



LIVING LIFE & BEING GODLY

A STUDY OF 2 PETER 1

We often believe that being godly means that a person can not live a productive or practical life. The view we have is that life demands compromises that either make life a drudgery or godliness useless. Peter who struggled with the realities of these issues, tells us that a meaningful life and a godly life are not mutually exclusive.

Second Peter was written shortly before Peter's death. He references in this book his impending death. Christian tradition places the death of Peter and Paul in the winter of AD 67-68. This corresponds to Paul's request in 2 Timothy for his winter coat when Timothy visits him in Rome. This would place their deaths sometime from December through February. The persecution of Christians ended with the suicide of Nero in June of AD 68.

Sunday School Illustration: Peter and John heal the lame man in the temple.

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

We don't know exactly how Peter was executed.

The Jewish War began in 66. Roman hatred of Jewish people and by extension Christians who were viewed as religiously Jewish hit its peak between 66-68. Crucifixion would have been the preferred method of execution for Christians. Peter being a prominent leader of the Christian movement would have been singled out for a brutal execution. The Apostle Paul because he was a citizen of Rome escaped this type of execution, he was beheaded.



Peter in Prison by Rembrandt

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

Second Peter was written shortly before Peter's death. Peter according to tradition was housed until his execution in the Tullianum [modern Mamertine Prison]. He references in chapter 1 his impending death. Christian tradition places the death of Peter and Paul in the winter of AD 67-68. The persecution of Christians ended with the suicide of Nero in June of AD 68. Peter faces the end of his life with a sense of purpose and grace. He was not only concerned with his own death but wished to prepare Christians to live in the years to come.



Peter in Prison by Rembrandt

2 PETER 1:10-15

10 Therefore, brethren, be **even more diligent** to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will **never stumble**;

11 for so an entrance will be **supplied** to you **abundantly** into the **everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 For this reason I **will not be negligent** to remind you always of these things, though you know and are **established** in the **present truth**.

13 Yes, I **think it is right**, as long as I am in this **tent**, to **stir you up** by reminding *you*,

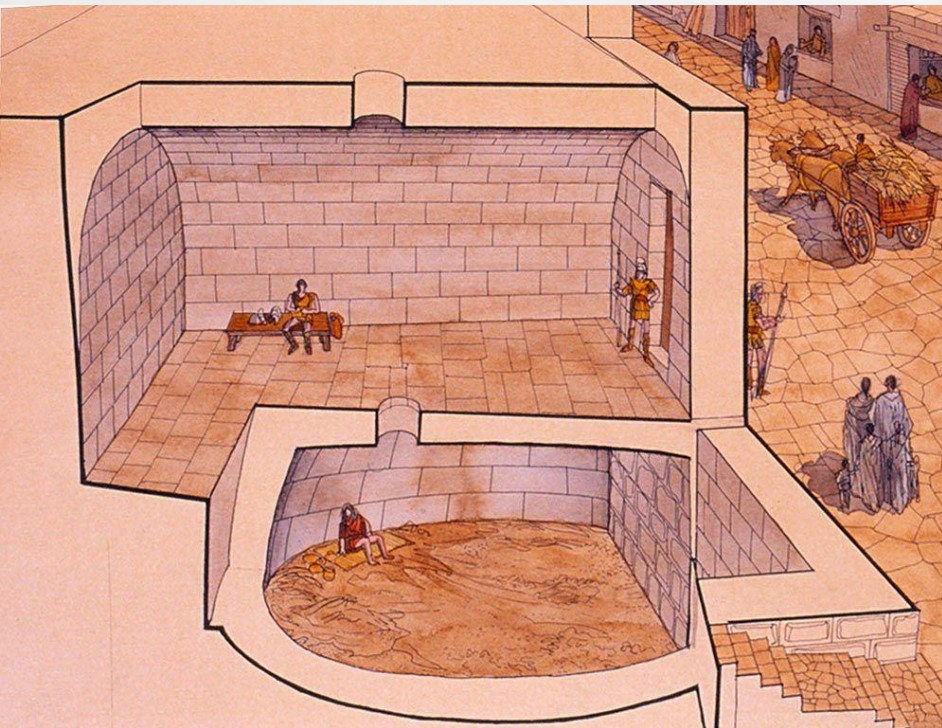
14 knowing that **shortly** I *must* put off my **tent**, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. *[Reference to John 21:18-19]*

