

# **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

## **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### **1. Christian Joy and Hope Under Persecution and Suffering**

1 Peter 1:3-9 The Baptismal Doxology

#### **A. What are the challenges and threats to Christians today?**

- i. Contemporary challenges: The Paganism of radical environmentalism; WOKE culture; social Marxism; cancel culture; progressivism; the effect of Darwinism upon societal beliefs and man's self-appraisal; transgenderism; LGBTQ; godlessness; atheism; and the loss of absolute truth. The common denominator in these challenges to Christianity is that Christianity and the God of the Bible must be destroyed. Christianity is an impediment to the advancement of mankind.
- ii. Underlying spiritual problems are as old as the fall into sin: the thorough corruption of our nature; man's desire to control and dominate; the rejection of what God has ordered as good in favor of the disorder, self-centeredness, and lovelessness that flows from a rejection of God as Creator and Redeemer.

#### **B. Peter's Joy:**

##### **The Living Hope of Salvation through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

- i. Blessing God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ under the cross of persecution and suffering (external persecution on account of one's faith in Christ and internal suffering on account of the problem of original sin.)
- ii. Who was Simon Peter? Uneducated fisherman, called to be a disciple of Jesus and an Apostle of Christ.
  - a. Peter was a disciple of Jesus (the person and work of His Savior was what he became an "expert" in)
  - b. Peter saw Christology and the redemptive work of Christ as permeating all of theology and the self-understanding of every humble Christian in his or her respective station in life.
  - c. Peter sees the entire life of the Christian as one of joyful confessing under the cross of persecution and suffering.
  - d. Peter believed that God furthered the cause of the Gospel and the kingdom of God on earth through the suffering and persecution of the Church, just as He accomplished the salvation of the world through the suffering and death of Christ.
  - e. Peter's life and ministry was one of joy and singing in the optimistic hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

#### **Suggestions for Prayer—**

**Psalm 34** "The Joy of Those Who Trust in the Lord"

**Hymn 756** "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me"

## Baptismal Doxology

*For the Church Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land*

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again  
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,  
reserved in heaven for you,  
<sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith  
for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.  
<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice,  
though now for a little while, if need be,  
you have been <sup>g</sup>grieved by various trials,  
<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith,  
*being* much more precious than gold that perishes,  
though it is tested by fire,  
may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,  
<sup>8</sup> whom having not <sup>g</sup>seen you love.  
Though now you do not see *Him*,  
yet believing,  
you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,  
<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

### **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

#### **1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties**

## **2. Encouragement for Christians Dispersed in a World of Darkness**

1 Peter 1:1-2 and the entire epistle

### **A. The challenges of first-century Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**

- i. The ancient culture in which these Christians and the early church lived.
- ii. The problem of persecution in the ancient world and the deep-seated spiritual problems which are parallel to the challenges of the Church and Christians today. (There is nothing new under the sun).

### **B. How does Peter address the persecuted Christians of the first century?**

- i. Peter calls them pilgrims, or sojourners, or temporary residents (which means, in part, that preserving life in this world is not the objective for the Church or Christians). They remain in this world for the glory of Christ, for the refining and exercising of their faith in Jesus, and to bear witness to Him for the sake of those who hate and persecute them.
- ii. Peter does not scold them for their ignorance, nor rebuke them for their spiritual deficiencies, he rather comforts them and builds them up in the Gospel of Christ. (Redemption in Christ is a thread that runs through the epistle and reminds us of Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Creed).
- iii. Peter calls them "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"
- iv. Peter extols the Holy Spirit as the one who will sanctify them for the obedience of faith in Christ as they are sprinkled with Christ's blood for the forgiveness of their sins.
- v. Peter addresses them with the greeting: "Grace to you and peace be multiplied"
- vi. No matter the threats to their faith, the persecution, and the suffering Peter builds them up with the Gospel of Christ.

### **Suggestions for Prayer—**

**Psalm 43** "Hope in God; He is Your Joy"

**Hymn 768** "To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray"

## Baptismal Doxology

*For the Church Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land*

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again  
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,  
reserved in heaven for you,  
<sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith  
for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.  
<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice,  
though now for a little while, if need be,  
you have been <sup>l</sup>grieved by various trials,  
<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith,  
*being* much more precious than gold that perishes,  
though it is tested by fire,  
may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,  
<sup>8</sup> whom having not <sup>l</sup>seen you love.  
Though now you do not see *Him*,  
yet believing,  
you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,  
<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

### 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

#### **3. Life Lived as a Doxology of Praise Under Trials**

##### 1 Peter 1:3-9

- A. The unrelenting place of praise in the life of the baptized faithful.
- i. Our baptism has begotten us to a living hope of salvation
  - ii. Hope is unseen, but absolutely certain
  - iii. The abundant mercy of God in Christ's suffering and death is the cause of our salvation.
  - iv. The hope of salvation rests upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
  - v. Salvation in Christ is an inheritance of grace that cannot be destroyed; it is incorruptible and undefiled; it does not fade away.
  - vi. Salvation in Christ cannot be taken away from the Christian or the Church.
  - vii. We are preserved in Christ by the power of God.
  - viii. This salvation is ours now through faith, but it is yet to come.
  - ix. Christ (and His Word) is the singular object of our faith
  - x. We rejoice in this salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time, even though "for a little while" (John 16:16) we have been grieved by various trials (persecution, discrimination, hardship, imprisonment, the loss of property, and martyrdom for the faith). See John 15:26 through all of John 16.
  - xi. God's purpose in "these various trials" is to refine our faith and hope in Christ, which is more precious than gold which perishes.
  - xii. Our joyful confession of faith in the face of various trials gives "praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" in the testimony of the Gospel and on the last day.
  - xiii. We love Christ, though we do not see Him, because of the certainty of our faith in Christ and the hope of salvation.
  - xiv. Our rejoicing with joy is "inexpressible and full of glory" (the mystery of putting into words the comfort we have in Christ).
  - xv. The conclusion to the various trials of the Christian life is the salvation of our souls in Christ.
- B. The place of singing in the Church:
- i. Confessing our faith and hope before a world of darkness and despair.
  - ii. To teach the faithful and to comfort those tempted to despair
  - iii. The purpose of trials is a cause of rejoicing

## **Baptismal Doxology**

*For the Church Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land*

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again  
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,  
reserved in heaven for you,  
<sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith  
for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.  
<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice,  
though now for a little while, if need be,  
you have been <sup>(d)</sup>grieved by various trials,  
<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith,  
*being* much more precious than gold that perishes,  
though it is tested by fire,  
may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,  
<sup>8</sup> whom having not <sup>(d)</sup>seen you love.  
Though now you do not see *Him*,  
yet believing,  
you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,  
<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### **4. What Can We Learn from the Benedict Option?**

#### **Overview of the Book:**

**1** (Chapters 1-3) Defines the challenges of post-Christian America, explores the philosophical and theological roots of our society's fragmentation, and explains how the Christian virtues embodied in the sixth-century Rule of Saint Benedict played a powerful role in preserving Christian culture throughout the Dark Ages.

**2** (Chapters 4-8) How the way of Christian living prescribed by the Rule can be adapted to the lives of modern conservative Christians of all churches and confessions. The Rule of Benedict offers insights in how to approach politics, faith, family, community, education, and work (examples are given from the lives of Christians).

**3** (Chapters 9-10) The critical importance of believers thinking and acting radically in the face of the two most powerful phenomena directing contemporary life and pulverizing the church's foundations: sex and technology.

#### **The Rule of Benedict chapter 3**

1. Order
2. Prayer
3. Work
4. Asceticism
5. Stability
6. Community
7. Hospitality

#### **The Roots of the Crisis: 5 Causes Cited**

1. "In the fourteenth century, the loss of belief in the integral connection between God and Creation—or in philosophic terms, transcendent reality and material reality"
2. "The collapse of religious unity and religious authority in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century"
3. "The eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which displaced the Christian religion with the cult of Reason, privatized religious life, and inaugurated the age of democracy"
4. "The Industrial Revolution (ca. 1760-1840) and the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries"
5. "The Sexual Revolution (1960-present)"

**Positive Accents:**

- “The most important institution to conserve: the family” p. 1
- “Christianity...ought to be a powerful counterforce to the radical individualism and secularism of modernity” p. 1
- “Young adults are almost entirely ignorant of the teachings and practices of the historical Christian faith” p. 2
- “Christian conservatives...have to develop creative, communal solutions to help us hold on to our faith and our values in a world growing ever more hostile to them...a truly countercultural way of living Christianity” p. 2
- The importance of teaching the faith
- The importance of prayer
- The understanding that what we believe as Christians sets us up as living a countercultural way of life.

**Areas of Concern:**

- “The time [is] coming...when men and women of virtue would understand that continued full participation in mainstream society [is] not possible for those who wanted to live a life of traditional virtue” p. 2
- “Christians who hold to the biblical teaching about sex and marriage have the same status in culture, and increasingly in law, as racists. The culture war that began with the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s has now ended in defeat for Christian conservatives....the upset presidential victory of Donald Trump has at best given us a bit more time to prepare for the inevitable” p. 3
- “The choices we make today have consequences for the lives of our descendants, our nation, and our civilization. Jesus Christ promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His church, but He did not promise that Hell would not prevail against His church *in the West*. That depends on us, and the choices we make right here, right now” p. 5

**Concluding Criticisms:**

1. Confusion of the Kingdom of God with culture, nation, and society.
2. Confusion of what the Church is as a confessing community and that faithfulness to Christ is the measure of “success”
3. Misunderstanding of the role of persecution and suffering in the advancement of God’s kingdom
4. The lack of missionary fervor
5. The failure to connect Christology and the Gospel of God’s grace to the life of virtue and Christian living
6. The failure to grasp the significance of original sin, human corruption, and the bondage of the will
7. The loss of joy that is anchored in the redemptive work of Christ.



## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### **5 Christ Is the Only Light that Overcomes the Darkness**

*We will discuss the theses: “Christ is the only Light that overcomes the darkness” of this world by doing a bit of exegesis on 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:19; 1 Peter 3:15; and Acts 5:20. Several theses follow each set of texts. In some instances, there is a comparison between the NKJV and the ESV translations.*

#### **1 PETER 2:9**

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” NKJV

1. The mercy of God in Christ is what creates the Church and constitutes her as the unique people of God.
2. The proclamation of the Church and every Christian is broader than preaching, teaching, or even speaking, but includes the very life of goodness and mercy that is lived toward a hostile world.
3. “Excellencies of Him” or “praises of Him” refers to the goodness and virtue of a life lived from the mercy of God toward a world that is hostile to this goodness.

#### **2 PETER 1:19**

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son,<sup>18</sup> with whom I am well pleased,” <sup>18</sup> we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” **ESV**

1. The Father's delight in His beloved Son at the Transfiguration was a testimony to Jesus' total and complete willingness to lay down His life in the self-giving sacrificial love for sinful humanity.
2. The prophetic Word of God was fully confirmed in the life, death, and resurrection of the Christ to which the apostles were eyewitnesses.
3. The prophetic and apostolic Scriptures are the “lamp” that shines forth Christ who is the light of the world.

#### **1 PETER 3:15—TO EVERYONE AN ANSWER**

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better

to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered<sup>18</sup> once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit..." **ESV**

"But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. 'And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.' "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..." **NKJV**

1. "To suffer for righteousness' sake" is based upon Jesus' promise in the Sermon on the Mount.
2. "To suffer for righteousness' sake" is to suffer for Christ's sake.
3. The "answer" to the darkness of this world is Christ. Therefore, every defense of our faith, of truth, of the goodness of creation, of marriage, of family, of race, etc. MUST be anchored in Christ.
4. The ordinary life we live as Christians flows from the call of the Gospel of Christ and our faith in God's mercy Jesus which made us His people.
5. Our lives bear witness to Jesus Christ in everything we do and say.
6. We are called to be prepared to give an answer, a defense, for the hope that is within us.

#### **TO EVERYONE AN ANSWER:**

1 Peter 3:15 "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and ***always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you***, with meekness and fear..."

- The Word of the Lord Jesus, received in our hearts, is that Word by which we are sanctified, set apart, declared, and made holy to confess Christ in the lives that we live and in the witness that we give to others concerning why we live the way we do and why it is so important to us and for those who do not know Christ.

#### **Acts 5:20**

"Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 'Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.'"

We want others to receive this Life—this Christ—too. "**This life...**" Acts 5:20 – Peter is told by the angel to stand in the temple and "**speak all the words of this life...**"

1. We must know the Gospel, we must know the Law that is fulfilled in Christ, we must know how every aspect of our lives and creation finds its identity, meaning, purpose, and significance in Christ if we are to "proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" by the lives we live.
2. Christ is "this life" that saves us; "this life" that we preach; "this life" that we live; and "this life" that we confess.
3. The ordinary Christian cannot be "an expert" at the darkness, but we can know and receive the Light

# **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

## **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### **6 Relativism and Disorder VS. Truth and the Order and Beauty of Creation**

#### **Introduction:**

- For whom is this discussion? To comfort and build up Christians. To protect the Christian congregation and the Christian marriage and family. To protect Christian children. To be given the answer for the hope that lies within us.
- What are the goals? We are to be experts in Jesus, answering the challenges to the Christian faith from the Scriptures based on Christology and the Gospel. We are to learn and rejoice in the blessed hope and salvation we have in Christ and how this brings order and beauty into our lives.
- Why? Because we are disciples of Jesus, we testify in our preaching, living, and witness to one another and to the world to Him—"to this Life" which is good and beautiful and the source of salvation. (Acts 5:20)

#### **What is relativism and to what does it lead?**

There is no absolute truth, truth is relative and subjective, each person decides truth for himself, it leads to a denial of natural Law, the destruction of the body and soul, mental and spiritual illness, disorder and chaos, and a breakdown of the communal structures of marriage, family, community, culture, society, and government. It is fundamentally self-centered and selfish. It is totalitarian and subjugates all who oppose "the truth" that is not anchored in the objective truth of God's Word and natural Law. It is not open to reason but opposed to reason. It is not open to scientific investigation but opposed to it in favor of its chosen world view. Relativism leads to atheism and a rejection of divine authority. Relativism leads to a rejection of Christ.

(Christians have often been led to jettison their faith, when their faith conflicts with what their subjective will WANTS to do. A troubled conscience is a powerful thing. If a troubled conscience is not relieved by God's Word, which calls one to repentance and faith, it may reject the faith entirely in favor of its own view of morality in order to live with itself, e.g., a child who goes off to college and is swept up into activities that he knows are wrong, his flesh desires to them, these activities conflict with his faith and what he knows to be right, so he renounces his faith in order to cope with the guilt.)

#### **Where does relativism come from?**

The rejection of absolute morality and truth stems directly from Adam's fall into sin and the breach that it caused in his relationship to God. (Genesis 3, 6, 9; Psalm 51:5; Matthew 15:19; Romans 7:18, etc.)

(All humanity, including Eve, descended from Adam's flesh and from Adam's fall [Romans 5; 1 Peter 2:13-14]. The church needs to hold on to the proper use of masculine and feminine pronouns in doing theology, confessing the faith, and in discourse with one another. We should not acquiesce in our conversation to the world's assertion that these pronouns are from an outmoded, misogynistic, patriarchal worldview that subjugates women. The masculine and feminine pronouns capture the beautiful order of God's creation in the giving and receiving of life and love, wisdom and virtue, compassion and care in marriage, family, society, and church).

The corruption of original sin distorts the capacity for man to act positively on the natural law that is written in his heart apart from the positive influence of divine truth from outside himself. The corruption of original sin clouds all human judgment and reason and makes them subject to a warped will that is turned inward and is in bondage to sin and disorder apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth. (Third Article)

**What is truth?** (The real question is “Who is Truth?”)

Jesus is objective truth because He is incarnate self-giving love, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the express image of God the Father, through whom all things were created, by whom all things are held together, and by whom all things are redeemed to enjoy life with God in the eternal fellowship of the Holy Trinity.

- **Jesus describes Himself:** “I am the way (odos), the truth (alatheia), and the life (zoa). No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6
- **All the “I AM” statements of John’s Gospel** not only link Jesus to God’s self-revelation to Moses at the burning bush, but they also proclaim Him to be the source of all life, goodness, beauty, truth, and the One whose ultimate self-giving sacrifice of love upon the cross gives meaning, purpose, order, and fulfillment to the lives God has given us to live.
- **Paul’s confession of Jesus in Colossians**
- **The Apostle to the Hebrews**
- **Jesus Before Pontius Pilate:**
- **The Apostle Peter’s Catechesis on Jesus before Pilate in 1 Peter 3:**
- **The Apostle Peter’s Blessing and Encouragement in 2 Peter 1:**

**To what does truth lead?**

To the order and beauty of a faith and life that is lived in Christ and from Christ, who is the light of the world.

**The Small Catechism**, in the Ten Commandments and Table of Duties, describes the life of faith in the Gospel of Christ to which we are called. The positive descriptions in the explanations of the Ten Commandments articulate what Christ is for us in His active love for God and for others, and what He gives us the privilege to live in for others through faith in Him. These descriptions articulate objective truth, which is beautiful, because it is anchored in Christ’s love for God and for one another. Everything that the first Adam and his descendants failed to be, every lie and deception of the relativistic self-centered world that gives no real peace, joy, or fulfillment is answered by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Here we see what it is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**See 1 Peter 4:1-16.** Peter makes clear that the foundation of our life as Christians rests upon the atonement of Christ, who is our righteousness. This life cannot be lived apart from the preaching of the Gospel and the sober life of prayer. It is a life of love toward one another within the Church and toward those who are hostile to us outside the church. It is a life of compassion, hospitality, unwavering confession of Christ, and rejoicing under suffering.

**The Example of 911 and the Triumph of Natural Law and the Eternal Truth of Sacrificial Love**

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### **7 Global Climate Change VS. The Curse of the Fall**

#### **Introduction:**

In a post-Christian world, we have lost the understanding and belief that we are creatures whose world and life are dependent upon a Creator to provide for us, to sustain us, and to protect us. Human beings cannot live without a god—someone or something that we trust in and depend upon for our security and well-being. Ultimately, when man rejects God as Creator and Savior, we make a god out of ourselves in some way and believe that we can save our lives and our world. (Think of the response to the pandemic). Read 2 Peter 3:1-13

#### **What is Global Climate Change?**

Global climate change (global warming) is the belief that the irregularities and apparent “imbalance” that we experience in the natural world are due to human failures and influences that are threatening to destroy the planet. The religion of “global climate change” is based upon the thesis that the earth evolved into a perfectly tuned ecosystem that if left in its pristine state will continue to provide an environment in which all living things will flourish. Man is the intrusion into this ecosystem, the cause of imbalances that will bring about the destruction of the planet unless he corrects the negative influences that are harming the earth. (Restoring utopia without God).

#### **What Phenomena are real?**

Drought, famine, tornadic and hurricane activity, wide swings in temperature, variation in precipitation patterns, changes in ecosystems in various places, localized flooding, extinction of species, etc. are all phenomena that can be observed. The theses of global climate change, however, must be rejected because it asserts that the earth would be in perfect balance, if only man corrected his failings and assaults upon the earth that have jeopardized the natural “Garden of Eden.” Christians offer a different thesis, namely, that the apparent “imbalances” in (what we would call creation) are due to the fall into sin, where man turned over the dominion of the creation to the Serpent, and to the Curse of the Fall as a consequence of man’s sin and as an instrument of God for our repentance.

The “idol” of the global climate change religion is “mother earth”. She has “created” a perfect world that man has polluted. Salvation for the earth will come from man “cleaning up” and “fixing” the mess he has made out of the planet. Global climate change is a return to ancient paganism.

#### **What is Paganism?**

The worship of false gods, in this case, the natural world and ecosystems of earth which must be served by human sacrifices to “appease” the goddess, “mother earth” so that she will restore her own version of the “Garden of Eden.” (All false religions have a “works-righteous” component.

