

Cyber Truths By E-mail

1 3. If Peter Wrote Today (August 8, 2005)



Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

We want to thank you for responding to our e-mail requesting you to verify that you'd like to stay on our list. We're delighted to have so many responses! We continue to covet your prayers as we press on to produce the Demolishing Stronghold video. Your prayers are helping us have breakthroughs. Thank you!

I [Mike] was reminiscing this morning before I climbed out of bed. It's been over 22 years that we've been writing some form of teaching letter. When we first started, we'd write them in pen, type them, mimeograph them, then mail them out via "snail mail". Things have changed! We still hope that what we write helps each of you on your journey to salvation. We want to be at our Lord's banquet table and rejoice together with you in our Lord's faithfulness to have brought us home.

If Peter Wrote Today

Maybe some of you have done this before: You picture Jesus or one of the apostles here on earth in our time, and wonder what they'd think of Christianity. After reading First Peter we tried to consider what the bold apostle would write to the "Christendom" system in the US, and what he would write to the individual followers of Jesus. Here's what we think his letter might look like:

" To you who follow Jesus I remind you that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. Be careful how you live in it! Don't desire what the people of this world desire. They have no concern about eternity. They are doomed and don't care.

You in the US who call yourselves "Christian" but don't follow Jesus, I warn

you: Your lives and those of the world are indistinguishable. I want to remind you who call yourself "Christian" that the Lord delivered the Israelites out of Egypt but later destroyed in the desert those who did not trust. Except for the faithful Joshua and Caleb, that generation never made it to the Promised Land. And, if you continue in your lack of a trust that's evidenced by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, you are not going to make it to salvation at the completion of your life pilgrimage. You can't just sit in pews and listen to religious teaching. Repent! I remind you that there truly is an eternal fire prepared for those who don't complete their pilgrimage to salvation. You must authenticate yourself through His Spirit as one of Jesus' own here on earth, in love-grounded obedient trust in Him as the LORD of your life. Remember, it's not what you think about yourself, but what He thinks that matters.

If you are a follower of Jesus, ask the Holy Spirit each day to help you make your calling and election sure. You must make every effort to add to your way of life faith, and to faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective in completing your pilgrimage to salvation. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your time on earth is your testing ground to confirm if you truly are the Father's child. Trust is seen in how you live, not in what you think.

The true followers of Jesus around the world are now forfeiting everything, including their lives, to be true to their trust in Him alone. What does it cost many in the US to call themselves "Christian"? An hour or two in a pew, and financial provision for the institution of which they're a part to continue. They face no threat to their lives or livelihood to be considered "Christian". But without a cost to forfeit the goals and values of the world system, "Christians" will never perfect their faith, nor find eternal glory.

If "Christians" will just choose to follow Jesus as we in the earliest Church were commanded to do, watch how your family and friends will treat you. Often, the first cost of really being a follower of Jesus is that your family and friends and even other "Christians" turn against you. NO ONE who is without the indwelling Holy Spirit can ever understand you; that's because as a follower of Jesus, you give the Spirit of Christ rule in your soul.

Your worst tormentors as a follower of Jesus will be "Christians" and your own family members. Our Lord warned us of this: Trust in Him would divide families, and we'd be persecuted by the religious establishment. John and I were dragged before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Council.

Religious people can't tolerate having followers of Jesus around. They fear becoming convicted, as you've become in response to the Spirit's call. Just keep in mind: A follower of Jesus FOLLOWS Him no matter what the cost. A "Christian" tries to hold on to all he can here on earth, forfeiting not only his soul, but His eternal glory. Keep this distinction in your heart clear, and be sure to frequently test your own goals and

motives.

Too many of you who once followed your Lord no matter what the cost now suffer nothing for your Lord Jesus. You've let yourself be seduced into becoming name-only "Christians" and become friends of the values of this world. If you do not repent, this path will make you an enemy of our Father in heaven. If you're unsure where you stand, just ask those who know you well: What are the first topics you bring up, and what do you talk about most often?

Test Yourself:

How much of your conversation has anything to do with following Jesus?

Another thing the Lord holds against those who are name-only "Christians" is your toleration for sin. Too many of you live in self-pity because you "can't sin" like those around you do. With heavy heart as my brothers Paul and John have so often written, I give you this warning: Haven't you noticed that your prayers AREN'T being answered by our Father? Haven't you noticed that you have no testimony to His faithfulness? Worst of all, for too many of you who once followed our Lord, it doesn't ever bother you... Repent, and return to what you once had! If you don't, your path is spiraling toward hell, not heaven.

I also warn you so that your life will be full in Spirit, not empty and fruitless: Rid yourselves of all malice and slander toward any other human made in God's image and for whom Jesus died. Our Lord loves all mankind, and never made you judge of anyone. And, repent of the deceit in your heart that a "little sin" is OK. This is hypocrisy! Repent for your envy of those "Christians" who live according to the world's standards.

Rather, grieve for them. The way they live is of the evil one.

And most of all crave the truth as the Holy Spirit would have you know it in your heart and live it day to day. It's only through the Spirit's power that you can complete the path to your salvation. In this manner of trusting in His faithfulness in loving obedience, you will be like the living Stone whom men rejected, but was chosen by God.

BE the living stones of this generation, images of the Great Stone. If you will live as He would have you live, you will be this generation's holy priesthood — living sacrifices acceptable to our Father through Jesus Christ.

Followers of Jesus are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Choose the path of righteousness, and fellowship only with the righteous, so that you may have praises to your Father's glory. This is your true worship which is acceptable to your Father. And be available in soul and spirit to serve HIS purposes as a willing and effective representative to those who have yet to trust Him. His heart yearns for the lost to repent!

Again, I urge you, abstain from giving in to your sinful desires, which war against your soul. Resist! Remember, RESIST! Acquire the mind of Jesus in ALL your thoughts. Show those around you that you truly are a follower of Jesus by living in such a Christ-like way among them that, though they harass you for not being part of their religious practices or worldly lifestyle, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. And, live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for

evil; live as servants of the Most High God. Be led by the Spirit!

Remember: You are to live as aliens and strangers to the goals and desires of this world. Embrace the rejection you face for following our Lord Jesus. It is a gift from Him to refine you, demonstrating that you are truly His follower as you respond in love.

The world and its desires pass away, but the person who does the will of God lives forever. If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. Remember what our Lord told us, "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." Judge yourself: Does the world hate you?

You were called to this life of being rejected by the world, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. And remember that when they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate when He suffered. He made no threats, and took up no offense against anyone. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him Who judges justly. Do likewise. Speak no slander against those who reject you because of Jesus. Our Father will deal with them. He can bring pressure on the resistant so that they might turn from evil and come to Him for reconciliation.

Keep reminding yourself that your Lord bore your sins in His body on the cross, so that you might die to sins and live for righteousness. Through His suffering and death, you have been reconciled with the Father. This is what the world must see in your life: You truly are the Father's child. And those who know you need to know your Father THROUGH you.

May following our Lord Jesus create in you His aroma. Entrust yourself to the Spirit within you, and He will empower you to not only follow our Lord Jesus, but become more like Him."Two followers of Jesus,

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz