

Take-Home • Session Two

Be Holy: Ransomed and Reborn • 1 Peter 1:13-25

What We Found

Peter's command, be holy (1:15-16), turned out to rest on facts, not performance anxiety: God is a Father whose judgment takes his children seriously, and you were ransomed from the futile ways handed down to you at a price that reveals your worth, the precious blood of Christ. We found Exodus 12 hiding inside 1:19: Christ is the true Passover Lamb, without blemish, whose blood turns death away and springs slaves free. And the born-again question gained a second clue: the new birth comes through the living and abiding word, the imperishable thing Isaiah promised when he said all flesh is grass.

Voices of the Church

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St. Clement of Rome (d. c. 99), Letter to the Corinthians 7

An early successor of Peter as bishop of Rome, writing within a generation of this letter, urges the Corinthians to gaze intently on the blood of Christ and to know how precious it is to God the Father, since it was poured out for our salvation and won the grace of repentance for the whole world. Clement even uses Peter's own word, precious, for that blood; within a generation, the Church was already lingering over what our salvation cost God.

Voices of the Church

St. Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180), On Pascha

In the oldest surviving Easter homily, St. Melito preaches Christ as the true Passover: the lamb slain in Egypt was a sketch, and Christ the reality; he was led like a lamb and slaughtered like a sheep, and by his blood death is despoiled. This is precisely Peter's move in 1:19, and it shows the lamb-typology was already being preached publicly, by a bishop in the liturgy, within a century of the apostles.

Voices of the Church

St. Leo the Great (d. 461), Sermon 21 on the Nativity

"Christian, recognize your dignity." St. Leo exhorts the baptized to remember whose head and body they belong to, and never by sin to return to the old baseness they were ransomed from. The Catechism places this line at the head of its whole moral section (CCC 1691), which is Peter's logic exactly: dignity first, then conduct worthy of it.

Live It This Week

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This week: (1) Memorize 1 Peter 1:18-19. (2) Read Leviticus 19:1-18 once and count how many commands concern ordinary life: money, speech, work, neighbors. (3) Choose one compartment you have kept from God and hand it over in a single sentence of prayer each morning. (4) Do one earnest, inconvenient act of love for someone in this group before we meet again.

Scripture Memory

“You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19, RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read 1 Peter 2:1-10 before Session Three.

Go deeper in the Catechism: CCC 602; 1691; 2013