

Peters Insight/godhead

by Charles Anderson

The sermon explores the Epistle of Peter and its relevance to believers in the face of opposition and persecution, emphasizing the importance of contentment and the doctrine of election.

Duration: 30:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2 Peter 1:21 - 2:1, 2 Peter 3:1-4, 1 John 3:2

Topics: "Godhead"

Description

In this video, the speaker shares various anecdotes and experiences to convey important messages to the audience. He begins by recounting a summer where children interacted with hippies and were promised to be featured in a movie. The speaker then transitions to discussing the letter of Peter in the Bible, emphasizing that believers are exactly where God wants them to be. He also mentions the importance of having a global perspective and reaching out to those who have not heard the gospel. Lastly, the speaker shares a personal testimony of his assurance of salvation and emphasizes his certainty of going to heaven.

Transcript

I would like to take just a moment to invite you to pick up a little piece of literature that I've placed in the back as you leave this morning. It is some information concerning Northeastern Bible College. I don't know how many of you have ever even heard of our institution, but I could spend the rest of this morning, my session here, just telling you some remarkable things that God did over the years as a result of the establishment of this institution.

When I was pastor of a church in northern New Jersey in Bloomfield, along about 1950, I think it was, I had a little vision at that time. I wanted to gather together a group of young men. I had in mind just young men in the beginning, and I thought that maybe the thing that was needed at that time was to teach young fellows not only the content of the word of God, but how to preach it.

I was deeply concerned about what I thought was an anemia of the Christian pulpit, and I thought perhaps we could instill in young fellows a passion and a desire to preach. In fact, I used to call them our preaching fools. I wanted kids who would rather preach than eat, if that's possible.

But, at any rate, that was the concept, and then we wanted to, I further had a desire to teach them how to win souls to Christ, how to become experts in the matter of leading people to a saving knowledge of the

Lord Jesus. And our third objective then was to give them a world vision, realize that there was a great vast number of people in our world who've never had a chance to hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give them a world vision. So, we started.

I used to say, and still do, at that time we had no campus, no faculty, no administration, no students, no money, and no sense, or else we never would have started, I suppose. But, we did begin with only three students, and I must cut this short because I will wander all over the earth telling you about the school, but eventually God gave us a campus in a little exclusive kind of community in northern New Jersey, just about 20 miles due west of Times Square, New York. So, we're in the great metropolitan New York area, and there in a 17-and-a-half-acre campus we established Northeastern then Bible School.

And over the years, as I served as its president, the school grew far beyond any expectations I ever had or dreamed, until in 1980, after 30 years of serving, I felt it was time that they got some new blood, new ideas, new vision. I figured that I was kind of getting over the hill. You know, by the way, I saw a dandy motto the other day in a hotel.

It said, it's better to be over the hill than under it. How do you like that? I thought I should have bought a half a dozen of those and see if I can get rid of them. Well, I got the notion that I was over the hill a little bit, and they ought to get some new leadership and get this thing rolling.

At that time, the Lord had blessed us, and we had grown to almost 500 students, and our graduates have moved out across the whole earth, and we now have about 1,800 or more graduates, and they are serving in all parts of the world on mission fields, as well as here in the homeland in various capacities. Well, I had the notion I didn't want people going around the corner whispering he's a nice guy and all that, but he's a dodderly old fool, and you ought to realize you ought to get out while the getting's good. So, I got out while the getting was good, and yet, and I shall not bore you with the interval, but we had a couple of presidents in between.

Things didn't turn out so good, so about a year ago, they asked if I'd come back, not as president, but as chancellor, and that I would kind of bridge the gap between the old days and the new days until they got a new president, and so that's been my capacity. Some people ask me, what are you doing, and I have to tell them I don't know what I'm doing. I'm just doing what I see I must do, but right now I'm doing my best to represent Northeastern Bible College.

It's very difficult these days to keep a school on an even keel theologically, financially, even morally, ethically. It takes a strong hand at the helm to keep an institution going straight, and we've discovered that. So, anyway, my job is to move around the country and around the world for that matter, and we've gotten off to visit many of our students all around the world in their ministries, and so I'm talking about Northeastern wherever I get a chance.

If you want to get some more information, please pick up one of the blue folders that you'll see out there. There's a picture book that'll give you some pictures of the campus and what's going on, and above everything else, we solicit most earnestly your prayers at this time that God will give us his special guidance and direction in everything. If you have any questions afterward, I'd be very happy to answer them.

