

1Peter 1:1 Introduction - "Strangers In The World"

We start a new study this morning, and yet we must always keep in mind that even though the Bible is made up of numerous separate books and letters, God the Holy Spirit has designed His word to be one complete work inspired by One God; and though He uses many people to write it, there is only one Author.

And so our study this morning takes us to the first epistle of Peter. And as is my custom when we start a new study, I like to give some background information on the work at which we're looking.

Now, since this is not a history class, but a time to hear from God through His word I will be somewhat brief concerning the historical aspects of this letter and yet I want to include some things which I believe will add to our understanding of God's word as we have it in first Peter.

Of course the writer of this letter is the same Peter who spent some three years with Jesus as His disciple. He's the same Peter who denied our Lord three times and the same Peter who ended up giving his life for Christ in service to Him.

In fact, in all of the N.T. there is only one man named Peter and this is the man who penned this letter. Some quick information about Peter himself which might help us see the grace and mercy given him by Christ.

The first time we meet Peter is in Mar 1:16-18 "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him."

Peter was a blue collar worker. He was out there doing the job only a rugged individual could do. Peter wasn't some wimp. But when Jesus called him, both he and his brother left what they were doing and followed Christ.

By the way Peter's name was Simon before Jesus changed his name to Peter which means, stone or rock. He seemed to be a man of extremes and one who was always willing to take the lead. And he was very bold in some ways; not always in a confrontational way, but in a way that only wanted answers to what he felt were important questions.

We read in Mat 19:24-27 "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

He knew they were specially called and he simply wanted to know how they fit into the scheme of things. And yet he was willing to go the distance for something he could get behind 100%.

We see this again in Mat 16:13-17 "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" (The "you" here is in the plural form which addressed all of the disciples) Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Peter wasted no time in declaring that Jesus was who He said He was. This same Peter also seemed to be the epitome of loyalty to the Lord when he told Jesus in Mar.14:31, that even if he had to die with Jesus, he would never deny Him.

And yet we know the tragic story of how Peter fulfilled the very prophecy Jesus gave him that he would in fact deny Him three times before the cock crowed. And on the morning of Jesus' arrest Peter did deny Him.

It's worth looking at that incident and seeing how a man intent on following the Lord to the very end could find himself, under pressure, actually denying Him.

Luk 22:54-62 "Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him,

for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly."

That had to be the lowest point in Peter's life. To deny the Master, the very One whom Peter knew to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

But of course this is not the beginning of the end for Peter. And yet it is in a sense the end of his beginnings with the Lord. For in three short days Peter would learn that the One he knew as Messiah would prove Himself to be the living Savior as He rose victoriously from the dead.

But it was during our Lord's 40 days after His resurrection, just before He ascended back to the Father, that Peter's life would be given its true direction by Jesus.

Charles Swindoll in his book, "Hope in hurtful times", puts it this way. "Peter was fishing when the words of Jesus came to him from the shore, jostling a sleeping memory. He immediately threw himself into the sea in a rush to get to his Lord. Once on shore, Peter found breakfast waiting for him and the other disciples -- Jesus Himself tending to their needs. While they were all hunched around the campfire, Jesus took Peter aside and began his restoration....

.... Three times He asked Peter if he loved Him, providing this devastated disciple a chance to reconfirm his love for each of the times he had denied it. And with the words "Tend my Lambs... Shepherd My sheep ... Tend My Sheep," Jesus reestablished Peter's role of leadership in His Kingdom and then sealed it with the command to follow Him."

..... A quick look at Luke's record in the book of Acts will show how this second chance turned Peter's life around... It was Peter who took the lead in choosing a disciple to take Judas' place (Acts 1). It was Peter who became spokesman for the first evangelistic outreach at Pentecost (Acts 2). It was Peter who, with John, healed the lame man at the temple (Acts 3). It was Peter who defied the Sanhedrin, refusing to be silent about Jesus (Acts 4). It was Peter who presided over the grim task of dealing with Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5). It was Peter who dealt decisively with the deceit

of Simon the magician (Acts 8). It was Peter who reached out to Cornelius, a Gentile, after God revealed to him that the gospel would be extended universally. (Acts 10-11)."

..... And this was the man God used to pen the two letters known as 1 and 2 Peter. He was a man who could identify with failure... who could understand pain... who was well acquainted with suffering."

In fact, this is much of what this first letter is all about; suffering. And though this is the overall theme of the letter the purpose is to demonstrate that there is hope even in painful times and that they are not without a purpose, and that purpose is to be molded into the kind of effective servant that even Peter became in Christ.

As I scanned Swindoll's little book on this letter I noticed that he states three lessons that he learned from 1Peter. "First: Failure in the past does not nullify purpose in the future. Second: A broken heart is great preparation for healing fractured lives. Third: One letter of hope brings more encouragement than a thousand thoughts never expressed."

