

1 Peter 1:17-23 – The apostle calls believers to live up to who they are

We are empowered to show the same love, which redeemed us, to others

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

"Since you call on a Father" – NASB "If you address as Father": only Christians call God 'Father'.

"Reverent fear" – respect, deference; awe not terror.

18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

"You were redeemed" – slaves could be freed for a ransom; "redeem" meant buying back a prisoner of war. We are prisoners of sin and sin's curse, and we cannot raise the price. Only God can ransom us by payment in Jesus' blood, the full final sacrifice.

20-21 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your 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.

"He was chosen" – God planned redemption through His Son from the beginning of time. Both the law and the coming of Christ were part of His plan.

"Last times" – between Jesus first and final coming.

22-23 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

"For you have been born again" – Peter exhorts readers and hearers to 'become what you are'. The evidence of becoming a Christian is the Holy Spirit's transformation of character from within, hence "love from the heart".

"Through the living... word of God" – God's word is not magical but at the same time it has spiritual power, working in concert with the Holy Spirit.

REFLECTION To be "redeemed from the empty way of life" is by definition a release into new life, which is what happens when we face up to the truth about God and about ourselves, and know we have to do something about it – be born again spiritually. But is a new life that is not empty, but full – full of the awareness of God's love for us, that redeemed us, undeserving as we were. The love that we experience, knowing God, is also the love that we give out. Any close relationship can bring friction as well as synergy. But knowing we are loved, is being able to love others, whatever is occurring.

QUESTION *What about God's love for us is so special? How does His kind of love show up the gaps in our kind of love?*

PRAYER Lord God, we are so grateful that we can call on You as a loving and completely fair Father. And at this season of new life, new beginnings and new awareness of what Your Son Jesus has done for us, we thank you for the free choice we have. Once again we ask Jesus to take lordship of our lives so that we can believe in You, know Your love and security – and be free to share that love with others who need You. Amen.

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The Living Word

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Bible readings for Sunday, April 26, 2020, with explanatory notes

Bible study on the Revised Common Lectionary passages for **April 26**

Prepare by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on the pulpit teaching

Easter 3 theme: **Changed lives show our thanks for the price God paid for us**

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 – Praise for God's goodness in deliverance

Luke 24:13-35 – Two disciples returning to their village get a Bible study

Acts 2:14, 36-41 – Peter tells the crowd they killed their Lord and Messiah

1 Peter 1:17-23 – The apostle calls believers to live up to who they are

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 – Praise for God's goodness in deliverance

The psalmist pledges a public thanksgiving

1 I love the LORD, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy.

2 Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live.

"He heard my voice" – personal thanksgiving for deliverance from death. Possibly written by a king – see Hezekiah's deliverance, Isaiah 38:10-20.

3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow.

4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "LORD, save me!"

"Cords of death entangled me" – pulled towards the realm of the dead. Jonah prayed in a similar way, Jonah 2:5, also Psalm 18:4-5.

12 What shall I return to the LORD for all His goodness to me?

"What shall I return" – or render. The meaning is to pay back positively. This verse acts as the headline.

13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.

REFLECTION The Hebrew Scriptures (OT), the good news of Jesus Christ (gospels) and Christian living in the power of the Spirit (Acts and letters) give us three different perspectives from the same author, the Holy Spirit. This OT poem of thankfulness for deliverance from death points to our living in gratitude to God for His reprieve of us, paid for in a servant-like way by the blood sacrifice of His Son.

QUESTION *How might the world see in us thankfulness for what the Lord has done?*

14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people.

"Cup of salvation" – after the Passover meal and following the third cup of wine, this psalm is read and Jesus would have shared this reminder of God's salvation on the night he was betrayed, Matt. 26:27; Luke 22:14-22.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His faithful servants.

16 Truly I am Your servant, LORD; I serve You just as my mother did; You have freed me from my chains.

"I am Your servant" – words brought alive in John 13:1-17 by the Lord showing that every disciple must have the heart of a servant.

17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to You and call on the name of the LORD.