The Graeco-Roman world had its pantheon of gods that needed to be appeased in order to garner their favors. The ancient Egyptians worshipped the gods of the underworld, the world, and the overworld in order to “fix” the imbalances in nature that were causing famine, pestilence, or some other observable malady. Rejected in paganism is any notion of the Triune God who is both Creator AND Redeemer of the Creation.

**What is the Scriptural Witness to global climate change, famine, and pestilence?**

Satan is allowed certain prerogatives over the earth to do his muck-racking, as in the example of Job, but ultimately God is in charge for His own purposes. The ancient witness of the Bible and secular history shows the phenomena “climate change” in the form of drought, localized flooding, storms, pestilence, and species running wild have been with us throughout world history. (E.g., famine during the time of the patriarchs, the plagues in Egypt.

**What is the purpose of the curse of the fall?**

God cursed the creation and subjected her to futility as a consequence for man’s sin and as an instrument to call her to repentance and faith in Christ.

The Scriptural witness is that God created the heavens and the earth for man that we might receive and enjoy life with God in the fellowship of God’s love. The Holy Trinity created man in His own image, male and female, to be fruitful as God is and to exercise benevolent dominion over the creation as God does. It is not man made for the creation, but the creation made for man.

The curse of the fall is rooted in Adam giving over his dominion of the creation to Satan and God cursing of the creation as a consequence for man’s sin and in the hope of the resurrection of the creation in Christ. Jesus is God’s Son, the express image of the Father, through whom the creation is redeemed from sin and the curse of the fall to restore the creation and our relationship with God the way God intended it to be from the beginning of creation.

**Tracing the Scriptural Progression from Creation to the Curse of the Fall  
to the Redemption of the Creation in Christ**

Genesis 1:28-31 – God gives to man dominion over the creation

Genesis 3:14-19 – The Curse of the Fall and the Promise of Salvation

Genesis 8:21b-22 – The Promise of the Sustaining of the Creation under the Curse after the Flood

Genesis 9:1-3 – The Opportunity to eat meat

**The Catechesis of Jesus on the Evils of this World**

Luke 13:1-5 – The Evils of the World and the Call to Repentance

Matthew 5:45 Sun and Rain, signs of God’s universal grace.

John 12:9-24 Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit

**St. Paul Catechesis on the Curse of the Fall and the Hope of the Resurrection**

Romans 8:18-23 – St. Paul Catechizes the Church Concerning the Curse of the Fall

Romans 8:31-39 – Nothing in Creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

**Conclusion: What is our hope, what is our confidence?**

The importance of the curse of the fall to call us to repentance and faith in Christ.

Faith in God’s sustaining care of the creation in Christ.

The hope of the resurrection

**Psalm for Meditation: Psalm 104, 65, 95, 90, 97**

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**8 Evolution VS. Adam and Christ**

**Introduction:**

Evolution must be rejected because it is a denial of a personal God in whose image we were created and redeemed, and of the salvation of humanity in the incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God (the Second Adam).

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18

“We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” 2 Peter 1:16

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.” 2 Peter 2:1-2

“Let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.” 1 Peter 4:19

**What is Evolution?**

**Websters Universal Dictionary:** “In biology...the theory that all existing organisms have arisen as morphological and physiological modifications of preexisting forms, that they are all genetically related, and that the change resulting in present differences has been gradual from the simple and less differentiated to the complex and more highly differentiated. An important theory in connection with evolution is that characteristics inherited and those acquired through environment, function, etc., are transmitted to the offspring.” “In metaphysics...The evolution theory of the origin of species is that later species have been developed by continuous differentiation of organs and modifications of parts from simpler and less differentiated, and that thus all organic existences, even man himself, may be traced back to a simple cell.” Webster’s Universal Dictionary of the English Language, 1937.

**The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia:** “Organic evolution conceives of life as having begun as a simple, primordial protoplasmic mass from which arose, through time, all subsequent living forms. The first clearly stated theory of evolution, that proposed by Jean Lamarck in 1801, included the inheritance of acquired characteristics as the operative force in evolution. Subsequently (1858), Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin independently set forth a scientifically credible theory of evolution based on natural selection, focusing on the survival and reproduction of those species best adapted to the environment.” The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, Columbia University, 1983.

**Concise Contemporary Definition:** That life arose from lifelessness spontaneously through a process of random, accidental chemical processes over millions of years. Complex forms of life arose from earlier simpler forms of life through a process of natural selection influenced by the environment and the organisms innate “desire” to continue to live. Life forms are continually “improving” and “advancing” from the simple to the complex. Organisms that cannot adapt die; those which can adapt live and continue to thrive and progress.

**What are the consequences of evolutionary theory?**

1. The denial of a personal God who is Creator and upon whom the creation depends.
2. The replacing of the Holy Trinity with the pagan gods of “preexistent matter” and “primordial protoplasmic mass”.
3. Evolutionary “progressive” morality.
4. The denial of the uniqueness of the human person.
5. The denial of the creation of man in the image and likeness of the Triune God of love.
6. The denial of the historicity of Adam as one from whom all humanity descended.
7. The denial of sin and its resulting death as “alien” to and an intrusion into God’s creation.
8. A rejection of the dominion over the creation that God gave to Adam.
9. A denial of the incarnation of the Son of God as the Second Adam and Redeemer of fallen humanity.
10. A denial of the atonement of Christ and its resulting resurrection of the body.

**What is the Biblical origin of humanity?**

- The creation of man in the image and likeness of the Triune God of love—Genesis 1:26-28
- Adam as the first man from whom all humanity descended—Genesis 2:7-8, 21-24

**What is the relationship between Biblical creation and soteriology?**

- Jesus affirms the creation of man and the institution of marriage—Mark 10:2-9/Mt. 19:3-6
- The prologue of John’s Gospel teaches creation of man by the eternal Logos (the Word), who is the Son of the Father, and who, in the incarnation subsumed all humanity to Himself for our salvation—John 1:1-18
- The Creation of Adam and His Fall is Linked to the Incarnation of the Son and His Atonement which is the source of salvation and the resurrection of the body—Romans 5:12-21
- The historicity of Adam and Christ—1 Corinthians 15:1-58:
  - Speaks of the historicity of the death and resurrection of the Christ, according to the Scriptures.
  - Speaks of the historicity of Adam and Christ, linked together in the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection.
  - Speaks of the certain hope of the resurrection of the body to immortality and incorruption at the Second Coming of Christ.

**Conclusion:**

Evolution leads to an understanding of life that is devoid of transcendent meaning, purpose, and most of all love. We are reduced to purposeless organisms adrift in a cosmic sea where we are here for a moment and gone forever. The Christian world view and the narrative of being created in the image of the Triune God of love as descendants of Adam and redeemed by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Second Adam gives real meaning to our lives. It ushers us into an understanding of the world and our own existence that sees us having been created by God to be in an eternal communion of love with Him who created us and redeemed us by the blood of His Son.

**Psalm for Meditation: Psalm 139** (vss. 13-16)



## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

### **9 Racism VS. Original Sin and the Tower of Babel**

#### **Introduction:**

Christians deplore and reject racism of every kind. Christianity does not believe that there are many races. We believe that there is only one race. We believe that all human beings descended from the one man Adam and are redeemed by the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, who embraced all of humanity in His incarnation, and that He redeemed all of humanity in His once and for all sacrifice upon the cross. Our belief in the sanctity of humanity is based upon the two-fold truth that mankind was created in the image and likeness of the Triune God of love, and that all humanity was redeemed from sin by Christ's death upon the cross.

- These basic assertions about one humanity (rather than race) redeemed by the incarnation and atonement of Christ are why the Church engages in mission work to all the nations of the earth without discrimination, favoritism, or partiality.
- The church has her own culture that flows from the Gospel of God's universal love for mankind in Christ. (We reject the false premise that the objective of the Church's mission work is to subjugate people).
- The beauty of the Church's liturgy and hymnody is that it is NOT culturally bound but makes use of every contribution in hymnody and liturgical practice that faithfully upholds the Gospel of God's grace in Christ.
- The Church, generally speaking, resonates and affirms Martin Luther King Jr.'s assertion in his "I Have a Dream" speech: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."
- Traditional racism is compatible with evolutionary theory, but NOT historic Biblical Christianity. I would argue that discrimination based on "survival of the fittest" under evolutionary theory is actually "proper" according to the theory of evolution.
- This study will focus on what might be called "traditional racism" rather than contemporary "Critical Race Theory" and "Woke Ideology"

#### **What is racism?**

Racism is discrimination against people based upon the belief that there are different races of human beings and that certain human beings, based upon skin color or ethnic origin, are inferior to others. (Not all "racism" is white against black. For example, there is "tribal discrimination" within many countries in Africa).

#### **Is there or has there been racism among Christians within the Church?**

Unfortunately, yes! But its origins are not in Scripture, Christian doctrine, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ; rather, its origins are in the problem of sin which has had its negative impact upon individual Christians and the Church. So, the real problem is SIN, which manifests itself in racist discrimination and all kinds of other sinful behavior.

#### **Original Sin According to the Scriptures:**

#### **What is the origin of humanity and original sin?**

The passages below trace the origins of humanity and humanity's fall into sin to one man, Adam. The historical fact of Adam's creation, fall, and the descent of humanity from him finds its remedy and salvation from sin in the historical incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. **Acts 17:25b-26; Romans 5:12, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22**

### **Sin is the common corruption of all mankind:**

Psalm 51:5 - "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."

Genesis 6:5-6 - "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (all day). And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."

- The Lord was grieved because man had not simply rebelled against God, but because his rebellion had utterly offended God's nature of self-giving love and turned man into an ego-centric animal who only loves himself and cares about no one else.
- This ego-centricity is the origin of racism and, indeed, all sin.

### **What has the fall into sin done to humanity?**

#### **A Look at the Fall itself and its consequences: Genesis 3:1-13**

- Rebellion against the God of love creates an ego-centric nature in the image of the Serpent.
- Adam sought to "preserve himself" at all costs
- Covetous desire tramples upon the rights and dignity of others

#### **Jesus' commentary on the human condition since the fall: Mark 7:21**

- Defining each of these things Jesus' mentions as evil reinforces the understanding that the unbelief of sin is rooted in a deep-seated self-centeredness and self-preservation at the expense and subjugation of others.
- Notice the definition of evil by Jesus articulates sin on the basis of the Ten Commandments

#### **The example of original sin's influence in David's fall into adultery with Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11**

- He preys upon the beautiful, yet vulnerable wife of a Hittite.
- All his sin flowed from his self-centered covetous desire.
- His conspiracy involved an elaborate plan of self-justification.