15 Moreover I **will be careful to ensure** that you always have a reminder of these things after my **decease**.

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

The Tullianum possibly began as a cistern. The holding cell was a deep pit that could only be accessed through a hole on the floor of the chamber above. This prison was used for high risk political prisoners. Low risk prisoners were kept at the nearby Lautumiae, tufa quarries [*tufa is soft limestone*], during mass incarceration events. The Tullianum [Mamertine Prison] was established in the 600s BC. It had had seen many high risk political prisoners. Nearby was also the Tarpian Rock where traitors were executed, Paul may have been beheaded there. **Psalm 71**



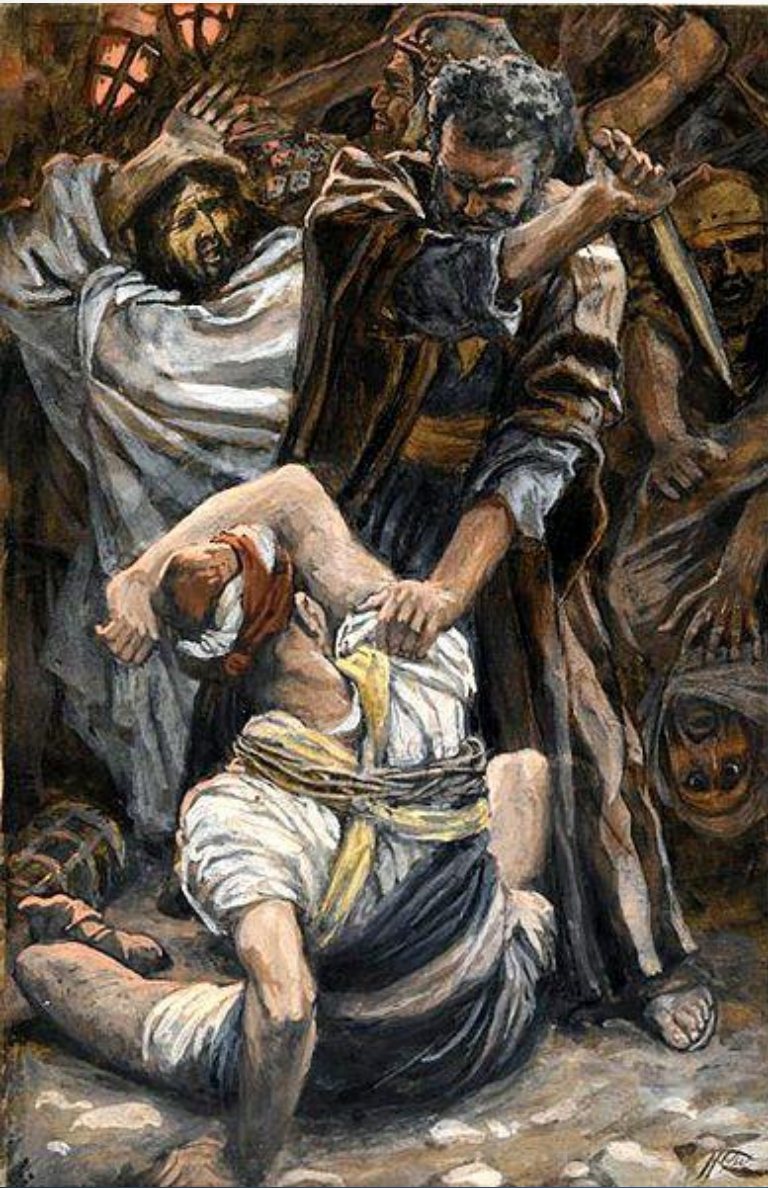
[above] The inside of the Tullianum [modern Mamertine Prison]. [below] Artist reconstruction.

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

7 Lessons for Life from Psalm 71:

- 1. Vv. 1-3 – We need to take refuge in the Lord.**
- 2. Vv. 4-6 – We need to hope in the Lord through life’s stages and circumstances.**
- 3. Vv. 7-13 – We need even when facing derisions and attacks to trust that the Lord is near us.**
- 4. Vv. 14-16 – We need recount the grace and deliverance of the Lord.**
- 5. Vv. 17-19 – We need to help prepare the next generation as God prepared us.**
- 6. Vv. 20-22 – We need to trust in the Resurrection.**
- 7. Vv. 23-24 – We need to believe in God’s goodness and justice.**



“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

Peter was a man who had strong emotions and personal struggles. He made promises he couldn't keep; got angry with his fellow disciples; was jealous of John; lost control in the garden; panicked when challenged; and gave up when he became discouraged.

In verse 10 he tells us to be diligent to live up to our calling by Christ Jesus and his choice of us. That means that we need to strive for steadfastness in our personality as we follow Jesus. As we grow we move to a more stable Christian experience even when we are plunged into chaos. Paul at the same time Peter wrote, wrote **2 Timothy 4:5-8**.

