

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will share from what they have learned from their quiet times. Every day during the past week we had a quiet time from a passage in the New Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. We will share the important truths and lessons from our quiet times and try to answer some difficult questions.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 1 PETER 1-5.

(S) **SHARING FROM 1 PETER 1-5**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 1 Peter 1-5. Now we will use our quiet time notes to share truths and lessons from the assigned passages and discuss some questions.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Peter chapter 1.

(T) I want to share from 1 Peter 1:13-17 and 22 about responsibility. After God has sovereignly saved me, I have a great responsibility to live the kind of life God teaches me to live. 1 Peter 1:14-16 say, "Do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, 'Be holy, because I am holy'." God sovereignly called me to be like him. God is holy and therefore I should live a holy life. The word *holy* means two things: On the one hand I should *separate* from everything that is sinful and on the other hand I should *devote* myself to everything that pleases God. I separate myself from the evil things I did before I became a Christian. And I devote myself to know and to obey God's will as he revealed it in the Bible. 1 Peter 1:17 teaches me that I should live my life as *a stranger* here in this world. I should be a good citizen of my country, but I should know that this is only temporary. Soon Jesus Christ will return and then I will become a permanent citizen of his new heaven and new earth!

Sharing quiet times from 1 Peter chapter 2.

(S) I would like to share from 1 Peter 2:21-23 about suffering. 1 Peter 2:21-23 says, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin ... When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly". In the world, when people suffer, they often react with open rebellion or violence. They stand on their human rights or rights as employees. When their employers do not give in, they respond with strikes, force other employees to join their rebellion or persecute employees who do not join their rebellion. Whenever their demands are not met, they turn to violence, beating their fellow employees, destroying their employers' property or even destroying public property. In the world, people generally react to injustice by doing injustice in return. They take "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Mat.5:38). Religious fanatics do exactly the same. They force people to keep their religious rules. If they don't, they persecute them.

How should Christians react to suffering for doing good? The apostle Peter says that Christians should follow in the footsteps of their Master, Jesus Christ. He never committed any sin, and yet when people hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate. He did not pay evil people back by doing evil to them. When people beat him with fists and sticks, he did not threaten them. He could have threatened them with the armies of angels and judgement of God, but instead, he did not open his mouth. However, Jesus Christ did not remain completely passive when he suffered for doing good. 1 Peter 2:23 says, "Instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." Whenever Jesus Christ suffered, he prayed and stated his case to God the Father. He handed over to God the right to judge every case. In his own time, God the Father will judge the unjust and wicked political and religious leaders and teachers. Therefore, Jesus Christ did not feel the need to retaliate or threaten. As a conclusion: when God calls me to suffer, he calls me to suffer like Jesus Christ.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Peter chapter 3.

(T) We will now share the meaning of 1 Peter 3:18-20. It says, "Christ was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built". According to some people this means that between his death and resurrection, the soul or spirit of Jesus Christ *descended* into the underworld, the abode of the spirits of people who lived *before* the coming of Jesus. They say that Jesus preached the gospel to them in order to give them a chance to be saved. This interpretation is impossible for the following reasons:

First. 1 Peter 3:18 speaks of Christ's work of atonement and reconciliation through his *death and resurrection*.

Jesus was put to death *in the body* means that he was put to death while he still possessed his weakened human nature, burdened with the sins of mankind. Jesus was made alive *by the Spirit* means that he was made alive or resurrected by the Holy Spirit, that is, by his divine nature. While Jesus died as to his human nature, he never died as to his divine nature. His divine nature resurrected and renewed his human body so that his body became imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual (1 Cor 15:42-44)! In his death, Jesus Christ laid aside the weakness of his human nature and severed every connection with sin and death. Through the Holy Spirit, God raised him up, so that from that moment onwards he would no longer live in the weakness of the human flesh but in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11).

(S) Second. 1 Peter 3:19-20 speaks of Christ's going and his preaching.

One. Jesus went after his resurrection and not before his resurrection.