#### **The Curse of the Tower of Babel—Genesis 11:1-9**

God not only cursed the creation on account of man's sin (the Curse of the Fall), but He also cursed humanity's self-centeredness at the Tower of Babel. Man, who had been singularly united against the Triune God, is now subjugated to God's curse that turns man in upon himself, separating him into language and people groups, whereby the futility of sinful partiality and prejudice could be manifest for what it is: sin that flows from separation from the God and ends in destruction. Racism leads to death and destruction.

- Their sin at the Tower of Babel was a supreme act of human idolatry: Man (collectively) is God to the rejection of the true God.
- They were practicing a form of totalitarian fascism believing the same anti-Trinitarian man-centered Creed. (We see this in the collective, widespread opposition of Christianity. Coexist has become a kind of mantra of collective humanity against the truth of who we were created to be in Christ).
- This "Curse of the Tower of Babel" is the origin of all language groups, nations, ethnicity, and culture (which in and of itself is not evil), and its corresponding partiality and prejudice where one group believes itself superior to others and exalts itself over others.

**Pentecost:** The division of the Fall and the Tower of Babel is reversed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Hymn— "All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall" LSB 562**

# The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer

## Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

### 10 Critical Race Theory VS. The Ten Commandments and Natural Law

#### PART I

##### Introduction—

**2 Peter 2:1-3** But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup>And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. <sup>3</sup>By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction <sup>4</sup>does not slumber.

**The Ten Commandments describe what is truth, the order of creation, our proper relationship to God and to one another, and the problem of sin. Though sinful man is incapable of fulfilling the objective Law of God as codified in the Ten Commandments, these fundamental truths are the natural law that is written on the hearts of all humanity. God's Law and the order of creation is fulfilled in Christ through His incarnation and redeeming work. In the incarnation of the Son of God we see the image and likeness of God and what He created man to be. In Christ's atoning sacrifice in the flesh, He has redeemed and reconciled humanity to God.**

**Defining Terms by Rev. Paul Dare, Christians in a Woke World** (Traces the origins of CRT and Woke ideology to Karl Marx and other notable individuals such as Antonio Gramsci, Ibraim Kindi, and others)

- **Critical Race Theory** = Critical Theory is social critique which aims at undermining the status quo, that is, the shared institutions of society, with the hope of overthrowing it...The goal of Critical Theory is to wake people to the fact that they are miserable and oppressed so that they will rise up against the 'circumstances that enslave them.' Critical Theory is characterized by an unrelenting criticism of shared institutions (family, Christianity, the church, acceptance of authority of any kind, defined roles of men and women the importance of personal responsibility, rule of law, sexual morals, patriotism and national unity, common language, shared traditions and holidays, etc.
- **Cultural Marxism** = Traditional Marxism assigned people to a group of either "oppressed" or "oppressor" based on their financial status – the rich (owners of means of production) versus the poor (workers). It then pitted those groups against one another with the idea that the oppressed should overthrow the oppressor and achieve equality. **Cultural Marxism** is much the same, except it divides people by their gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, and religion, among other things. It also pits people against one another with the idea that the oppressed are to overthrow the oppressors.
- **Oppressors** = those who are the dominant group/majority group, and if they are they are by definition oppressors.
- **Oppressed** = those who are the recipients of the oppression of the dominant group whether they realize it or not.
- **Intersectionality** = to be in multiple "oppressed groups" (black, woman, lesbian)

- **“Woke Ideology”** = to become sensitive and aware of all the ways in which you are in an oppressor group and to take the necessary actions to atone for these sins.
- **Cancel Culture** = you are disenfranchised if you do not accept the Woke ideology or speak against the propaganda in any way. You are not only “cut off” and “canceled” but you are also the recipient of every indictment of the Woke culture.

**People are easily drawn in by reasonable slogans that are “wolves in sheep’s clothing” –**

- **“Black Lives Matter...”** of course they do, but black lives have been enslaved by the proponents of CRT and Woke ideology to destroy the very lives and institutions of marriage and family they claim to want to help.
- **“Racism and discrimination are evil...”** of course they are, but “systemic racism” has been used as the cause of every societal ill to the destruction of society and culture.
- **“We must treat everyone with equality and fairness...”** of course we should, but “equity” and “fairness” has been used to “cancel” any and all dissenting voices, and to control and subjugate the masses to an ideology that controls individuals rather than honoring and respecting the dignity and worth of every human being. (Ironically, CRT and Woke-ism does not care at all about individual human freedom; it only cares about the collective subjugation of everyone to its ideology. Star Trek Analogy: It is like the Borg) Example Catch Words: Equity, Fairness, Inclusion, Diversity, etc.

**The danger of accepting the false premise is that one immediately loses the argument—**

**FALSE PREMISES:**

- ✓ All members of a “majority group” discriminate against “minority groups”.
- ✓ It is unloving not to accept a person’s choice of gender pronouns.
- ✓ If you are white, you are a racist.
- ✓ If you are a man, you oppress women.
- ✓ If you are heterosexual, you oppress homosexuals.
- ✓ If you are a social conservative, you are a white supremacist.
- ✓ If you are a Conservative Christian, you are a bigot.

**The religion of Critical Race Theory and Woke-ism seeks to destroy Christianity** and the virtue of natural Law written in the created order in favor of its new matrix, which is nihilistic, loveless, selfish, self-centered, and totalitarian. CRT and Wokism does not uphold human rights but destroys them as it seeks to subjugate and control people according to Marxist ideology.

## The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer

### Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## 10 Critical Race Theory VS. The Ten Commandments and Natural Law

### PART II

#### THE GOODNESS OF GOD'S CREATION AND THE INCARNATION:

**Critical Race Theory and "Wokism"** is a denial of the incarnation of the Son of God and a rejection of the order of God's creation and who we were created to be as human beings, male and female, made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Christ.

**CRT and Wokism** is nothing less than the spirit of Antichrist because it denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh to redeem the created order. The Son of God becomes man and is joined to humanity, thereby sanctifying God's created order, to redeem the created order and all humanity from the destructive forces of sin. In the incarnation, the Son of God is conceived, born, lives, and dies for humanity's redemption from the destructive forces of self-centeredness and reconciles us to the self-giving God of love.

**1 John 4:1-3** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

**The religion of CRT and Woke is nihilistic, it destroys the historic understanding of—**

- creatureliness (that we are dependent upon God and the objective morality that he has written upon the hearts of humanity/natural law);
- the common descent of all people from one man (a unified humanity with a common origin in God and from Adam);
- our biological and spiritual identities as men and women (state of being—who we are in truth rather than the falsehood of who we chose to be or what we chose to reject);
- what it is to be a man (the concept of masculinity, what it is to be a husband, a father, the paternal love of a father, and the sacrificial service of male headship within the home);
- what it is to be a woman (the concept of femininity, what it is to be a wife, maternal love of a mother, and the fulfillment that comes from receiving the love and care of her husband);
- the concept of a helpmeet, and mutual submission and subordination within marriage between the husband and the wife;
- the institution and yoking together of marriage and family—involving one man and one woman who are united together biologically and spiritually in the one flesh union for the procreation of children, and their spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical care and upbringing;
- the dignity, freedom, and worth of every human being;
- the concept of sacrificial love and self-sacrifice for the benefit of another within the order of creation.

Look at the value and benefit, mental and spiritual health that society has received from God's order compared to the destructive forces of Woke ideology.

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**11 LGBTQ VS. Man and Woman Made in the Image of God**

**Introduction—LGBTQ what do the letters mean?**

**Peter's Warning: 2 Peter 2:1-22**

**Ancient Sodom and Gomorrah Vs. Present Day Sodom and Gomorrah**

- The ancient world of homosexuality (Sodomites and Catamites), as well as the Graeco/Roman world's practices of homosexuality and fornication were simply governed by raw lust, "carnal desire"—the gratification of sexual appetite in self-centered pleasure.
- The modern world of LGBTQ has "sophisticated" the practices of homosexuality by disconnecting gender from the objectivity of one's biological sex organs and allowing for the redefining of one's state of being purely in terms of the personal subjective choice of each human individual. (This is relativism on steroids. I determine WHO I AM and WHAT is RIGHT for ME.)

**The Tragedies of the LGBTQ movement:**

1. There is a malevolent Satanic component involved in the motives of those who are promoting this agenda in healthcare and education. They are out to destroy the Biblical world view of humanity, marriage, and family.
2. The agenda of the LGBTQ movement and its emphasis upon each individual doing what seems right in his or her own eyes appeals to the sinful flesh in everyone. ("I do not like...but I do desire that...and the ideology of personal freedom and choice gives me license to indulge my desires.")
3. Those who have been emotionally, psychologically, and physically abused (children, youth, and adults) within God's proper relationships (marriage, family, parent child) often fall prey to the false hopes and dreams of the LGBTQ ideology and, in extreme cases, gender dysphoria).
4. Civil government and culture have acquiesced to the LGBTQ agenda. Public policy, corporate medicine, big business, and popular culture promote the ideology as the "enlightened mainstream" point of view over against the "unenlightened bigoted" Biblical view of humanity, marriage, and human sexuality.
5. Liberal mainline churches are accommodating the culture on this subject.
6. The historic Church has condemned homosexuality but has not done enough to extol the gift of God's creation, redeemed in Christ, as the better way to mental, physical, and spiritual health and well-being.

### **The Order of Creation: Men, Women, and State of Being Under God in Creation**

Historic Christianity confesses the wonderful gift that humanity is made, male and female, in the Image of the Triune God of love to be fruitful and to exercise dominion over the creation. We were created by God in love. Our biological and spiritual identities (who we are created to be) as men and women are gifts of God and are the means by which God has given us to give and receive spiritual and biological love with one another within the orders of creation. A man is so ordered by God to give and receive love as a man before God, as a son to his parents, a brother to his siblings, a husband to his wife, a father to his children, and a friend to his friends. Each ordering has its proper relationship to God and to the object of love within each particular relationship. A woman is so ordered by God to give and receive love from God in the subordinate relationship to the headship of her father and then the headship of her husband (1 Corinthians 11:3 "the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God"). From her head she is gifted with the capacity to give and receive love (still as daughter to parents and sister to her siblings) but most especially as wife to her husband, mother to her children, and friend to her friends. These states of being and relationships within the created order are not without significance but are intrinsically connected to being either male or female.

Our biological state of being as male and female is both physical and spiritual. Apart from this ordering we cannot truly love as God loves, nor can we produce life or be healthy. The overthrowing of God's order and who He has created us to be leads to death. All the organs of our body have a proper function and use. To use the organs of our body in ways and for purposes for which God did not design them is sin which separates us from God and contributes to spiritual, physical, and psychological sickness, separating us from God and from one another.

Our sex organs are as important to who we are and to the procreation and preservation of our lives and our mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as are any other vital organ of the body (heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, brain, etc.) We would never simply remove our heart as if it is not a vital organ. Similarly, the mutilation of the body to alter our state of being sexually is not only a fantasy, but it destroys everything that we were created to be as men and women made in the image and likeness of God.

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**12 Perversion and the Four Loves**  
Gift-Love and Need-Love  
Affection, Friendship, Eros, Charity (C.S. Lewis)

**Introduction—**

**How do we minister to those who sincerely believe that their fulfillment will be found outside of God's order?**

- A daughter or wife who seeks fulfillment in a lesbian relationship.
  - A son or husband who gives himself over to a homosexual lifestyle.
  - A person who despises their biological identity and seeks to identify as a different gender or to undergo hormone therapy and surgeries to “change” their gender.
1. It is not enough simply to condemn the sin. (The Law must be preached with the Gospel in view. Example of Nathan ministering to David, or Jesus with the woman caught in adultery).
  2. Pastoral care (and care within the body of Christ and the Christian family) calls us to understand the origins of disordered desire, self-loathing, and emasculation.
  3. Satan most often tempts us by perverting what is good in God's order (such as the legitimate need to be loved and accepted for who we are within the relationships God has ordered).
  4. We must never underestimate the damage that the problem of sin can do to God's good order. (Perversion of the order is one of the evidences that the order is good).

**What is love?**

**“Gift-love” and “Need-love” (C.S. Lewis)**

- **Divine Love is Gift-love** (in the Holy Trinity and in God's relationship to us which we, in spite of sin, share in in our God-given relationships with one another)
- **Need-love** is something we are designed to receive within God's ordered relationships, but because of sin it can be perverted.

**Examples of “Gift-love” and “Need-love” within our God-given relationships**

- A mother toward her child
- A husband toward his wife
- A friend toward his friend in need

**How we give and receive love in these relationships affects our spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical health and well-being.**

- Faithfulness or unfaithfulness within our offices in the loves that we give and receive can either reinforce and promote the good of God's order, or it can damage God's good-order and lay the groundwork for the devil to pervert what is good and tempt us to “seek the good”—what God has created us to receive—from sources from which it will not bring fulfillment, but destruction and disorder.



## **The Four Loves**

**Affection** is the love, care, and compassion of a parents to their children or children to their parents. It may be seen in other relationships of a teacher to her pupils or students to their teacher. Almost anyone can become the object of one's affection. (C.S. Lewis p. 53-54)

**Friendship** is the love of mutual regard, respect, trust, and belief that binds people together in a relationship of shared commitments and reciprocal support for each other.

**Eros** is "being in love" (as C.S. Lewis defines it) which desires to give of itself entirely to the beloved without withholding anything of oneself and to do so for the benefit of the other. For us as Christians it is wrong to think of Eros simply as "animalistic sexual passion" which are so often sinful and self-centered, but a kind of self-giving love that does, in fact, desire to live for the other in such a way that life is created (the procreation of children)—it is the love seen before the fall in Adam who confessed of Eve, "this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

**Charity** is the love of God (1 Corinthians 13) which is His nature: to give as the source of goodness; and to reject that which is the source of evil and destruction. God's love—charity—is anchored in grace. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10) Or, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

**The Apostle Peter was a recipient of this charity in the Lord's call to him, and in the Lord's forgiving grace that forgave him and reinstated him to an office that called him to love the Lord by loving others more than he loved himself.**

We typically use one word for "love" in English, even though the word has different meanings depending upon the context, and those meanings are often very different.

### Examples:

- "I love the Cubs" / "I love God"
- "I love my wife" / "I love my children"
- "I'm in love with you" (spoken to a spouse) / "I love you" (spoken to a friend, or parishioner)
- What would happen if these loves were confused? (Idolatry, adultery, fornication, perversion).

**The Christian Pastor and the Church need to know and understand that we have, in God's design, a legitimate need to "Give love" and "Receive love"**

**We also need to be aware of how Satan takes what is legitimate and twists it into what is disordered and illegitimate, especially when we do not receive the love we are designed to receive.**

**Satan uses our sinful abuses of proper love, to tempt, corrupt, and pervert love into something that is not love, but a departure from what is good.**

### Examples of Perverted Love that Can Lead to Disordered Sexual Lives:

- **The “Soft Abuse” of a child emotionally:** Foster mother who did not give love in the way God called her to love her child, but made demands upon her child that taught her that the mother’s love had to be earned, it was conditioned upon the basis of merit, and it resulted in a disordered view of femininity and the office of a wife in marriage (I am there to please my husband, to do what he wants, to earn his love).
- **A sexually abused child:** May grow up hating who they are as a little boy or a little girl. The sin committed against them defiles them physically and spiritually. It may cause self-loathing and a desire to completely “change” who and what they are to flee from what the abuse has done to them and their sense of value or self-worth. Or, the abuse may become self-corrupting to the degree that they act out what was done to them in relationships with others that are disordered.
- **A boy exposed to pornography at a young age:** Is stimulated to see women and the gift of sexuality as objects for his own self-gratification and pleasure rather than growing into adulthood with the sense of the sanctity of marriage and the gift of human sexuality within marriage for the spiritual, emotional, and physical giving and receiving of love.
- **The Temptation to Lesbianism:** Women who do not see Christ’s love and compassion in the men in their lives, seek this love from the tenderness and compassion of other women.
- **The Power of Lust:** The lie that one’s biological identity is merely a personal instrument by which one should indulge his or her self-centered desires—an insatiable “need-love” that is disordered and leads to loneliness and a lack of fulfillment in all human relationships.
- **The Power of Peer Pressure in a Society** that has completely rejected God’s good order in favor of “mental and emotional health” that rejects the objective goodness of God’s order.

### Pastoral Care for Those Tempted to a Disordered Lifestyle:

1. The need to accurately diagnose the origins of the disordered desires or temptations.
2. The need for patient conversation to learn the truth of what has happened to a person.
3. Our diagnosis as pastors is a theological, Law/Gospel, Creation/Salvation spiritual diagnosis that is anchored in Christ. (Who are we in Christ as our Creator and Redeemer? What is His Gift-love for us? What does it mean? What does the forgiveness of Christ mean for us? How does Christ’s absolution not only forgive my sin and make me whole, but also cleanse and sanctify me from the sins that others have committed against me? What does Christ’s acceptance mean? What does Christ’s acceptance not mean? How do we “suffer” the failures and sin of those who have desecrated their God-given office?)
4. The importance of Pastoral Care involving counsel from God’s Word, confession and absolution, and prayer. (Confession and Absolution is one of the most profoundly intimate moments wherein we are **Given** the love of Christ that we **Need** to recreate us and make us whole. It is also the strength to “give” and “receive” love as God has so ordered it for our lives).
5. The importance of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, the feast of love, to cleanse, sanctify, and renew us body and soul within our God-given calling.

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

### **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## **13 Humanism VS. Faith in the Holy Trinity**

**Introduction**—What if you could have moral, ethical, human behavior, that treated its fellow man with respect and dignity, that helped others, was well-educated and promoted science, freedom, and the betterment of human life without belief in a god? You would have humanism. This “Jeffersonian Belief”—Give me the Sermon on the Mount without God and the supernatural. The Golden Rule.

Humanism appeals to the cultured, well-educated, respectful agnostic or atheist (he is not radical, nor does he believe that the extreme ideologies of our culture are helpful and good for society, yet he lacks the spiritual fortitude to resist it.

### **What is humanism?**

- **Classical humanism** is concerned with universal human values, potential and worth. It is concerned with the needs and welfare of humanity. It emphasizes the significance of the individual. It sees human beings as autonomous, rational, moral agents. Classical humanism, which is associated with the Renaissance, emphasized beauty, aesthetics, freedom, logic, reason, and the study of the humanities (ancient literature, art, philosophy, and the classical languages of Greek and Latin).
- **Christian humanism** is the union of Christianity and classical humanism. Classical humanists studied Greek and Latin writings, Christian humanists study Hebrew and biblical Greek, along with the writings of the church fathers. Like classical humanism, Christian humanism pursues reason, free inquiry, the separation of church and state, and the ideal of freedom. Christian humanism is rooted in Scholasticism, the dominant Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Scholasticism was a system of logic, metaphysics. It was intellectualistic and grounded in Aristotelian thought. Notable Scholastics in the Church were Albertus Magnus, Dun Scotus, and especially Thomas Aquinas. At Luther’s time Erasmus was the foremost Scholastic who ascribed certain freedoms to the human will in spiritual and moral matters (Pelagianism or semi-pelagian). Luther wrote his famous treatise, the Bondage of the Will, against Erasmus.
- **Secular humanism** is a term coined by Christians to describe the idea that one could retain certain “Christian values” without the dogma and supernatural content of the Christian faith. By the 1960’s the term had been embraced by humanists who considered themselves secular. Today, the term “secular” is largely dropped, and the term “humanism” applies to the beliefs of people who simply want to be good, well-educated, moral, ethical people who are concerned about their fellowman without the baggage of religion and a specific belief in a personal transcendent God.

