talks about 'setting apart' from the opposite perspective. In Ch3 v15, we are told that we must 'set apart Christ as Lord'. This could be the key to the whole letter and how to grow and multiply healthy disciples:

Imagine everything in your life had to be put in one of two columns. 'Setting apart' here

means putting the Lord in a column on His own. We can call this Column One.

Everything else in our lives goes in Column Two. But notice, we are to set apart Christ as *Lord*. This means everything in Column Two is there for His use and pleasure. However, we must never allow *anything* in Column Two to become so important to us that we would ever consider moving it into Column One. To set apart Christ as LORD means never allowing anything to interfere or challenge His will or command. Everything has to be given over to His pleasure.

What are the things that we as a church, a community and as individuals find most difficult to keep out of column one? How does this relate to our 'Aah that I must leave all this' list from Session 5?

