

(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 and to answer some difficult questions.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 2 PETER 1-3.

(S) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM 2 PETER 1-3**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 2 Peter 1-3. 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 2 Peter chapter 1.

(T) I want to share from 2 Peter 1:1-4 about **the responsibility of God with regard to salvation.**

First. Faith is a gift.

It says that “we *have received a precious faith*” and “everything we need for life and godliness!” Christians have the very great privilege that they have received a very precious faith and everything they need for life and godliness. This *faith* is the faith of the heart, the inward trust that binds a Christian to Jesus Christ and that saves him. This faith is very precious, because it saves for eternity. The apostle Peter is writing to both Christians from the Jews and the Gentiles. He says that the faith that the Gentiles have received is as precious as the faith that the Jews have received. The distinction between Jews and Gentiles during the Old Testament period has been removed. Peter is repeating in this letter what he said in Acts 11:17 and 15:9, that God gave the Gentiles, who believed, the same gift as the Jews, who believed. God made no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles, because he purified the heart of everyone who believed. This faith is *given* by God to people and can never be earned, but can only be received. God's responsibility with regard to salvation is that he gives the people he chooses faith.

Second. Man never chooses God, but God chooses man.

Some Christians wrongly teach that *faith is a work of man and not a gift of God*. They interpret 1 Peter 1:2, which says that God chooses people according to his foreknowledge as if God only knows beforehand who would repent and believe. Or they say that God chooses beforehand those people whom he knows would not resist his divine influence. In their opinion, God's election is not sovereign election, but is conditional election. They teach that God's choice of people is dependent on man's choice of God. They say that God's election is dependant on his foreknowledge concerning the future decision, faith and work of man. They teach that God chooses those people whom he knows will have faith in Jesus in the future. This is NOT true.

Third. Grace and faith are sovereign gifts of God.

The Bible teaches that *faith that saves is graciously given by God!* Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches, “It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.” Faith does not originate from ourselves, but is the gift of God. It certainly is true that God foresees faith, just as he foresees everything that comes to pass. The question is then, “From where does this *faith*, which God foresees, come?” The only biblical answer is that the faith that God foresees is the faith that God himself creates in the hearts and minds of the people he chose. In John 6:44,65 Jesus teaches, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me *draws* him.” “No one can come to me unless the Father has *enabled* him.” In Philippians 1:29, the apostle Paul teaches, “It has been *granted* to you, on behalf of Christ, ...to believe on him ...” In Acts 13:48, Luke writes, “All who were *appointed for eternal life* believed.” And in Acts 16:14, he writes, *The Lord opened her heart to respond* to Paul's message.” Therefore God's eternal decision to generate faith that saves in the hearts of people determines (preconditions) his eternal foresight or foreknowledge that these people would one day believe. We have to differentiate between God's own eternal and sovereign election to faith on the one hand and the consequences of God's election on the other hand! 1 Peter 1:2 teaches that it is absolutely God's responsibility to elect and to call people to salvation.

(S) I want to share from 2 Peter 1:5-11 about **the responsibilities of the believer with regard to his growth and fruitfulness.**

First. Christians have the responsibility to add Christian virtues to their faith.

2 Peter 1:5 says, “Make every effort *to add to your faith* goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.” And 2 Peter 1:10 says, “Be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.” Although 2 Peter 1:1-4 teaches that it is only God's sovereign grace that makes me a Christian, this does not mean that I

must remain passive! All Christians have the responsibility *to add to their faith* certain characteristics and *to make their calling and election sure!* After a person has become a Christian through God's grace, he has the responsibility to grow in the Christian virtues. A Christian needs these virtues especially in order to overcome the false teachers.

For example, I need the characteristic *goodness* in order that I am not misled by the false teachers. Goodness is moral excellence or the courage to live holy. It is the strength not to be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings (Heb 13:9; Eph 4:14), but instead to contend for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose me (Phil 1:27-28).

I need knowledge in order that my exertion does not degenerate into a foolish waste of my energies. I need knowledge about *when, where and how* to act and especially about *what way* of acting would bring most glory to God and the best results to the Christian Church. On the one hand, I need self-control in order to know when to hold back or even to abstain from any speaking or action. On the other hand, I need perseverance in order that my self-control does not change into a quiet resignation and an apathetic, powerless and despondent toleration of sin and a denial of Christ. Perseverance is that virtue that does not yield to wrong teaching and a wrong way of living.