We'll see how all of this plays out over the next few weeks as we study this letter from God, penned by Peter. But before Peter gets into the realities of suffering he lays a very important foundation so that each believer will keep in mind his position before Christ, Who is our Rock, and Who is able to make us stand. And so we come to our text.

1Pe 1:1 "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." Unlike Paul, who on a number of occasions defended his position as an apostle because of such opposition from enemies of the cross, Peter needed no reason for such a defense.

Everyone knew who Peter was and his position in Christ as one who had personally walked with the Lord. One thing you notice is that Peter doesn't address himself as "The apostle." Rather, an apostle; one among the others.

This is important to note because some would try to place Peter in an elevated position; a position which Peter never claimed for himself. Be that as it may, he was still an apostle.

As we've said before the word apostle in general use meant "one sent as a messenger". And so many people could fit into that category. But when Peter or Paul would use that designation for themselves they meant it in a special way, as a messenger sent with God's very message for the world as the Lord inspired them to write His word.

And for that reason, there are no more apostles today who would have all of the qualifications that were met by certain men called out by Christ for His special purposes in the first century, not the least of which was to give us the Bible as we have it today.

And so Peter addresses these people as one with authority and can give them instruction as coming from God Himself. But, he's not intending to bring attention to himself because he designates himself as an apostle "of Jesus Christ". In other words, Peter could be saying, 'I'm a messenger for Jesus, here's what the Lord wants you to hear.'

By the way, this particular letter is referred to as a general letter. The reason for this is because it's not addressed to any particular individual, like Paul writing to Timothy; and it's not addressed to any one church, like Paul writing to Rome.

This letter was designed to go to many churches and be read. What would actually happen is that a messenger would take the letter to a church and they would make their own copy. And so every church would make their own copy for their own possession.

This was a practice with all of the letters, even the letters addressed to individual churches. The churches would recognize them as messages from God penned by the apostles. And so the letter which Paul wrote to Rome, for example, was copied and found its way to the rest of the churches who would make their own copy.

Now, it's interesting to note how the people are addressed in this letter. "To God's elect, strangers in the world." That's how the NIV puts it. In other translations like the NAS it reads: "To those who reside as aliens", while the KJV says, "To the strangers scattered."

What the NIV does is to place the idea of being elect or chosen at the beginning of this verse, while other translations place the idea

of being elect or chosen at the end of this verse. The KJV even places it in verse 2.

Don't worry, the Greek language allows both possibilities. But so as not to confuse you I'm going to deal with both ideas together as does the NIV.

"To God's elect, strangers in the world." Whenever the word elect is used in the Scriptures, as it refers to people, it always means God's people and so we know that Peter is addressing the church. Now, what will often happen at this point is that someone will emphasize that Peter is introducing a Theological truth which stands on its own.

That is not what Peter is doing here. He isn't teaching on the doctrine of election as though this were some sort of catechism for these churches. He's simply identifying them as people who have received God's grace and stand in a relationship with the living God by faith in His Son.

In fact, from such a statement without any further explanation, Peter assumes that these people believed and accepted the doctrine of election and that they understood that they were the recipients of such grace from God.

But, for the sake of those here this morning who may be a little fuzzy on this subject let me quickly explain it. All through the O.T., as well as the N.T., we see the doctrine of election. Its classic definition is that God has chosen a people out of the world for His own possession.

As the Lord revealed Himself to Israel in the O.T. He said. "I will be your God and you will be My people." It was His act of choosing which placed Israel in a relationship with Himself.

In the N.T. we have such passages as Eph 1:3-6 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

In a nutshell election is God's Sovereign choice. And His choice has nothing to do with who we are or what He knows about us,

even before we were born. His choice is entirely according to His love and mercy and will.

Some will suggest that God foreknew and elected us in the sense that He could see down the long corridor of time and know who would choose Him. But, that would make His choice of us dependent on our actions, which denies Him a true choice based only on His Sovereignty.

As Jesus said to His disciples in Joh 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last..."

And so we must agree with God's word that God is the One who initiates our salvation by choosing us and then calling us. This is what Paul meant in Rom 8:29-30 "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

But having said that what do we do with passages like these?

2 Peter 3:9⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

1 Timothy 4:10¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Romans 5:18¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

It would certainly appear that Christ is the Savior of all men in juxtaposition to the elect which is by default not all men but a portion of all men.

So, what is it? Is Christ the Savior of all men or of only the elect? The first thing we need to consider is this. Does the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ actually and really save anyone or does His work on the cross only make people savable?

In other words, is salvation effectual as God intended to save a people completely by His choice, or does the final effect of salvation depend on man's choice? This is important because it

goes to the heart of God's eternal decree to save a particular people who are dead in their trespasses and sins.