18-19 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the house of the LORD – in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

"Courts of the house of the Lord" – temple or tabernacle precincts.

Luke 24:13-35 – Two travelling disciples get a Bible study

They learn how recent events were foretold

13-14 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

"Two of them" – perhaps husband and wife and one named Cleopas, (v.18), John 19:25, walking NW.

15-16 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising Him.

"Kept from recognising" – Jesus needed them, first, to grasp how His life, death and resurrection were all part of God's plan of wider salvation.

17-18 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.

One of them, named Cleopas, asked Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"Does not know" – Romans crucified as a deterrent.

19 "What things?" He asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

20-21 The chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him; but we had hoped that He was the One who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

"Redeem Israel" – Messiah, for them, would free them from Gentile rule; God's redeeming purpose was freedom from slavery to sin.

22-24 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

"Did not see Jesus" – these two had not heard about Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, John 20:1, 16-18.

25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.

"The Messiah... suffer these things" – they thought the crucifixion negated Jesus being the Messiah. It confirmed it because it was foretold.

"Moses and all the prophets" – the whole OT points forward to Jesus.

• **For further study:** Isaiah 50:4-9; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 2, Psalm 16, Psalm 22, Psalm 118.

28-29 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if He were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So He went in to stay with them.

"Stay with us" – hospitality was customary, but they wanted to know more.

30-31 When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised Him, and He disappeared from their sight.

"He took bread" – although not the host but the guest.

"He disappeared" – in a new body with different properties. He ate, but also appeared through walls, disappeared, and covered distances in a moment.

32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33-35 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when He broke the bread.

"Appeared to Simon" – not mentioned in the gospels but confirmed independently by Paul, 1 Cor. 15:5.

REFLECTION This is one of Luke's longest and therefore most important stories. Two disciples, in shock after their Lord's horrific torture and shame, are joined on their journey by someone who shares a different perspective – how this was foretold, something God knew that evil men would do. Understanding how God turns such evil to our good, and why His anointed One had to experience injustice and suffer – seeing Jesus become like a lamb made a sacrifice for our sin – changes our whole view of life. This is Jesus, who then revealed Himself as they ate together.

QUESTION *What is the difference between following the good example of someone who WAS, and receiving instruction and encouragement from the Lord who IS, with us?*

Acts 2:14, 36-41 – Peter tells the crowd they killed their Messiah

Holy conviction comes on them and they respond in a mass baptism

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

"Peter stood up" – first to recognise who Jesus was, Matthew 16:13-19, first in bearing witness to Him.

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

"Lord and Messiah" – Peter had already explained (vv.31-32) that Jesus, born to be Messiah and anointed at baptism, was raised to life, ascended to heaven and was now enthroned at the right hand of God.

• **See also** Luke 2:11, 3:21-22, 4:18; Acts 2:32-33, 4:27.

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

"What shall we do?" – recognising their part in killing their Messiah: the moment of Holy Spirit conviction and new birth.

38-39 Peter replied, "Repent and be

baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."

"Repent" – implies believing. To repent is to change what we believe, from sin and independence, to God. For the Judeans in the crowd, changing their former attitudes about Jesus.

"Be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ" – a public declaration of new allegiance to Jesus following a change of heart. Baptism (the word means 'immerse') in the Bible cannot be separated from the conscious decision to "repent"; it then follows as a symbol of being immersed in Jesus, washing off the old life and rising into the new.

40-41 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

"Three thousand" – from the visiting Passover throng. Archaeology has found large baths in the temple precincts, enough to baptise this number.

REFLECTION Peter's message, which established the pattern for preaching in the early church, set out clearly who Jesus is, and how we should respond. The "repent" and "be baptised" call is to submit, a cost the proud and independent part of us is never going to accept easily! But in the same breath, Peter mentioned something enriching, that enables us to live differently. This is "the gift of the Holy Spirit", the power that raised Jesus from the dead. He empowers us to change and submit, and shows us how to live different, thankful lives that in many small ways show our inexpressible joy and recognition of what Jesus did for us.

QUESTION *We resent change but welcome a promise. How does "repent" sit with you?*