I need godliness in order to continually trust in the Lord's presence and help instead of in my own wisdom and strength. Godliness is that virtue that does not seek its own honour or interest, but God's glory. It shows that everything I do is done because I believe in the Lord and love him.

I need brotherly kindness, which is the virtue of being affectionately attached to my Christian brothers and sisters and seeks to build them up.

And finally, I need love, which summarises all virtues and seeks to do good to others and save them, and therefore refuses to go along with their sins.

God promises that when I exercise and make progress in these virtues, then I will never be ineffective and unproductive. I will be a Christian who has influence in my neighbourhood and I will grow in my knowledge and fellowship with Christ.

Second. Christians must make their calling and election sure.

It is by exercising my responsibility to grow in the Christian virtues, that I make my calling and election sure. It was God's responsibility to elect me and to call me. But it is my responsibility to make my calling and election sure"! The fact that God elected me was revealed in the fact that he called me through the preaching of the gospel and the work of his Holy Spirit in my heart. I cannot engrave my name deeper into the book of God's eternal plan and sovereign election. But I can lose the visible evidence of God's election when I deny the faith or when I live in sin. A Christian who does not grow in holiness can never really be sure of his salvation. But when I exercise my faith and grow in the Christian virtues, I will become more and more conscious and sure that God has elected and called me to be his child!

Sharing quiet times from 2 Peter chapter 2.

(T) 2 Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgement, while continuing their punishment." I would like to oppose the first false teaching concerning the last judgement that is called "the annihilation theory".

People who advocate this false teaching say that after wicked people die, they are annihilated and stop to exist. They also say that there is no hell. They base their false teaching on the fact that only God is immortal; that eternal life is later "given" to believers; and that unbelievers will be "destroyed", which they interpret as "reduced to non-existence". The annihilation theory is not biblical! The following are arguments against the "annihilation theory".

The first argument against the annihilation theory is that God is "immortal", but has given "immortality" to man.

According to 1 Timothy 6:16, God is indeed the only One who possesses immortality in the sense of deathlessness. Genesis 1:27 says that God has created man in his image and that includes that he created man to be immortal in the sense of existing forever. However, according to Genesis 2:17, God warned the first people that if they sinned, they would lose their immortality; they would certainly die! Genesis 3:19 shows that after death the bodies of all people decay to dust as a punishment for sin. But 1 Corinthians 15:42 teaches that at the resurrection the bodies of all people will be resurrected "imperishable" again! Thus, the Bible clearly teaches that when people die nobody goes out of existence!

The second argument against the annihilation theory is that God has given "immortality" to all people, but "eternal life" only to believers.

John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15 and Revelation 20:12-15 teach that at the second coming of Jesus Christ the bodies of all people, both the righteous and the unrighteous people, will be resurrected and they will be resurrected at the same time! Matthew 25:46 says that the people who are not righteous will then go away to *eternal punishment*, but the people who

are righteous will go to *eternal life*. Thus, while the bodies of both unbelievers and believers will continue to exist forever, only the unbelievers will suffer eternal punishment and only the believers will experience eternal life! The word “immortality” or continued existence does not mean the same as “eternal life”. Eternal life is indeed a gift from God, which the wicked do not receive. But this does not mean that the wicked will not continue to exist. The bodies and souls of people who are not righteous will continue to exist forever in hell. But the bodies and souls of people who are righteous through faith will continue to exist forever in heaven and on the new earth.

The third argument against the annihilation theory is that the word “destruction” in the Bible does not mean “annihilation” or “going out of existence”.

The words “death”, “destruction” and “perish” in connection with man in the Bible do not mean “going out of existence”. In 1 Corinthians 5:5 “destruction” cannot mean “annihilation” at all. In this passage, the Church delivers a sinner to Satan for the “destruction” of his sinful nature, in the hope that his spirit might be preserved on the Judgement Day. The sinner may for example suffer terrible sicknesses or suffering, but he will not be annihilated. Satan can only “destroy” man’s sinful nature, but only Christ can “annihilate” his sinful nature by his work of salvation! 2

Thessalonians 1:8-9 teaches that “destruction” at the Final Judgement is exactly the opposite of “going out of existence”. There the wicked are punished with “an everlasting destruction”, which is “an *everlasting existence* away from the presence of the Lord and from the majestic glory of his power”. The vengeance which God will inflict (8) is a banishment from experiencing God’s love, mercy and care, and an expulsion from beholding and marvelling the glorious majesty of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 20:10, it means “being tormented with burning sulphur day and night for ever and ever”. 2 Peter 2:9 clearly teaches the same, that after death, the Lord will hold the unrighteous for the day of Judgement. The unrighteous dead continue to exist and their punishment is also continued. Nobody is annihilated!