Jesus Christ was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit, and *in this resurrected state by the Holy Spirit* he went somewhere and preached something. Therefore, Jesus did not go somewhere and preach something between his death and resurrection! Luke 23:46 says that when Jesus died, he committed his spirit into the hands of God the Father. His human spirit never went down to the underworld or to hell, but was always in the hands of God the Father. After his resurrection he went somewhere in his glorious resurrected body and preached something.

Two. Jesus went upward and not downward.

1 Peter 3:22 teaches that Jesus went upward to heaven. It is a reference to his ascension. Jesus never went down to the underworld to the spirits of dead people, but he went up to heaven to the right hand of God!

Three. Jesus did not preach the gospel, but proclaimed his victory.

1 Peter 3:19 does not say that Jesus preached the gospel. The original word simply means *proclamation*. What was the contents of this proclamation? In the original language, "the going" and "the preaching" of Jesus Christ belong together. It means that his triumphant going upward to heaven proclaimed his victory over sin, death and his enemies! His ascension to the right hand of God was the proclamation of his final victory!

Four. Jesus did not preach the gospel to the spirits of dead people in the underworld, but his ascension into heaven was the proclamation of his victory to all careless and disobedient people in the world.

1 Peter 3:19-20 says that this proclamation of victory was especially directed "to the spirits in prison", who disobeyed God in the time of Noah. Who are these "spirits in prison who disobeyed God in the time of Noah"? Jesus himself gives the answer in Matthew 24:37-39. He says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." Jesus Christ himself teaches that "the people during the days of Noah" *symbolise* all "the careless and disobedient people in the world"! 2 Peter 2:9 says that "the Lord knows how ... to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgement, while continuing their punishment." *The spirits of all careless, disobedient and unrighteous people are after their death held imprisoned in hell until the Judgement day of God.* Jude 1:6 says that the fallen angels or evil spirits are also kept imprisoned until the judgement day of God. The ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven to the right hand of God is a proclamation of victory over all the careless, disobedient and unrighteous people, whether they lived before or after his first coming of Jesus Christ; and it is a proclamation of victory over all the evil spiritual powers like evil spirits and evil governments in the world (Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11; 1 Pet 3:22).

(T) Third. 1 Peter 3:21-22 speaks of Christ's resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven.

2 Corinthians 2:14 and Ephesians 4:8 say that when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven he led all Christians as captives in his triumphal procession. This symbolises that Jesus Christ had conquered sin and death on the cross and in his triumphant ascension to heaven showed the world the Christians, whom he had subdued by the power of his love, mercy and grace!

Colossians 2:15 on the other hand says that also the defeated forces of evil are paraded as his prisoners of war in chains behind Jesus Christ the Victor during his triumphant entry into heaven! 1 Peter 3:21-22 says that after his resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven at the right hand of God, all good angels and all evil spirits, all powers in the universe and all governments on earth are willingly or unwillingly put in submission to Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

1 Corinthians 15:25 and Philippians 2:10-11 teach that all those people who do not submit to Christ's triumph in mercy, must one day submit to his triumph in judgement!

Sharing quiet times from 1 Peter chapter 4.

(S) We will now share the meaning of 1 Peter 4:6. It says, “For this is the reason the gospel was preached to those who are now dead (literally “the dead”), so that they might be judged according to men in regard to *the body*, but live according to God in regard to *the spirit*”.

According to some people, this means that the gospel is also preached to the spirits of people *after they have died* and thus give them a second chance to be saved. That is a false and unbiblical teaching. Instead, this verse says that the gospel was preached to people *during their lifetime*, but they had already died by the time the letter of Peter was written. The context explains the meaning of verse 6.

First. 1 Peter 4:1-2 teaches about salvation and sanctification.

1 Peter 4:1 teaches that the suffering and death of Christ brought final redemption from sin for Christians. All Christians who suffer now under the persecution of non-Christians and die at the end of their lives should arm themselves with Christ’s insight (attitude). Christ’s insight was “to be done with sin”! By his death on the cross, Christ had made an end of the old lifestyle of Christians (perfect passive). Christians should have the same insight as Christ, namely, that their former pagan life of sins has been brought to a definite end. Christ’s death and resurrection redeemed them from their slavery to sin.

1 Peter 4:2 teaches that Christians should therefore not continue to live like they used to when they were still non-Christians, but they should live the rest of their lives on earth in holiness! They should no longer live for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Second. 1 Peter 4:3-5 teaches about judgement.

People, who continue to live like pagans, whether they call themselves Christians or not, will have to give an account at the final judgement of how they lived while still alive in the body. People, who choose to live in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry, will be judged according to their words and deeds while they lived in their bodies on earth.

(T) Third. 1 Peter 4:6 teaches about the purpose of preaching the gospel.

The real reason for preaching the gospel to people is to either save them or judge them. The gospel is preached to people while they are still alive in their bodies on earth, so that they might be saved and then live a sanctified life while still alive in their bodies! Verse 6 speaks of the need to live a spiritual life in the present body in spite of physical death of the present body in the future. All Christians will in the future “be judged according to men in the body”. This means that *their lowly bodies* are already condemned to die one day, as happens to all people on earth (Hebr 9:27). Our present flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). Although all people will die physically, those who respond to the gospel while they are still alive in their bodies on earth, will “live according to God in the spirit”. All Christians should now while they are still alive in the body on earth (2) “live for God according to the spirit”. This means that with *their regenerated or new spirit*, Christians should live for God, serve and worship God (live for the will of God)(2). With their inner beings they should delight in God’s Word and in God’s ways (Jn 4:23-24; Rom 7:22,25). In short, all Christians should now live the sanctified live! The real reason for preaching the gospel to people while they are still alive in their bodies on earth, is that they might be saved and then live a sanctified life while still alive in their bodies!

The reason why the gospel was “preached to the dead”, that is, to people who were still alive in their bodies on earth when the gospel was preached to them, but had already died by the time this letter of Peter was written, was not to save their present physical bodies from persecution, but to save them from sin and eternal death in hell and to enable them to live sanctified lives in the midst of persecution!

Fourth. 1 Peter 4:6 does not teach the second chance theory.

Verse 6 CANNOT mean that the gospel was preached to *the spirits of dead people either in the underworld or in hell*, because these spirits had no more *bodies* that could die, after they had the gospel preached to them. After they had the gospel preached to them, their *bodies* could not have been condemned to die anymore! Verse 6 does not refer to the spirits of people who have already died, but to the spirits of people who are still alive in their bodies on earth!

Moreover, the teaching of 1 Peter 4:6 is completely different than the teaching in 1 Peter 3:18-22. 1 Peter 3:18-22 teaches the universal proclamation of the triumphant resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ in heaven. And 1 Peter 4:6 teaches that the purpose of preaching the gospel to people while they are still alive is that they might be saved and live sanctified lives on earth.

Conclusion: There is no evidence in the Bible that people will get a second chance to hear the gospel and be saved after their physical death! The gospel is preached only to people while they are still alive on earth. Their unbelief or faith while they are still alive on the earth will determine their eternal destiny!

Sharing quiet times from 1 Peter chapter 5.

(S) I want to share from 1 Peter 5:5-6 about the Christian's attitude towards church leaders. Verse 5-6 teaches, "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time". God has forbidden all church leaders to be authoritarian and rule by commands! Instead church leaders should lead the other Christians by example and by service. In the same way, God has commanded that all church members may not be rebellious and refuse to follow the correctly appointed leaders. Instead, their correct attitude towards church leaders should be submission. God has given the elders of a church authority, but their authority is *limited to their tasks*. They do not have authority in every area of human existence. Moreover, the elders themselves are under the authority of Jesus Christ, that is, under the authority of the Bible, of the Holy Spirit and of the other elders. The authority to save, to change, to use and to bless people, to guide through the Word and the Spirit, to give spiritual gifts, to assign specific tasks and to call to specific ministries, ultimately rests with Jesus Christ and not with the elders. But in the areas of their assigned tasks, the elders have authority and the members of the church should submit to their leadership.

Therefore, the attitude that God demands from both the members as well as the leaders is *humility*. And a humble person is not puffed up with his own importance, abilities, or accomplishments. He also does not arrogantly assert himself or try to dominate others. A humble person does not belittle others, but instead counts them better than himself. I want to be a humble church member and follow my elders in the areas of their assigned tasks.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Divide 2 Peter 1-3 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".