And that's really the issue because unless we believe in universalism which states that God has in fact saved "all" men, then we have to deal with the reality that all men are not saved.

Here's the problem as stated by Paul in two different passages as he deals with it.

Ephesians 2:1-3 ^{NAU} And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Being dead in your trespasses and sins means exactly that. The word dead can also be translated corpse. Dead men don't bring themselves to life. Dead men don't seek any solution to their death problem. Dead men are dead. In this case it is a spiritual death that not only does not seek the things of God, including salvation, but are rather incapable of seeking God as Paul points out to the Romans.

Romans 3:10-12 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

Either none seek for God, some seek for God, or all seek for God. Well, our experience tells us that "all" do not seek for God, but that "some" seek for God. But Paul quite clearly says, none seek for God. So, for those who seek for God how do we explain the phrase, none seek for God?

The only people who seek for God are those whom God has sought and revealed Himself as He has opened their eyes and ears and given a new heart whereby they are given new life with the ability to now see the need for a Savior.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit

within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Without God giving us a new heart, which is to say, a new life necessitated because we were dead, we will continue to be dead men walking without any desire to seek the things of God.

For this reason Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, or born from above. This is a work entirely by the Holy Spirit who is the agent through whom the heart of stone is made into a heart of flesh through regeneration.

Titus 3:5-7 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

Therefore the verses quoted above that appear to be talking about salvation being given to all men must be qualified by the clear teaching that none can hear or desire the things of God in their naturally dead spiritual state. In fact, this is why it is essential that God calls out a people from among the dead to be His people. Jesus spoke of this in the gospel of John.

John 6:37-40 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

It is clear that the Father has sent the Son into the world with a mission. That mission is to totally save, not simply make savable, an elect group of people for His own possession. These elect, we are told, will come to the Messiah Jesus because they have been given to Christ by the Father. These elect will behold the Son and will believe on Him for eternal life and they will be raised up by Christ on the last day.

This is much different from the teaching that Christ died for the entire world with the potential for them to be saved as these spiritually dead people somehow see their need for a Savior.

Unless people are born with some sort of spark of life with the ability to choose eternal life then we must defer to the plain teaching that none seek after God, there are none who will do so, which is why they must be born from above.

In short the verses above including John 3:16, when speaking of the world, are addressing all types of people in the world.

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son and later in the same gospel is where Jesus identifies who in the world He meant. All that the Father gave Him out of the world.

When Peter speaks of the patience of God notice to whom that patience is directed.

2 Peter 3:9⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

His patience is directed toward those to whom Peter is writing.

2 Peter 1:1¹ ...To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Peter is addressing the sheep of Christ who know His voice because He has given them ears to hear. He is patient toward those whom the Father has given Him as His patience is worked out over time desiring that none of His sheep will perish. And they will not because we are assured that they will be raised up at the last day.

When Paul writes to Timothy in what appears to be a universal salvation for all men it must be in the context of those who are actually saved.

1 Timothy 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Paul is contrasting those who are apostates with true believers. If Jesus Christ is the Savior of all men, then Jesus Christ is the Savior

of “all” men. Remember, all that the Father gave Him will come to Him. But the argument goes, no, Jesus is the Savior of all men, but they must believe to receive.

But it begs the question once again, how can they believe when they are literally most spiritually dead? It wasn't until Lazarus was given life by Christ that he was able to respond to the command to come out of the tomb. And it isn't until one has been given a heart of flesh, born from above, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, that they can then and only then respond to the command to repent and believe. This is why Paul adds the phrase, especially of believers, when he addresses the living God, who is the Savior of all men.

Essentially, Paul is saying that God is the Savior of all men, particularly all men in the world, both Jew and Gentile who believe. And who can believe? All that the Father gives to the Son from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Those out of the entire world.

And then we must deal with the justification of all men.

Romans 5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Did one transgression result in condemnation to all men?

Absolutely. Then it only stands to reason that each of these same people are being addressed when Paul says, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

So, there you have it. All men, because of the one act of righteousness in Christ, have been declared righteous. That would be the “result” of that one act of righteousness. But as we know all men are not made righteous. Why? Because they didn't believe that they were made righteous. But if I declare you not guilty, then you are not guilty whether you believe it or not.

We can't have it both ways. Either Christ's sacrifice was effectual in accomplishing the Father's will or it was not. Either all men are made righteous by the one act of Christ or they are not. No, the argument goes, it's ultimately up to the one who must believe that Christ is His Savior and then he receives justification.

But that's not what the text says. All men are condemned by the one transgression of Adam. All men are justified by the one act of righteousness of Christ. Nothing is mentioned about faith here. No,

but they must believe before they can receive. Yes. And who will believe? Paul says, No one, not even one.

But again, the argument goes that Jesus essentially says, if you hear His word you must repent and believe to see the Kingdom of God. If people weren't capable of believing after hearing then this would be an empty command from Christ.