“The Ear of Malcus” by James Tissot

2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8 [ESV]

5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.



“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

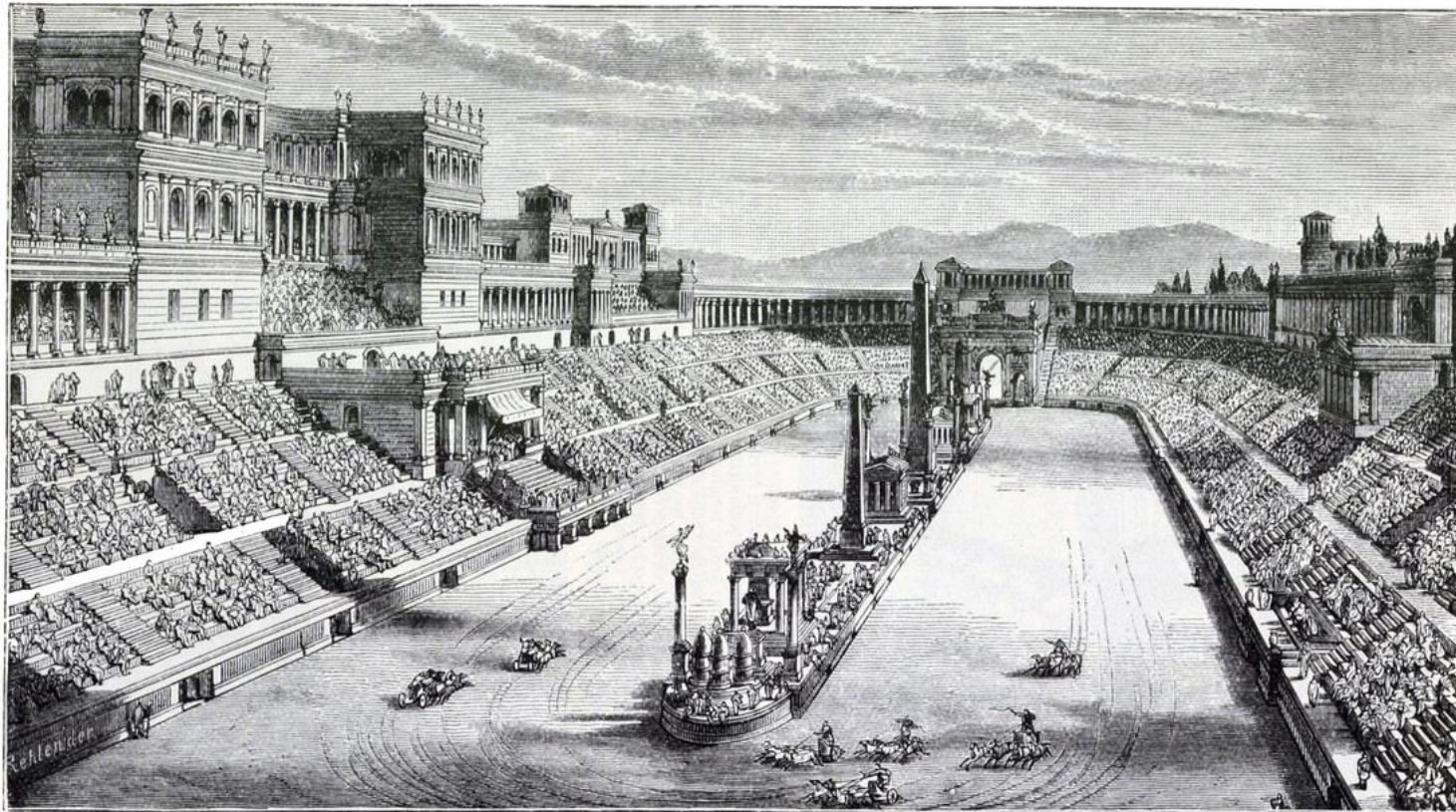
2 PETER 1:10-15

The great fire of Rome began on the night July 18 or early morning July 19 of AD 64. It began in the Circus Maximus at the elliptical Emperor’s Entrance. Around the base and preliminary if the structure were vending shops for food, and various items as well as warehouse space.