#### **Key points to secular humanism:**

1. Secular humanism is rooted in agnosticism or atheism.
2. Humanism is a man-centered ethical system

3. The fundamental aspects of modern humanism:
  - Ethical
  - Rational
  - Supports democracy and human rights
  - Personal liberty combined with social responsibility
  - Values artistic creativity, imagination, and the power of art to move people
  - Desires to achieve human fulfillment by cultivating ethical and creative living to address the problems of our times.
4. “The Happy Human” – in 1965, the British Humanist Association in the UK held a design competition for a logo to capture modern humanism. The winner was “the Happy Man” but later renamed the “Happy Human”
5. Humanists deny that humanism is a religion, but in 2014 a federal district court held that “Secular Humanism is a religion for Establishment Clause purposes.” In 1961 decision *Torcaso v. Watkins*, the court stated that The Establishment Clause prevents government from aiding “those religions founded on different beliefs.” In a footnote of that decision, the court clarified that this principle extended to “religions in this country which do not teach what would be considered a belief in the existence of God...Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others.”
6. Humanist Chaplains have been employed on major universities such as Harvard, MIT, Columbia, New York University, Rutgers, Stanford, and the University of Central Florida.

### **Faith in the Holy Trinity—What does this mean for us as Christians?**

1. The problem of sin, as God defines it, cuts across the claims of humanism and shows us to be in need of redemption. The goals of humanism to create a good, better, and prosperous life for all humanity have never been close to being realized.
2. The ideal of love is not found in man, but in the self-giving love of the Holy Trinity.
3. Fulfillment, meaning, and the purpose of life comes from dependance upon God, the Holy Trinity, as confessed in the Creed (See the Small Catechism’s Explanations)

### **Peter’s encouragement to live in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord: 2 Peter 1:2-4**

1. That God is Creator, over us, the source of life, and all things, and that we, as Creatures are dependent upon Him the divine life and love of the Holy Trinity that is communicated to us know through the promises of God in Christ whereby, we become partakers of the Divine Nature.
2. That the Holy Trinity is the source of objective truth and moral goodness and virtue.
3. Humanism does not know the forgiveness of sins, what that means, and how it is at the center of our lives as Christians in the way in which we live with one another and interact with the world around us. (Table of Duties, 1 Peter 2 and 3 material)

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**14 Human Tyranny VS. Christian Freedom**

**Introduction—Our freedom as Christians is found in Christ**

The Apostle Peter not only emphasizes our pilgrimage through a world of tyrannical oppression, but he emphasizes that our freedom is found in faith. Our citizenship is in heaven. The end of our faith is the salvation of our souls (1 Peter 1:3-9). Christ's forgiveness, that we are righteous for Jesus' sake, is our true and eternal freedom. By faith in Christ's redemption, our conscience lives in absolute freedom from sin, oppression, tyranny, bondage, and judgment. "A Mighty Fortress-And take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife; they yet have nothing won. The kingdom ours remaineth."

**Tyranny-** "1. Arbitrary or despotic exercise of power; the exercise of power over subjects and others with a rigor not authorized by law or justice or not requisite for the purposes of government. 2. Cruel government or discipline; as, the tyranny of a master. 3. Severity; rigor; inclemency; unseemly; harshness."

**Tyrant-** "Any tyrannical power or influence; any force impelling, restraining, or overruling against one's wishes..." (Websters Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1937)

Tyranny sets aside the proper use of Law to Curb absolute power and control in civil affairs.

**Tyrannical Regimes—totalitarianism**

**Nazi fascism** – Its beginnings in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Fascism comes from the Latin word *fasces*, which was a tight bundle of wooden rods which included a protruding axe blade. In Ancient Rome, the officers attending the magistrates would hold the *fasces* as a symbol of the penal power of their magistrate. The Italian fascist, Benito Mussolini, adopted this symbol to recall the greatness of the Roman Empire (the absolute power of the emperor) and to reinforce his authority as dictator of Italy. A common characteristic of fascism is that all citizens were to be totally unified around the tyrannical ideology (like this "tightly bound fasces") and to relinquish all personal autonomy. All were to serve the state and submit to the power of the dictator for the good of the nation. Adolf Hitler was the *furher* (*the supreme leader-an oppressive god*). *His command was law.*

**Communism** - In varying forms throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notable individuals: Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leon Trotsky

Communism comes from the Latin word *communis*, which means "shared" or "common", but it should not be confused with a word like *communion* (which is rooted in the giving and receiving of love without the loss of the individual person, e.g., Acts 2 and the sharing of all things in common). In communism the human person is subjugated to the common good. (Ideas of this sort stretch back to the utopian ideals set forth in Plato's Republic). Communism is a political and economic doctrine that strips the individual of private property and replaces a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of the means of production and the resources of a society. Communism strove for a utopian society in which there would no longer be the economically "oppressed" by the "oppressor" but one in which everyone was the same, all worked together for the common good, and individual and personhood was obliterated. (See Critical Race Theory and Wokism today which is social Marxism.)

### **Our St. Peter Option Study has been highlighting Human Tyranny**

- Critical Race Theory and Woke Ideology
- Radical Environmentalism
- LGBTQ ideology

### **The Egyptian Dynasty that Enslaved Israel**

Their desire to return to Egypt, rather than live in the freedom of the Lord's redemption, is illustrative of the tendency since the fall to gravitate toward a willingness to tyrannize (the force of law is an end in itself) or to be enslaved (to submit to tyranny out of fear)

**True freedom** is not a matter of revolution and insurrection (this is an attempt to secure freedom by the coercive force of law and control, which results in simply a new form of tyranny), but rather a freedom of conscience that lives by faith in Christ and His righteousness.

### **Further Word on the Function of Law in Society or the Home -**

**Fourth Commandment Authority** is NOT to control and subjugate, but to serve. Governments do not possess 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment Authority to oppress, but to protect and serve. Parents and teachers do not possess 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment Authority to tyrannize their children, but to guide and nurture them. This is so because God's authority (which the Law describes) is rooted in His nature of self-giving love which protects, cares for, gives life, nurtures, etc. In the Christian worldview, those who possess 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment authority do not do so to be served but to serve. (This is a radical point of view that is rooted in the Gospel of Christian love.)

### **Christian Freedom**

1. Government has a proper role, under God (Left hand kingdom/Secular Authority) to protect the dignity of the human person and the fundamental human rights which enable us to live with each other in marriage, family, and community. (Natural Law is to be supported by Government as servant protecting God's gifts of life, marriage, property, truth, and due process or justice under the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment). In the United States, the citizenry is a part of the left-hand government in the responsibilities we have been given under the Constitution (Freedom of Speech, Right to Assemble, The Right to Redress, and the electoral process).
2. Christians and the Church (Right hand kingdom/Spiritual kingdom) do not engage in insurrection and rebellion against tyranny.
3. Christians and the Church remain true to our confession of faith in Christ under oppression. We yield in every way, but never in a way that denies our faith in Christ.
4. Suffering Persecution under tyranny and in love for our enemies is one of the central ways in which we bear witness to Christ.
5. **The Justification of the Sinner Before God is our ultimate Freedom**
6. Quotations from Luther's great Treatise, "The Freedom of a Christian"

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**15 Popular Culture VS. The Life of the Church**

**Introduction—**

The Apostle Peter warns of a culture that is completely devoid of God and that rejects the goodness God's love—a culture that is self-absorbed and full of covetousness, carousing, adultery, licentiousness, and pollution of every sort (2 Peter 2:12-22). The pop culture promises liberty but creates slaves of corruption that rejects the life that is found in Christ. We need to shield our children from these influences at the youngest ages, then we need to carefully and lovingly critique the culture in light of the Gospel and the goodness we know as they mature.

**Influences of the Popular Culture—**

- **Social Media** allows for the sharing of information, opinion, and personal information on an unprecedented scale. It has become an instrument for the swift dissemination of Anti-Christian dogma (radical environmentalism, Woke ideology, Critical Race Theory, LGBTQ theology, Gender identity politics, etc.) It is an avenue that enhances the capacity for the transgression of Fourth Commandment Honor. It is rife with slander, gossip, and malicious rhetoric contrary to the Eighth Commandment. It creates a sub-culture that is often counter to marriage, family, community, and church.
- **Internet World of Instant Access to information and pornographic images that titillate the flesh.** Godless information and opportunities to engage in the activities of fornication have always been available, but it required greater effort to access it. Now it is available by the click of a mouse.
- **Counter-Christian Culture of the Television and Movie Industry** that display with increasing frequency the glamour and acceptance of gay and transgender lifestyles, and the theology that undermines Biblical concepts of masculinity, femininity, marriage, and family. (Depictions in commercials of happy gay relationships)
- **The Media** which is the mouthpiece of the latest anti-Christian and anti-western propaganda. Christian ideals are ridiculed, made fun of, and treated as if they are unenlightened at best or bigoted and destructive at worst. The “it takes a village” utopian ideas of child-rearing promoted by the left-wing media destroy the biblical concept of family, stripping parents of their parental rights and promoting the “soft-totalitarianism” of the public schools, corporate medicine, and the “not-so-soft totalitarianism” of government control and the loss of religious freedom.
- **Conservative Talk Radio** is an opportunity for conservative Christians to be sucked into a lifestyle of division and unhealthy anti-Christian rhetoric toward family members, coworkers, and neighbors with whom we disagree. (Freedom of Speech may be a right under the Bill of Rights, but among Christians our freedom of speech is governed by the Word of God, love, and the Gospel).
- **The Top 40—The Songs that Shape the Story of Our Culture in Young People**
  - #1 – Heat Waves by Glass Animals
  - #2 – STAY by Justin Bieber

No Self-Censoring of the basest of appetites, desires, and the rhetoric that expresses these things characterizes our age.

The Christian Story has been replaced by the Hedonistic Self-absorbed Story of a Godless Age.

**The Life of the Church-What characterizes her?**

1. **The Church's Song**, the great hymnody of the church that supports our children, passes on the faith, and serves us in our old age.

Example: "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart" – LSB 708

2. **The Story of the Faith**, the rich and serious attentiveness to the narrative of the Gospel of God's love in Christ and how that creates faith and shapes the lives of the baptized faithful. (So important for children and is foundational for everyone. It presents an alternative to the incessant drumbeat of the contemporary pop culture).