You have some grandchildren who are considering training for the Lord's service. This might be the place for them to come. Now, this morning we have just a little shorter time together, and so this will be kind of

an introductory study to what I'd like to consider with you in these morning sessions.

Some Bible scholars think that the Apostle Paul was martyred about roughly the year A.D. 64, and that probably Peter was also martyred around A.D. 67. Now, if those dates are correct, there was about a three-year interval between the deaths of these two great men of God, and already there was rising on the scene an antipathy antagonism to the Christian faith. It began to dawn on people in the Roman Empire that this was not just a Jewish cult, a little offshoot from Judaism, but that it was actually a brand new and different religion.

And then, when they began to examine the special tenets, the special characteristics, of this new faith centered in this Galilean name, Jesus Christ, then there arose opposition, and rumors, and all the rest of it. And so, persecution began to fall upon the heads of Christian believers. They soon discovered that it was costing them something to become, or to be, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they needed consolation, they needed comfort, they needed some kind of teaching, admonition that would keep them loyal and true in spite of this persecution and opposition.

And among the letters written in the New Testament to encourage the saints are the two epistles of Peter, and particularly the first epistle. It is written to comfort, to admonish, and to encourage the saints of God in the face of encroaching and already occurring opposition and persecution. Now, friends, you know, when we talk about persecution here in this God-blessed land of ours, it's just a word for the most part.

You know how to spell it, but very few of us have ever tasted honest, real persecution for Jesus Christ's sake. We get a little opposition now and again. Maybe we do a little visitation in our neighborhood and have a door slammed in our faces, or we seek to give out some gospel tracts and have some wise, smart remark as people resist it, and we have a tendency to say that's opposition and that's persecution, but we know almost nothing about persecution.

I read an astonishing fact not long ago--I can hardly believe it--where a report is out that more than 30,000 Christians die every year around the world for their faith in Jesus Christ. Thirty thousand a year are put to death by one manner of means or another. There are lands, there are places on this globe right this very moment when the epistle of Peter and those passages in the New Testament that console the Christian and promise victory in the face of fierce, satanic opposition are most meaningful, maybe much more so than to us.

But who of us can predict what we shall yet face, even in our land, by way of opposition and persecution, so that these passages may indeed become far more meaningful in days to come? Now, all I wish to do this morning is to establish the people to whom Peter wrote. It's most interesting what he has to say concerning them. Maybe just a word about Peter.

We all know so much about the Apostle Peter, but his confrontation with the Lord Jesus is recorded for us in the Gospel of John, and it's most interesting to notice what the Lord Jesus said when he first saw Simon Peter. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone. The Lord Jesus knows who we are, but he also knows what he can do with us, what he can make out of us.

We may come to him with all of our weaknesses and flaws, but by his sovereign grace he can turn us into something that becomes an instrument that brings glory to his name. And that was true of Peter. He was classified, I suppose, among those ignorant and unlearned men who had taken knowledge of Jesus and

learned of him.

That's how they were accused by their opponents in the early church days. But, you know, it's a remarkable thing to notice Peter's insight into spiritual truth and even great theological themes. For instance, there is no writer of the New Testament epistles who has greater insight and clearer description of the work of the divine Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, than does Peter.

We'll see that in a little while. He has remarkable insight on the Trinity. I think that Peter was a dispensationalist, too.

I don't make any apologies for being a dispensationalist, and I don't think Peter did either, because he made it very clear that he distinguished between the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. He knew that there was some dispensational distinction. He's crystal clear in his explanation of the new birth.

If you are mystified, and we often are, even by the words of our Savior to Nicodemus, and we have to dig a little deeper to get at the meaning of what it means to be born again, Peter clarifies it beautifully in this first epistle in his explanation of what happens, and how the new birth comes about. He has wonderful insight into Calvary truth. He had, in this epistle, he reveals to us some of the Lord's activities between his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

He has the most comforting message on the meaning of Christian suffering. In his second letter, he gives us a wonderful insight on inspiration of the Scriptures when he says that holy men of God spake as they were driven along, moved by the Holy Spirit of God when they spoke God's words. He gives clarion warnings on the dangers of false prophets, and he has a very clear understanding of second coming truth.

Where did this man learn all of this? He didn't go to seminary. He wasn't a learned man. Well, he must have been a man spirit-taught, and out of the depth of that experience, he writes this letter to these people.