“The Burning of Rome” [AD 64] by Robert Hubert- 1800s

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

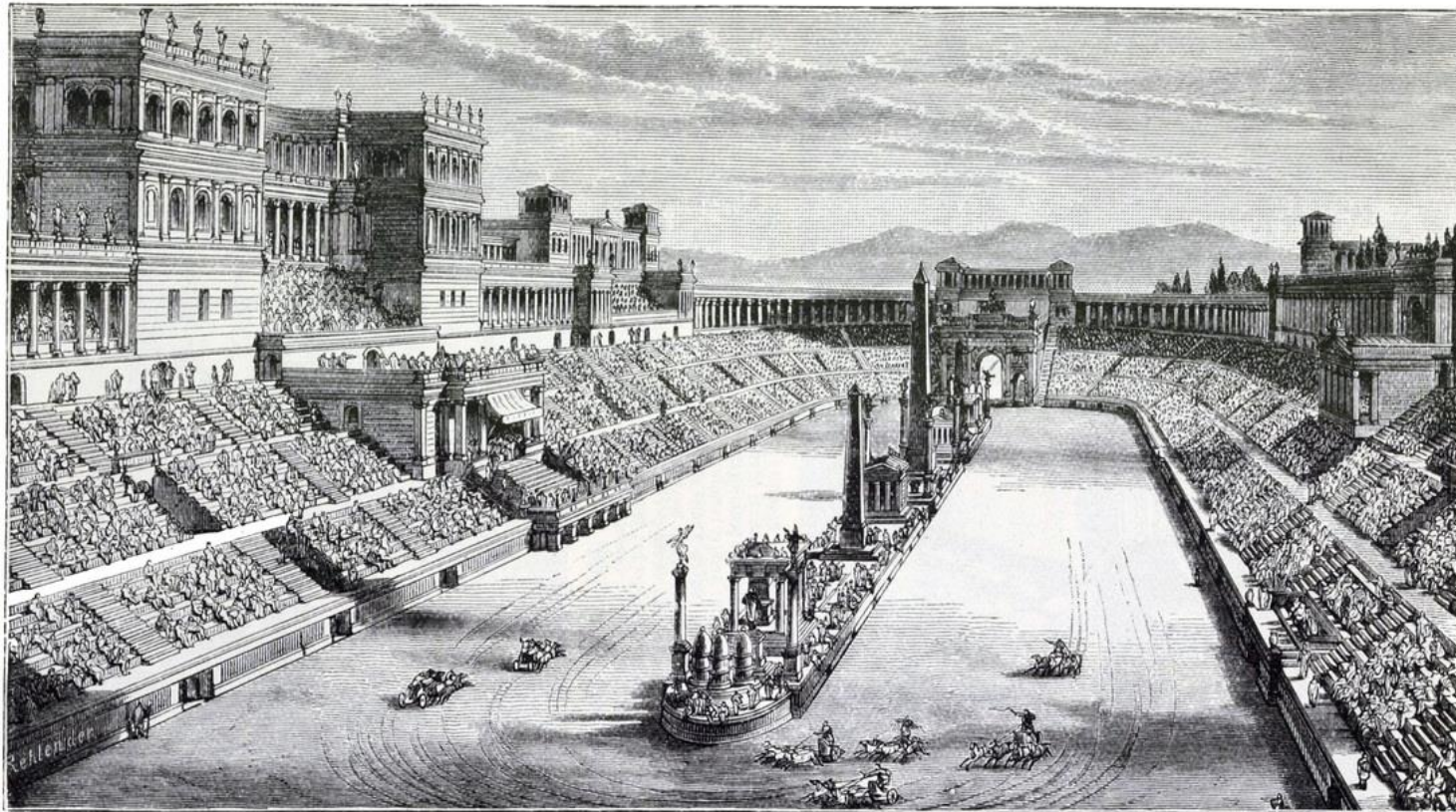


It is believed that the fire began in a food vending shop and spread to an olive oil distributor's warehouse. It soon engulfed most of the Circus Maximus and spread to the cramped lower end apartment complexes nearby. Many of these “Insula” were 5 to 8 stories with large portions made of wood. Over the next 6 days the fire raged along the Palatine hill. It was believed to be under control then flared up and burned 2/3 of the city in the next 3 days.

The Circus Maximus around AD 64, it could seat 150,000 people. It was one of the largest sporting venues in the ancient world.

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15



Emperor Nero was at his villa 30 miles south of the city and rushed back to Rome to lead relief efforts. Shortly after Nero started building on the destroyed portions of Rome and this led to a rumor that he had started the fire. There had been some arson involved as looters took advantage of the crisis to pillage and burn homes and businesses. Nero to deflect accusations blamed Christians who were unpopular in Rome. **2 Peter 3:9-15**

The Circus Maximus around AD 64, it could seat 150,000 people. It was one of the largest sporting venues in the ancient world.

2 PETER 3:9-15 [ESV]

9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,...