But it's not an empty command from Christ, it only points out that since people cannot spiritually hear they will do what God says they will do because of their sin and rebellion; not to believe.

Remember what Jesus said to the rebellious Jews of His day?

John 8:47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

Notice who hears. He who is of God hears the words of God, which is to say, those whom the Father gives to the Son will be enabled to hear. It doesn't work in reverse. It is not, you hear the word and then are declared to be of God.

No. Jesus plainly says, the reason you don't hear is because you are not of God, you have not been given to the Son by the Father. This is the same reason Jesus can say that it is only His sheep who hear His voice.

John 10:26-28²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Who are the sheep and why can they hear while the other people cannot? Because they have been brought from death to life by the Spirit as they are now able to respond to Christ by the faith He provides.

Only those sheep who have been given to the Great Shepherd by the Father can hear the voice of their Shepherd. These have been given to the Son before the foundation of the world and they will follow their Shepherd as they are given ears to hear. These elect will believe and they will receive because Christ will see to it that they will be justified by His sacrifice for them and they will be raised up on the last day by Jesus Himself who declared it.

But, Peter then calls these elect, "strangers in the world". A more literal translation would be aliens, or as the NKJV would put it, pilgrims which implies sojourners or a temporary resident.

And these terms would be closer because strangers gives the impression that we aren't known to the world. And yet Jesus wants us to be known to the world as lights and salt, glorifying our heavenly Father, not off in some monastery or keeping only to our own group to the exclusion of the world.

You can be an alien and be quite at home in one sense. We hear the term illegal aliens, who have made this country their home. But the point Peter is making is that we who have been called out by God may live in this world, but this world is not our home. We're only visiting this planet.

Our residence is in heaven and ultimately will be on the new earth. Therefore, our lives should be moving heaven-ward with our desire to draw closer and closer to the One who has given us eternal life.

So, these two terms; elect and strangers or sojourners are terms which we can call ourselves. But just in case we're not seeing the forest for the one or two trees we're concentrating on, let me take you back to why Peter is addressing these Christians in this fashion.

These Christians were facing all sorts of trials and in some cases real persecution. Before Peter addresses those problems he wants them to know how Jesus sees them.

Jesus sees them as His special children whom He has chosen in love. Jesus sees them as beloved children who need to know that, despite what this world may do to them, they have a place reserved in heaven where our Lord resides and is waiting for them with open arms.

This whole letter is meant as an encouragement to a group of people who are trying to deal with real life which was pretty tough for many of them. But this group of people were given a hope which only their Savior could give them.

You and I may not be undergoing persecution, but you and I face the attacks of the enemy in other ways as we try to live to God's honor and glory. And so you need to see yourself as one who is chosen by God Himself to be His representative in this world, which is not our home; just a place where we can shine for Him in the meantime.

But keep in mind too that as Peter encourages these people to look to their position in Christ, as one's who have been called out and

loved by Jesus, he doesn't divorce the means that Jesus has instituted to find encouragement and help in times of need.

And by that I mean the Body of Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit. It's not as though these people who are hurting are on their own with the Lord. Peter makes the assumption as he addresses these churches, that in their trials they are there for one another.

The writer of Hebrews touches on this in Heb 10:23-25 "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

This "one-anothering" can only take place as we are connected to each other. And that connection is found first and foremost in Christ, but it also includes Christ's church which He has given us for this encouragement.

This encouragement is found in the teaching and preaching of the word of God; encouragement found in the fellowship of the saints; encouragement found in worshipping our God together as we humbly rely on Him for all things.

Jesus knows our faith can be weak and that trusting in a God we can't see can be tough at times, and so He demonstrates His love through His people as we're giving that love to each other in tangible ways.

This is mentioned by Paul in Phi 2:1-5 "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:"

We must encourage one another as we meet needs and point others to Christ, but we must always understand where our ultimate encouragement comes from and that is from the hope we have in the Lord.

Rom 15:5-6 "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you

follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We really didn't get too far into this letter today. And quite honestly I didn't intend to get too far. I just wanted to set this up in a way so that as we go through this letter we can be encouraged and expectant of what God has to say to us in our trials and how we can see ourselves from God's perspective.

None of us are without trials. And what may be a small trial for one may be a major problem for another. When you're in the middle of it nothing seems to be small. But I want you to know that God knows where you are and He wants you to know that He's always there and He has the answer.

I would encourage all of you this week to read through 1 Peter in just one sitting and then at some time go through it at a slower pace and meditate on what the Lord would say to you and how He wants to encourage you.

But know this, you are chosen for a purpose. And it is God Himself who has chosen you. Choose Him every moment of your life by drawing close to Him and relying on the power of His Spirit to effectively represent Him in this world with the love and the hope He's given us in Christ.