

1 Peter 1:1-12  
Feilding Baptist  
31.5.26

### Call to Worship

Welcome to worship with Feilding Baptist Church!

Next Saturday my father would have turned 87. Psalm 87 says  
Psalm 87 (NLT)  
A song. A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

- 1 On the holy mountain  
stands the city founded by the Lord.
- 2 He loves the city of Jerusalem  
more than any other city in Israel.[a]
- 3 O city of God,  
what glorious things are said of you! Interlude
- 4 I will count Egypt[b] and Babylon among those who know me—  
also Philistia and Tyre, and even distant Ethiopia.[c]  
They have all become citizens of Jerusalem!
- 5 Regarding Jerusalem[d] it will be said,  
“Everyone enjoys the rights of citizenship there.”  
And the Most High will personally bless this city.
- 6 When the Lord registers the nations, he will say,  
“They have all become citizens of Jerusalem.” Interlude
- 7 The people will play flutes[e] and sing,  
“The source of my life springs from Jerusalem!”

### Footnotes

- a)87:2 Hebrew He loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. See note on 44:4.
- b)87:4a Hebrew Rahab, the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. The name is used here as a poetic name for Egypt.
- c)87:4b Hebrew Cush.
- d)87:5 Hebrew Zion.
- e)87:7 Or will dance.

This Psalm might cause you to yawn, until you look at verse four, and realise, these five places were all enemies of Jerusalem, enemies of God. And how does v4 end? They have all become citizens of Jerusalem! With an exclamation mark!

And there is another exclamation mark, at the end, verse 7, the source of my life springs from Jerusalem! Spring here is the word for a spring of water. A spring of living water does come from Jerusalem, the place where Jesus died, and rose again. Our faith is indeed renewed with the source of water, with Jesus, at Jerusalem.

Father God, thank you for this Psalm, that appears on the surface to mean very little to us. Thank you that even your enemies will acknowledge Jesus, His life, His death, His resurrection. Thank you for the meaning and life that this brings our lives. May this bring us much joy as we worship this morning. Holy Spirit, please refresh us, renew us, and bring us much joy. Please bless us this morning, please bless too this time and this space, in Jesus' mighty name we pray, Amen.

### Message - Living Faith

It is a live and living faith that we have, where grace and peace continues to be poured out, bringing joy now, and times to come.

So what do you know about 1 Peter?

Where was it written? When was it written? Who was it written by and to who? Why was it written? Is it of any relevance to us?

Martin Luther described the book or letter of 1 Peter as one of the noblest books of the New Testament. He said it is a paragon of excellence! In just five chapters, 1 Peter contains all that is

necessary for a Christian to know (Jobes, 1). So it's a book that even now is so relevant. It is a book we should turn to often.

But who was it written to? And what was going on? Five people groups are mentioned at the start, people in the modern day country of Turkey. It was a letter that was not exclusively to Jews or Gentiles. But primarily Gentiles. It was to the churches in this region, to the new Christians. It would have been taken by courier, from one province, to the next, to the next. Why did they need it? Because as new believers, they were living counter to the culture they had grown up in, and were living in. They had left behind them the worship of dead gods of wood and stone, for the worship of a living God. Through the Holy Spirit they were being transformed to be more like Jesus. But this was leading to tension in their communities, hostility, and persecution. Not from the State, that type of persecution was still to come. This was ridicule, mocking, snubbing from neighbours, and the community.

So 1 Peter is a letter to encourage these people, in the faith, in what they believed. It was to remind them of the ongoing benefits of faith. Faith in Jesus is supposed to be alive, fresh, active! And that's what the book or letter of 1 Peter reminds us. In fact, 1 Peter is a book that should be perfect for anyone who is bored with faith!

Let's read;

1 Peter 1:1-12 (NIV - UK)  
1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise to God for a living hope

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

After Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus, Peter greets the people as 'strangers' (NASB), 'God's elect, exiles (NIV), pilgrims (NKJV). What sort of picture does this paint of these people? They are part of the local culture of the areas, a variety of cultures. To the west they would have been more influenced by Roman and Greek culture, to the east more traditional. Now they are worshipping the living God. And as a result of this change, their local communities are marginalising them, shunning them.

So are they exiles? Well, we think of exiles as the people of Israel, taken to Babylon and Assyria. As punishment. These people were not being punished, and they're still in their own land. But the way they are being treated, was as if. So 'exiles' is an interesting choice of word. I prefer strangers. 'To those who reside as strangers' says the NASB. The NKJV has pilgrims, which also seems strange to us. However, if you've been a pilgrim, like those who walk the Camino, who are known as

pilgrims, this makes sense. On the Camino there are pilgrim masses, pilgrim menus, pilgrim rates at places of interest. Pilgrims are valued. But not everywhere.

When you're walking the Camino, the people in the small towns are so welcoming and hospitable, so grateful for those walking. Why? Because the 200 000 people who do this walk each year are their main source of income. But when you get to the big cities like Burgos, pffft, who cares about pilgrims! It's so noticeable. No special treatment! That's how it was for these followers of Jesus, being looked down on, excluded, treated as foreigners (NLT) in their own land.

As I said in the newsletter, this is a challenge for us. We also should be living counter to the culture of the world. Where are we facing this sort of persecution or personal attack, because we are living the ways and character of Jesus?

We don't need a guilt trip or a telling off. This is a positive and encouraging letter, so let's think about what we do, rather than what we don't do. Firstly, we come here, attend church. As far as the world thinks, that's bizarre! We give time and money and expertise. We pray. All three are very strange according to the thinking of the world. Yet all three are important parts of faith.

We contribute money to house children in hostels in Bangladesh, giving children better opportunities to make a difference for their country. The world would ask, why should we care? We help create businesses in the red light districts of Kolkata so that women and young girls can get out of this industry, and not be slaves. There are churches that help people transition from life in prison to life in community. There is one church in Feilding doing this. We don't throw away the key, but help people with a second chance, as God does for us. There are initiatives that followers of Jesus do in regards to justice. Why should we care? Because Jesus cares about us, and we continue the work of Jesus in the world.

When we face ridicule for doing this sort of thing, good! These are the right things to do, and we shouldn't shy away from doing what Jesus respects, and what the Holy Spirit prompts in us. We should be very wary of the temptations of the world, that is based on self centred spending and living.

Here you can see how much you miss if you read these five chapters too quickly. So far we're only half way through verse one!

So Peter encourages the people in verse two, you have been chosen, God knew you would say yes to following Jesus. Does this mean that we never had the freedom to choose, to make our own choice about following Jesus? Are those in the world the ones that just haven't been chosen? No, we are all called. Jesus came into the world because of God's love for all the world, not just for a select few (John 3:16). But, yes, God did know that we would say yes. For our God is omniscient, all knowing. [But we need to unpack the Greek meaning of the word - prognosis - and where it has been used elsewhere in the Bible.]

And we should note the work of the Trinity here, in our becoming part of the Kingdom of God. The Father, and the Son, and the Spirit combine, with the Father's foreknowledge, the work of the Spirit to sanctify, make us acceptable (holy). Because we chose to believe and are obedient to Jesus. It is Jesus' blood that we remember at Communion, the blood, like the sacrifices in the Old Testament, paying the price, the blood of the new covenant poured out to make us right with God, forgiving us. Jesus' death matters so much!

These opening verses say so much, but they're not done. One more thing. Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Well, it's actually more than that. Abundance sort of sounds like a dump truck of grace and peace. The Greek word is actually about grace and peace being multiplied. Here Peter, God through Peter, wants us to be confident that grace and peace goes on and on, and on. It's not a single hit. Like becoming a follower of Jesus isn't something we do once, then put the ticket in our scrap book.

That simply wouldn't do if we're to have the living hope of verse three. Not just hope, but living hope. Which reminds me of Peter's statement in last Sunday's verses. Jesus asked the disciples who the people were saying he was? There were all sorts of answers. But Peter was sure, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Living hope, part of living faith, in a living God.

This is for our salvation now, v5, we've been born again (NASB), given new birth (NIV), now and in the last days, v5.

All this leads us to greatly rejoice, v6. Does it? We're not a very emotional people. But if we stopped long enough to consider what the Father, Jesus and Spirit have done and are doing for us, maybe that will bring a spring of joy? If we stopped long enough to consider the grace and peace that is multiplied for us, that could, rather should bring us joy. If we look at the last three verses, where the prophets and angels longed to see the things that have taken place, we realise what privileged times we live in. We live this side of the cross, when Jesus by rising again, broke the powers of evil, of death, of Satan.

We have much to be grateful for. We have much to believe. May we be filled with the inexpressible and glorious joy that verse eight talks about. But let us match the living God with a living faith.

Concluding prayer

Father I thank you (Steven Stewart)

Father, I thank You for all that You've done.  
You gave Your Son freely for me.  
And I praise You for calling me, drawing me near.  
Out of blindness You caused me to see.

Verse 2

Spirit of life, You are God's holy fire.  
You've kindled my heart with Your blaze.  
And I know You're refining me, changing my life.  
And by faith You're revealing Your ways.

Verse 3

Jesus, I need You as Lord of my life.  
I give all I have unto You.  
Lord, I want to come under Your heavenly hand,  
And to praise You in all that I do.