Example: "Joseph, the Husband of Mary" – Matthew 1:18-25

Example: "Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet" – John 13:1-15

3. **The Culture of Catechesis and Prayer Centered around the Divine Service**

Daily prayer

Weekly meditation upon the catechism

Confession and Absolution Privately

Pastoral Care centered around repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

The centrality of the Holy Communion to which our catechesis leads and from which the life of faith branches forth in love for the community of faith and the world.

Example: Jim's Funeral, Mary Ellen's Hymn request for "O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" LSB 372/TLH 81



## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

### **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## **16 Peter's Christology of Vocation and Earthly Pilgrimage: An Introduction to the Table of Duties**

### **Understanding Christian Vocation: Peter's Pilgrimage as an Apostle of the Gospel**

The gift of forgiveness in Christ is the basis for the fervor of Peter's confession, even when he may not have realized the extent to which the gift of forgiveness in Christ for him as an unworthy sinner was central to his calling as a Christian and an Apostle.

### **Peter's Confession: Matthew 16:13-28**

1. He believed and confessed the truth: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God..." (verse 16)
2. The death and resurrection of Christ was at the heart of this confession and is the foundation of the Church and her ministry to the lost.
3. Peter believed and confessed, yet he denied the centrality of the cross for the very salvation he believed in
4. Jesus catechizes them to understand that dying to self (taking up the cross) and suffering for the salvation of others is central to our vocation as Christians in our lives and in the ministry.

### **Peter's Fervent Vow in the Upper Room: Luke 22:31-34**

1. Satan's desire is to destroy faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
2. Peter made a sincere vow to remain faithful to his Lord and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from Jesus.
3. Peter did not have the strength to be faithful to the vow he had made.
4. That Peter received the Lord's forgiving grace in the context of suffering with his own sin and spiritual weakness taught him total dependence upon Christ and the meaning of his vocation: to give Christ's forgiving grace to others.
5. "When you have returned to Me; strengthen your brethren..." (verse 32)

### **The Lord Catechized Peter in the Grace of God for Jew and Gentile Alike: Acts 10:1-43**

1. Even though Peter had been with the Lord for three years, and witnessed His forgiving grace to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, he was still slow to understand his calling to proclaim the forgiving grace of Christ to the Gentiles.
2. "God shows no partiality" – verse 34
3. "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." – verse 43 ends his sermon

### **Peter's Understanding of Vocation Rests upon the Forgiving Grace of Christ for all: 1 Peter 2:11-25**

1. The forgiving grace of Christ is what called us to be His people.
2. "To proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" is what we are called to by the Gospel for our salvation and what we are called to in the lives we are given to live as Christians.
3. A subtle, yet powerful distinction within the word "vocation" (One's station and the unique call of the Gospel of Christ's forgiving grace)

4. Luther's axiom in "The Freedom of a Christian" and its implications for the Christological understanding of Christian Vocation:
  - a. A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none;
  - b. A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to all.
5. Peter's theology of vocation rests upon Christ's joyful and faithful suffering under Pontius Pilate.
6. The unbeliever, especially the persecutor, observes our conduct ("good works") and glorifies God in the day of visitation. (verse 11-12). "Visitation" is itself a reference to Christ coming with His forgiving grace in both word and deed to unworthy sinners, persecutors, and those who hate Him.
7. Citizens, Servants, Persecuted Christians, Wives and Husbands find their identity in Christ.
8. Luther's theology of Vocation and the collection of passages in the Table of Duties rests upon the calling of Christ's forgiving grace.

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer  
Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**17 Sojourners of Light in a Foreign Land of Darkness**

1 Peter 2:11-25

Today's study will be a Bible study on vocation based upon the material from 1 Peter 2:11-25, under the theme, "Sojourners of Light in a Foreign Land of Darkness" –

*Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, <sup>12</sup>having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

1. Why might we call this world "a foreign land of darkness"?
2. Why can we call Christians "sojourners of light"?
3. What are the fleshly lusts which war against the soul?
4. What does it mean to have "conduct honorable among the Gentiles"?
5. What does the world identify in Christians that causes the charge that they are "evildoers"?
6. What are the "good works" or deeds of Christians, and where does Jesus' speak of them?
7. What is the "day of visitation" of which Peter speaks?

**Submission to Government**

*<sup>13</sup>Therefore submit yourselves to every <sup>[d]</sup>ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. <sup>15</sup>For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— <sup>16</sup>as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for <sup>[d]</sup>vice, but as bondservants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

1. What were the human institutions and governments of Peter's day?
2. What were the purposes of government according to Peter?
3. Can you give an example of "doing good" that would "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"?
4. How is our Christian freedom to be used?

## Submission to Masters

*<sup>18</sup> Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. <sup>19</sup> For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for <sup>[e]</sup>us, leaving <sup>[f]</sup>us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

*<sup>22</sup> “Who committed no sin,  
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

*<sup>23</sup> who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose <sup>[g]</sup>stripes you were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and <sup>[h]</sup>Overseer of your souls.*

1. Who does Peter single out as the “masters” to whom we are to be especially submissive?
2. What is it that is to govern our conscience?
3. What is suffering that is commendable to God?
4. How is this suffering connected to Jesus?
5. What governed Jesus’ in His acts of submission to masters and unjust authorities?
6. What does it mean “to live for righteousness”?
7. How does the understanding of our own sinfulness assist us in being faithful in our vocation as Christians?
8. Why is Jesus’ described as the “Shepherd and Overseer (or Bishop) of our souls?”

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**18 Domestic Life: The True Monasticism**  
1 Peter 3:1-7

Today's study will be a Bible study on vocation based upon the material from 1 Peter 3:1-7, and the Pertinent Sections of the Table of Duties, under the theme, "Domestic Life: The True Monasticism" –

**Introduction:**

What are the hardest things I've been called to do in my life?  
Husband, Father, and Pastor

What have been among the greatest sorrows and joys?

The Domestic Life of Marriage and Family is God's gift:  
The Offices of husband and wife/father and mother  
are the greatest offices in the created order.

**What was Luther's problem with the monastic life?**

1. Works righteousness associated with monasticism. Earning God's favor.
2. Considered holier than the "ordinary" life of a Christian in marriage, family, and society.

**What was good about the monastic life?**

1. Devotion to meditation upon God's Word and Prayer (spiritual disciplines)
2. Education

**The Domestic Life of the Christian family** brings the best of monastic life into marriage and family:  
God's holy offices of marriage and family,  
the Word of God and Prayer,  
education, and  
faith in Christ that is active in love for the benefit of the neighbor.

**The Office of Wife in 1 Peter 3:1-6**

- What is submission? (What are its demands? What are its limits?)
- Where does Peter anchor this submission?
  - In Christ's submission to Pilate, He was submitting to His Father (1 Peter 2:21-25)
- True beauty of the Christian wife
- What does such submission and obedience to serve? The cause of faith in Christ.
  - The Example of Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.
  - The context speaks of Sarah as an Old Testament disciple of faith in the Son of Promise

### **The Office of Husband in 1 Peter 3:7**

- What is “the understanding” with which the husband is to dwell with his wife?
- How does the husband honor his wife? (The way Christ honors us)
- What does the concept of “weaker vessel” mean?
  - She is the delicate and precious vessel through whom life is brought into the world.
- Husband and wife are equal recipients of the inheritance of salvation.
- The husband is called to live by the grace of Christ in his understanding of and relationship to his wife.
- Prayer, as the voice of faith, can only be heard if it rests upon the grace of God in Christ alone.

### **Table of Duties: To Husbands, Wives, Parents, and Children**

- A brief look at the Table of Duties

### **Prayers for the Domestic Life:**

Husbands

Wives

Parents

Children

### **Looking Ahead**

**The Call of the Gospel: To Suffer with Christ (3:8-22)**

**The Mind of Christ and the End of All Things (4:1-11)**

**The Blessedness of Christian Suffering (4:12-19)**

**Encouragement for Pastors During the Exile (5:1-14)**

## The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer

### Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## 19 The Call of the Gospel to Suffer with Christ

1 Peter 3:8-22

**Today's study will focus on 1 Peter 3:8-22**, and the call of the Gospel to suffer with Christ. This "suffering" involves not merely the pain that we receive at the hands of unbelievers, but also the pain we are tempted to inflict upon one another within the body of Christ. Passions can run high within the church and among brothers in Christ. Passions can also run high toward others with whom we are associated in life who may not believe in Christ and who may outright reject everything we believe in and stand for. Christ's work of reconciliation for friend and enemy "to bring us to God" is a paradigm for us in all of our relationships with one another both within the church and on the outside.

**"Be of one mind, having sympathy for one another"** – 1 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV)

Finally, all of you, have **unity of mind**, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart (**compassionate**), and a humble mind (**humble mind**).<sup>9</sup> Do not repay (**return**) evil for evil or reviling (**insult**) for reviling (**insult**), but on the contrary, bless (**same word from the Beatitudes**), for to this you were **called** (the call to faith in Christ by the Word of His grace), that you may obtain a blessing.

- These verses address our calling within the Church and among brothers and sisters in Christ.
- **Objectivity**: The "mind" of a Christian is to be governed, not by passion of lust, but by the sober and objective Word of God and call of the Gospel.
- "Sympathy, brotherly love, compassion, and a humble mind" are not chiefly emotions, but of the Christian will that is to be governed by the objective Gospel of Christ.
- "Sympathy and compassion" for our brothers and sisters in Christ identifies them as being just like us according to the flesh.
- The Call of the Gospel "to suffer" with Christ involves bearing with one another, not in a spirit of vindictiveness (works-righteous faith) but in the spirit of forbearance (faith in the grace of God).

## Psalm 34:12-16, Peter's Proof Text

<sup>10</sup> For "Whoever desires to love life  
and see good days,

**let him keep his tongue from evil  
and his lips from speaking deceit;**

<sup>11</sup> let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it.

<sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.  
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

- The evil tongue and the speaking of deceit is any speech that does not flow from faith in the Gospel.
- This means that “true things” could be said, but they are evil and undermine the Gospel if they do not serve the cause of faith in Christ for others or our witness to Jesus.
- The Lord stands in opposition to those whose words would deny the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ.