Now, let me read how he begins. Sometimes we're inclined to hurry up and get past the salutation of a letter, but you better not do that with this epistle of Peter, because you will miss a great deal. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. That's really only part of his salutation, but it's a very important part. I have a friend who spent some years on the mission field, and whenever I get a letter from him, if it's a two-page letter, I can count on the first page being salutation.

It's like a New Testament epistle. He'll begin, Dearly beloved in Christ, chosen in the Lord Jesus, one who loves the Lord, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and destined to be like Him when we shall see Him face to face. Now, it does not appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and therefore we rejoice.

He goes on like that for a whole page. Then I turn it over, and he says, I'm feeling pretty good. How are you? Gets down to the practical business, but you can always count on his approach in the most spiritual way.

It seems to me that he's getting you set mentally and in your heart for some of the practical things. Sometimes they're not such good news. Sometimes the letter will bring with it some bad news, but it's all right with him.

Begins in victory, winds up in victory. Well, even before Peter starts talking to these readers of his about their forthcoming experiences of persecution and suffering, he likes to get them set by, first of all, pointing out to them that where they are and where they've been placed in the providence of God is exactly where God wants them to be. Notice, for instance, he addresses this letter to strangers scattered.

Now, that word strangers is a most interesting word in the Greek language. I don't profess to be great scholar of Greek, but I'm a great lover of Greek, and I enjoy working with Greek words. They're almost mathematically set up, you know.

You can have fun dividing Greek words. They're parts that they're pasted together, or you can separate them. Now, this is a very interesting word.

It's a little difficult to pronounce, but it's *paredidimos*, and it's made up of three separate Greek words. *Para*, which means down from and alongside of. It's the preposition you find in the word *paraclete*, the word that's applied to the Holy Spirit.

He's the one who comes down from above alongside of us to comfort and strengthen and help us, and then there's another little preposition added, *epi*, which means upon, and the last, the main root of this word is the word *demos*, from which we get the word democracy. It means the people, a people, but in this particular case this Greek word means a people of a heathen city, and so the word, when it's put together, it means this. It is used of believers who have settled down alongside people of a heathen city.

In other words, you're located where the unconverted heathen are. That's where God has put you. Now, with all due respect to this lovely Christian community, you know there's some disadvantages in living in a total Christian community, don't you? You don't have any unsaved neighbors, so they don't bother you much, but when you try to reach out to reach the unsaved, where do you have to reach? Outside of your own community and find them out here somewhere.

So, if maybe, if God has put you in a place where you're surrounded by unconverted people, don't wriggle, don't complain, don't try to get out of it. You may be like these recipients of this letter. You are strangers, the people, believers who have settled down alongside the unsaved, and why have we been placed there? Oh, he goes on to use another term here, to strangers scattered.

Now, that's a very interesting word. Once again, we look to the Greek for its meaning. It is the word *diasporas*, and it's made up of two Greek words in this case.

Dia, which means fruit, and *spiro*, which means a seed from which we get our word sperm. *Spiro*, a seed, *sperma*, and so the application here is people who are who are placed by God providentially among the unsaved in order that they might spread the seed of the word of God, spread the seed, plant the seed. Isn't that remarkable? That's what we are, too, and that's where how God has providentially guided us in our lives.

We are placed providentially among the unconverted in order that we might spread among them the powerful, almighty seed of the word of God. Now, it might easily have been that some of these Christians already tasting the fires of persecution, for later on in the epistle this becomes fairly apparent. They may

have been praying, Lord, change my circumstances.

Isn't that the way we pray most of the time? I've got an obnoxious neighbor, please remove him. Maybe God wants him there, because you and I may need to develop some patience, or some love, or some concern that we don't now possess. Change the circumstances.

No, God says we are providentially placed where he has put us in order that through us we become the instrument for the spreading of the seed of the word of God. Don't pray now to be changed in your circumstances. Be content where he's put you.

Paul said, I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. Mrs. Anderson always used to translate that verse by saying, I have learned in whatsoever state I am except the state of New Jersey to be content where I am. She thought that was maybe the nearest thing to the most unhappy location on earth, the state of New Jersey.

Now, having said a word to them that consoled them a little bit about their circumstances surrounding them, so that there might now be in their minds a little more contentment. If God has placed me where I am, and he's put me there deliberately among unconverted people in order that he might use my life to spread the seed of the word, who am I to complain? I shall not. Now he has a word to say about who they are.

He says, you are the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. You have been elect by God the Father through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. You are the objects of the entire divine trinity in your redemption.

