

1 Peter 1 - Another Brick in the Wall - Session 1

Persevering through trials - Home Group study notes - 17 March 2019

Note for session leader

Today's aim: to see how a strong belief in two huge truths - what Jesus has done for us, and the fact he'll come again in glory and make everything right - helps us face life's challenges, and become radically more 'other-centred' and less centred on ourselves (radically, because it's tempting to hunker down and look after ourselves when things are tough, and then offer 'comfort' to others when things improve for us. But here and throughout 1 Peter, we are being told "come one - love one another actively, passionately, even as we face trials").

The song by Tim Hughes - 'Holding nothing back' is a good one to sing before you start the study - it's got the words 'free to live' and 'free to love' which fit well with the theme.

Warning: there are some meaty themes in the chapter, like 'chosen' and 'suffering' and 'holiness'. If you've time, you could look at them, but please don't let it distract you from looking at the main thing.

Introduction

Is anybody in your group competitive in games, or relationships. Find out. Ask people when they last got upset about losing a game. Think a moment about why it's so easy to get like that (and so ridiculous too really! Who are we upset with? God? Friends? Fate?).

Introduce Peter if some in your group don't know much about him. You could ask people in the group to do that if you like.

Explain that Peter was writing his letter to Christians living in central Turkey - local people ('pagans') and Jews (some had probably fled the persecution of Herod in Acts 8:1). These people had been formed into churches during Paul's 3 missionary journeys - all within 30 years of Jesus death. And now many of them were experiencing persecution for their faith.

Discovery

Read 1 Peter 1. The New Living Translation is a good version to use. It has helpful words to explain tricky ideas.

Ask people to identify the bits that talk about, a) what God has done to save us, b) what he's going to do one day in the future when Jesus comes back, and c) living well now.

Then consider the following:

- Does the hope we have stored up in heaven (Colossians 1:5), and Jesus's promised return one day, help us stop being so determined to make life work for us now, and more willing to trust ourselves to God and be less upset when bad things - even really hard things - happen to us. (you could lob in the idea of it not being enough to just stop worrying when bad things happen, a sort of Christian Buddhist way of suppressing all desire, which leads to a complete lack of passion for anything, which God doesn't want at all).
- Can we stop being grumpy when things don't go right for us, even in a game of cards!!!
- And then, does the wonderful work God did through Jesus for each of us help us look at each other as if we're all wonderful miracles (which we are!), supremely loved by God, and therefore well deserving of our love and help? In a word, does this understanding help us become more 'other-centred'. And put another way, can we get really excited for each

other even while things aren't going well for us personally? If we really believe it, surely we can. And that's what God wants us to be like (see v22).

Mike talked about each of our lives being our own 'little story' (beginning at birth and ending at death). He reckoned that unless we see these stories as part of God's 'big story', we'll try to run them ourselves and probably make a mess of them and live life pretty ticked off. Have a chat about that if you've time.

Application

Invite people to say where they are in these things, maybe share encouraging stories about how God has moved in each others' lives, and invite sharing of the challenges people are facing. Then pray for each other.

Exhort people to keep close to God - to read their bibles, to pray, to repent readily, to meet with others to encourage and pray. The truth will set us free! (John 8:32) - free to live, free to love!

God bless you all as you meet.

Mike

Home Group Notes from talk by Mike Gilson, Jubilee, Sun 17 March 2019