(S) I would like to oppose the second false teaching which is called “the second chance theory”.

The “second chance theory” is also not biblical. It says that salvation through Christ is still possible *after death*. People who believe this false teaching say that everyone who never had a chance to hear the gospel, or never properly considered the claims of Christ, or who died in infancy, will get a second chance to believe in Christ after death. They say that no one will be condemned to hell without a proper chance to hear the gospel and believe. Therefore, they conclude that the eternal state of man is not irrevocably fixed until the Day of Judgement. They base this theory on a human understanding of love and justice, and on a desire to make the gracious work of Christ as inclusive as possible. They refer to 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, which according to them, say that Christ in the period between his death and resurrection preached the gospel to the spirits in the underworld (G: Hades). They also refer to verses like John 3:18,36, which according to them teach that “a deliberate unbelief” is the only ground of condemnation. The “second chance theory” is unbiblical! The following are arguments against the “second chance theory”.

The first argument against the second chance theory is that the state of unbelievers after death is already a fixed state.

Before the Final Judgement Day, unbelievers already suffer in their spirits or souls. Luke 16:19-31 relates that God punished the unrighteous rich man *immediately after he died*. There in hell, he suffered torment and agony. 2 Peter 2:9 teaches that “the Lord holds the unrighteous for the day of judgement, while continuing their punishment”. “The unrighteous” are people who have not been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. After they die, they are “held fast” or “preserved for a definite purpose and for a definite time” in hell. There their punishment continues and they *suffer in their spirits or souls* until the Final Judgement Day. At the second coming of Christ, their bodies will be resurrected and they will be judged. After the Final Judgement Day their suffering will be even worse. They will suffer the added shame of God *pronouncing* their judgement *in the presence of all people who ever lived*. And they will suffer the agonies of hell not only in their spirits or souls, but also in their *bodies*! They will suffer the agonies of the withdrawal of God’s ever present reality from them forever. Jude 7-13 teaches that the blackest darkness “is continually being reserved forever” (perfect tense!) for the unrighteous.

The second argument against the second chance theory is that the eternal destiny of people is determined by things done in the flesh, and never by things that occur in the intermediate stage after death.

In Matthew 7:22-23, 10:32-33 and 25:34-46, Jesus teaches clearly that doing God’s will *on earth*, acknowledging Jesus before people *on earth* and doing deeds of kindness to Christ’s brothers *on earth* determine the eternal destiny of people! 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each may receive what is due him for the things done *while in the body*, whether good or bad”. 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6 do not speak about Jesus Christ preaching the gospel to the spirits of people after they have died and therefore do not teach that people get a second chance to believe in Christ after they have died. 1 Peter 3:18-22 speaks of “Christ’s triumphant ascension into heaven” and 1 Peter 4:6 speaks of “the sanctification of Christians on earth”. Because these two passages speak about different things, they may therefore not be used together to construct a false theory.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Peter chapter 3

(T) I would like to share from 2 Peter 3:9 about **God’s will that all people repent.**

Verse 8-9 says, But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient

with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” This verse is interpreted by some Christians to mean that it is God’s will that all people in the world are saved and that no one perishes.

First. Peter is not speaking to all the people in the world. When I look more carefully at this verse, I notice that the apostle Peter is not talking about “all people in the world”, but about “all the people to whom he is writing this second letter”! He does not say, “God is patient with *the whole world*”, but he says, “God is patient with *you*.” In 1 Peter 1:1-2 and 2 Peter 1:1 the apostle Peter is addressing people whom God elected to save through Jesus Christ. He does not say, “It is God’s will that no one in the world perishes”, but he says, “It is God’s will that *no one of you*, to whom I am writing, perishes.”

Second. The second letter of Peter is not directed to non-Christians in order to evangelise them.

It is directed to Christians in order to encourage them in the midst of very uncertain times and much persecution. The believers may know why this persecution and hardship continues and has not yet come to its end. The reason is that God is busy to carry out his salvation plan in the world. There are still many people whom God elected and who has not yet heard the gospel. God has purposed that all the people he has chosen before the creation of the world will certainly be converted and come to faith (2 Tim 1:9-10). They will come to faith, not on the ground of anything they do, but only on the ground of God’s gracious election and calling! Isaiah 14:24,27 and Ephesians 1:11 teach that nothing and nobody can hinder God’s eternal plan to save the people he wants to save!

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide 1 John 1-5 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”.