### **Suffering for Following the One Who Is Good** – 1 Peter 3:13-17

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good (**the person of our Lord and His Gospel of God’s grace**; there is only One who is good)? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake (**for the forgiving righteousness of Christ**), you will be blessed. Have no fear of them (**any who would oppose the Gospel from within the church or on the outside**), nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good (**for Christ’s sake**), if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

- “Doing good” is to “to do Christ” if you will, that is to say, to do as Jesus does in His grace and forbearance toward us.
- To “suffer for righteousness’ sake” is not suffering for the sake of generic morality, but to suffer for Christ’s sake and on account of His Gospel—on account of His forgiveness and grace on display in the lives of His Christians.
- The Christian “apologetic” is always about confessing Christ and the justification of the sinner before God by grace, for Christ’s sake. This is what animates the life of the Christian.

### **Christ Suffered Once for Sins to Bring Us to God** – 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered<sup>18</sup> once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which<sup>19</sup> he went and proclaimed<sup>19</sup> to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> because<sup>19</sup> they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.



- Substitutionary atonement: the righteous for the unrighteous to reconcile us to God.
- Jesus' preaching to the spirits in prison was a vindication of His grace which they had rejected in the days of Noah.
- The objective Sacrament of Baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- The problem of the persistence of sin in the life of the Christian and the Church—  
Translation differences: "Not the removal of the dirt of the body" OR "Not the removal of the filth of the flesh"?

**Conclusion:** Peter learned through the things that he suffered from within himself to depend upon the grace of his Lord for salvation and for his life in the church. He passes on this legacy to us.

### **Looking Ahead**

**The Mind of Christ and the End of All Things (4:1-11)**

**The Blessedness of Christian Suffering (4:12-19)**

**Encouragement for Pastors During the Exile (5:1-14)**

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

### **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## **20 The Mind of Christ and the End of All Things**

1 Peter 4:1-11

### **Today's study will focus on 1 Peter 4:1-11**

Christ's suffering in the flesh gives us an insight (mind) into how we are called by the Gospel to live in this world as the end of all things approaches. The evils of the world, with all its false doctrine and anti-Christian dogma, are all signs of the end. The sobriety of faith and prayer, living in love and hospitality toward one another, exercising the gifts that God has given us in the ministry to the glory of God in Christ Jesus is the disposition to which we are called.

1. **Christ's suffering in the flesh for the salvation of the world gives to us an insight** into how we are called to live in the latter days as the end of all things approaches and Christ appears again in glory.

**Mind** = thought, knowledge, insight, attitude, thinking

"Arm yourselves with the same insight or way of thinking about your lives as Christians..."

2. **"He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin..."**

**Suffering in the flesh** = not mere suffering; but suffering with faith in Christ, entrusting ourselves to Him who suffered for us, and suffering the denial of the lusts of the flesh...

**What does the flesh want to do in the face of external suffering?** Lash out in acts of retribution. Lust includes not merely desiring to satisfy the self-centered longings and appetites of the flesh, but also of the attitude of vengeance and desire for revenge.

**Lust is characterized by one of two things:**

- a. The desire for vengeance against external suffering (cutting off the ear of Malchus); or
- b. Acquiescence to the "will of the Gentiles (Nations)" walking in the fulfillment of sinful desire ("If you can't beat them, join them"—His denial of Jesus)

Peter teaches us throughout his witness to the Gospel what he also learned from experience, that "walking in the way of the Gentiles" can never give true peace and freedom to the conscience.

3. **The unbelieving world thinks it strange that we do not run with them** in the same flood of dissipation. To the world the tenants of the sexual revolution, LGBTQ+ teaching on human sexuality, critical race theory, woke ideology, and progressive secular humanism are obviously the true, correct, and enlightened world view. If we do not "run with them" we are spoken of as evil, bigoted, backward, mean-spirited people, etc.

"Licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries..." are all things that the self-centered, governed-by-emotions flesh wants, just like the evils of our age.

4. **There will be a judgment of the unbelieving on the last day**, but this judgment is for God to meet out in His time. It is not given for the church to meet out this judgment. Our use of the Law is to call to repentance and to be in service to the Gospel and faith in Christ.
5. **The Gospel of Christ is preached to those who are dead in the hope that they might live.**  
This “preaching of the Gospel” is centered first upon the content of who Jesus is and what He has done for us, but it also includes the way in which the Church is called to live in this world. Our preaching of Christology must be accompanied by living Christologically or with the “mind of Christ” under the things we suffer.
6. **What are we called to do since the end of all things is at hand?**  
**Watchful in Prayer**  
We are called to be self-controlled, serious, sober-minded and watchful in prayer.  
Jesus said, “See, I have told you these things...” and this becomes a comfort to us that we might not only endure suffering, but learn to believe that the things we experience as Christians are a validation of the very truthfulness of our Lord’s Word.  
**Fervent love for one another within the body of Christ because love covers a multitude of sins.**  
**Hospitality to one another** in the body of Christ without the self-centeredness and resentment of grumbling.  
**Faithful stewardship of the ministry and Christian service within the body of Christ.**  
This involves the ordinary things that Luke records in Acts 2:42ff after Peter’s Pentecost sermon: “They continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers...they ate their food with simplicity and gladness of heart...and they provided for everyone as each one had need.”
7. **As the end of all things approaches, we are called to do everything to the glory of Christ.**

## **Looking Ahead**

**The Blessedness of Christian Suffering (4:12-19)**

**Encouragement for Pastors During the Exile (5:1-14)**

**The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**  
**Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**  
1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

**21 The Blessedness of Christian Suffering**  
1 Peter 4:12-19

**Today's study will focus on 1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Looking Ahead**

**Encouragement for Pastors During the Exile (5:1-14)**

## **The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer**

### **Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land**

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

## **22 Encouragement for Shepherds and Their Sheep During the Exile**

1 Peter 5:1-14

**Concluding study:** Will begin with a short review of the Benedict Option, followed by encouragement for shepherds and their sheep (pastors and the baptized faithful) during the exile in a study of 1 Peter 5:1-14. The final portion will give a summary of the practical advice of what I would call "The St. Peter Option."

Introduction

- 1. Peter's encouragement "to shepherd the flock" is rooted in being a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.** (1 Peter 5:1-2a)
  - a. Peter was an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ and its outcome: resurrection.
  - b. In Jesus' suffering he saw his Lord becoming a partaker of his sin for his redemption so that he could proclaim that same forgiveness to others as an undershepherd.
  - c. When Peter was going through "the little while" of suffering he didn't understand how necessary the suffering was for Jesus and for him. Both Jesus and Peter were joined together in the sufferings of Christ. Jesus' suffering for Peter was necessary for Peter's salvation. Peter's suffering (sorrow and contrition)—caused by his sin and the Word of the Lord—drew him back to Jesus for the forgiveness.
  - d. It is through the absolution that Peter became "a partaker of the glory that will be revealed" in the resurrection.
  - e. Forgiveness is the glory of the resurrection. By the absolution we become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 2:4) and "the glory of the resurrection" now.
  - f. Remember how Peter was grieved in John 21, "Do you love me?" "Feed My lambs...Tend My sheep...Feed My sheep." He could not grasp the joy of these words apart from the Holy Spirit who is the agent of absolution by Jesus' word: "Peace be with you..."
  - g. Remember his reference "you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer/episkopos of our souls."
  - h. Peter's capacity to face all suffering, trial, opposition, adversity, persecution, and eventual martyrdom with joy was bound up with the resurrection of Jesus: Because He is risen from the dead, I shall rise from the dead. Because He is risen from the dead, my sin is forgiven.
  - i. Christ's absolution was the necessary "first word" for his ministry of joy and the necessary "first word" for the Christian in his vocation. "Ordained by forgiveness to preach and testify to the forgiveness of sins."

2. **Submission to Christ's forgiveness is the foundation for life in the Church and the joy of our fellowship together.** (1 Peter 5:2b-14)
- a. Peter now understood that the mandate of Jesus, "Feed My lambs, tend My sheep, feed My sheep" was really an absolution that sent him forth as a shepherd in the strength of Christ's forgiveness. Now the sorrow is turned to joy.
  - b. "Shepherd the flock..." was spoken to the elders in the diaspora from the same foundation of forgiveness.
  - c. The call of forgiveness is why the pastors are to serve, "not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not as being lords over those entrusted to them, but as examples to the flock"
  - d. The promise of living by the call of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins is that "when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." That promise is to pastor and people as well when we live by faith in the Lord's forgiving word in our vocation.
  - e. Peter's submission to the Lord's forgiveness is "the example" for both pastors AND the sheep, and such submission is characterized by the repentant life of humble contrition and repentance.
  - f. "Likewise you younger people, submit to your elders/pastors" for forgiveness. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility..."
  - g. Impenitence is prideful boasting/penitence is humble contrition in our lives before the Lord and with one another.
  - h. The absolution of the Lord raises us up with Christ and "exalts us in due time" (a foretaste of the resurrection and ascension now)
  - i. The absolution of the Lord is the strength to "cast all our care upon Christ" to "be vigilant" to "resist the roaring lion who seeks to devour us" "to remain steadfast in faith" "to endure suffering" with joy and confidence.
  - j. The call of the Gospel of God's grace by the eternal glory of Christ's forgiveness in His resurrection will "perfect, establish, strengthen and settle" us. To God "be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."
  - k. Look at how the love of God in Christ's forgiveness overflows in Peter's final joyful words: "Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus."
3. **The St. Peter Option:**
1. Return daily to the promise of your Baptism.
  2. Gird up your loins with the Word of God in the Divine Service, Catechesis, Daily prayer in the home and parish. "All flesh is grass, but the Word of the Lord endures."
  3. "Abstain from fleshly lusts"—Creating in your homes and congregations communities that are "sanctified by the Word" and places of refuge from the world.
  4. Partake regularly of confession and absolution.
  5. Dare to live the call of the Gospel in a disposition of mercy toward enemies and confident faith in Christ as citizens, servants in the workplace, wives, husbands, etc.
  6. Sing hymns
  7. Rejoice when you suffer for confessing the love of Christ to those who hate you.