“PREPARING FOR LIFE AND DEATH”

2 PETER 1:10-15

The legend that Peter was crucified upside down is first mentioned in a 2nd century “pseudepigraphal” [false authorship] book called “The Acts of Peter”. This document is not considered reliable. Though it is likely Peter was crucified.

In AD 64 unrest and rioting became common in Galilee and Judea, this would lead to all out war in 66 between the Jews and the Romans. Christians were viewed as Jewish or Jewish “wannabes” by the the Roman populace. This is what made them extremely unpopular. **2 Timothy 1:6-12**



“The Crucifixion of Peter” by Carvaggio

2 TIMOTHY 1:6-12 (ESV)

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

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2 PETER 1:10-15



Nero's persecution of Christians seemingly ramped up as the rebellion in Judea continued and his own grasp on power and sanity eroded. Christians were used as human torches to light pageants in Nero's gardens. While others were sewn into raw animal hides and thrown to ravenous dogs. Others were used to various sport executions in the arena.

“Nero's Torches” by Henryk Siemiradski [1800s]

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2 PETER 1:10-15



Peter tells us that he will fold his tent in this life. The image is likely borrowed from Paul. It is believed that they may have been for a short time imprisoned together as they awaited their separate trials. Peter shows that he has read Paul's letters. The imagery of folding his tent comes from Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians. Written 15 years before.

2 Corinthians 5:1-7

“Nero's Torches” by Henryk Siemiradski [1800s]

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-7 (ESV)

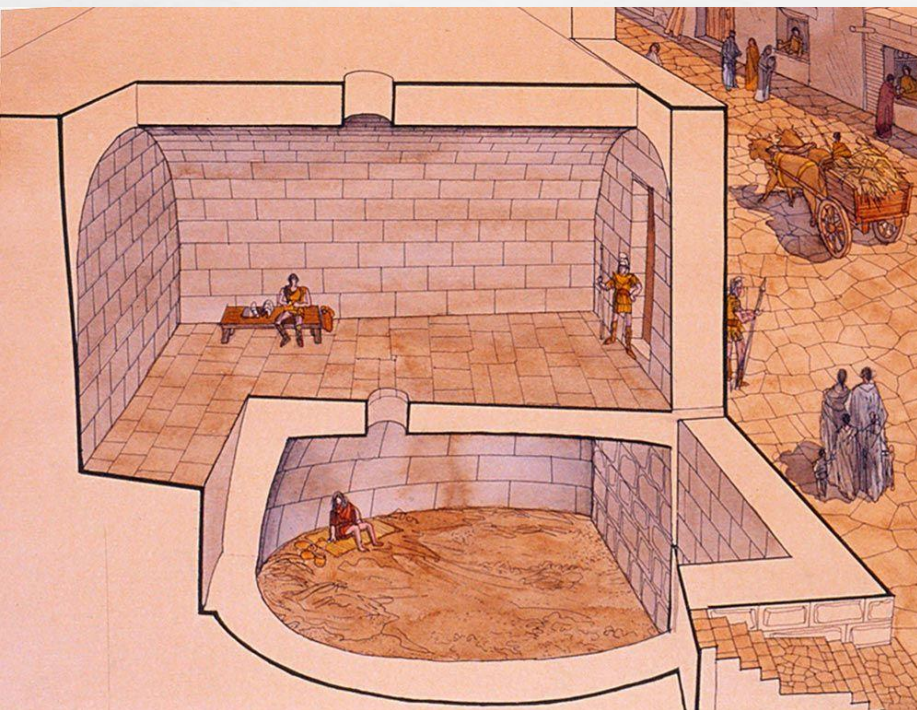
1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened — not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

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2 PETER 1:10-15

Peter clearly knows that his execution is near. He has been expecting it for 35 plus years. Jesus had prophesied it on a beach while walking with Peter along the Sea of Galilee. Peter had been given a new lease on life and discipleship after his abysmal failure. Jesus still had confidence in him. Yet that did not mean that Peter would not face difficulties. We sometime believe that our Christian walk insulates us from the struggles of living. Peter left that beach with a new sense of resolve and courage. Christ had called him and chosen him he had a purpose and mission to complete.



[above] The inside of the Tullianum [modern Mamertine Prison]. [below] Artist reconstruction.

JOHN 21:15-19 [ESV]

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.

18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."

19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

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2 PETER 1:10-15

We need to live without fear or intimidation in this world and with expectation of God’s glory in the next. Peter was no longer the uncertain man who had begun the journey on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he was now that Rock Jesus had promised he would be. What about you?



Peter in Prison by Rembrandt