You are God's elect. Now, I don't profess to understand all the vagaries of the doctrine of election. See, there's some people who shy off from that doctrine.

I used to think that words like election, and predestination, and foreknowledge, and foreordination, and all of those words, I used to think they were Presbyterian words. You'd have to be a Presbyterian to understand them. Well, they're not Presbyterian words, and they're not Baptist words, and they're not Brethren words.

They're biblical words. They are biblical truths, and while we may have some difficulty in both understanding them and explaining them even to others, they are in the Scriptures not for our confusion, but for our comfort. You know, it's a remarkable, wonderful thing to know that you're one of God's elect.

Do you know that this morning? Because if you have any doubts about that, get it settled, friend, before this day is out. You can make your election and calling sure. There are some folks here who were in our church up there in Bloomfield, but I always think of an incident.

We have near the Brookdale Baptist Church a little park, a nice little park. A lot of people go out there, the mothers that take their kids out, and so on, and one summer, the hippies discovered that park. I don't know where they came from.

They must have come out from under the rocks, but the motorcycle crowd and the black jacketed crowd took over. There were some couple of thousand of them that came and camped there. They drove the police insane by racing all around the park with their motorcycles, and so on, and it got to be a neighborhood nuisance, and I said to our church officers, I said, you know, we're sending missionaries all

over the world.

Why, God has brought a missionary opportunity right at our doorstep, so let's see what we can do to impact these young people. So, I got them to hire about 11 kids from our Bible college, girls, fellas, Hispanics, couple of blacks, and so on, and we hired them. We paid them a good salary all summer so they wouldn't suffer when they went back to school, and I said to them, now, I want you to get out there, and you've got to give us 40 hours a week work.

Get among those kids and witness to them. Whatever you do, don't wear a necktie. Go barefooted if you can, and some of you guys that have got beards, don't trim them.

Keep them. That'll give some entree to these kids. Well, for 11 weeks, those kids went and mixed with all these wild hippies, and all the while, we had a fellow with a movie camera who was taking pictures, and he kept saying to them, at the end of the summer, we're going to have a movie.

We're going to be in the movies, and we're going to show it in a building around the corner. Never said church. They would never come, I suppose.

A building around the corner. Well, the summer came to an end, and these kids were looking forward to coming to see themselves in the movies. Well, you know, I had to warn our people on Sunday morning what was going to happen.

I said, we're going to be invaded by the Martians tonight, so whatever you do, come prepared. Don't be shocked by anything. It was pretty tough for some of our deacons.

You know, some of these kids came, and they thought the backs of Jews were where you put your feet. They had never been in church, some of them, in their whole lifetime, and it's pretty tough for a deacon to remain spiritual when he looks over here, and here's a guy's barefoot who's been walking barefooted all summer and chewing gum and spit, and over here, this one, and he's wiggling his toes like this by your ears. It's pretty tough to remain spiritual, you know what I mean? Well, anyhow, they came 1,200 strong that night.

Boy, the place was packed. Now, they couldn't get used to our singing. We sang hymns.

They wanted to jazz it up, you know. They wanted to get it up. Come on, let's get this stuff going.

But somewhere en route, I gave a little gospel message, and I said this. I said, you know, I want you to know that I know that I'm going to heaven when I die. Not only do I know it, I know I know it, and furthermore, I know that I know I know I'm going, and in case you didn't hear me right, I know that I know I know I know that I'm going to heaven.

Wait a minute. One more time, I want to tell you that I know that I know I know, and I know I know I know that I'm going to heaven when I die. About that time, they began to say, he knows, he knows, he knows, he knows, he knows, he knows.

Well, friend, the only thing I wanted to get across to them, and we get across to ourselves, is that when you know that you're one of God's own elect, that gives a whole new dimension to life, doesn't it? A totally new dimension to life, and Peter is saying, no matter how tough it gets on the outside, and persecution will come, and suffering is as inevitable in your Christian life as breathing, don't you ever forget you're God's

elect. God has put his seal of approval upon you, and chosen you to be his. This must have been a great deal of comfort to them.

We'll pick up at this point next time. Let's pray. Father in heaven, how we thank thee for the sovereign grace of God that sought us out when we did not seek thee, that found us even when we were rebels, rebelling against thy word, thy truth, and thy love, and we thank thee for the electing grace of God.

We can't understand it ever, but we rejoice in it as a great fact. Accept of our thanks this morning, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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