



no matter what.





Dear Summer Staff:

I hate to admit how much my faithfulness to Jesus waxes and wanes with the ever-changing tide of my circumstances, feelings and the world around me. Sometimes the tide is so indomitable that it is difficult to imagine that I'm not supposed to go in the direction it is taking me. In those moments, it is easy to forget that I have been called out of a world in which I am now an alien.

Peter re-assures me that I'm not alone. He writes his epistle to men and women who faced similar tides of uncertainty, heartbreak, injustice - even persecution. He writes his epistle to people who had just as many questions as he did. He writes his epistle to believers who desire to live the way they are 'supposed' to, but who feel confused, torn, and overwhelmed.

This epistle is Peter's understanding of the life Jesus began to teach him how to live just thirty years earlier – one that he just couldn't wrap his mind around at the time. Now, before his death, his desire is to pass along to all believers who are aliens in their own homeland what took him thirty years to discover himself: If you are a believer in Jesus, then we must remember who we are and whose we are. We must trust God & obey Him...*no matter what*.

Remember, don't be the end user of this study. Re-invest what you have learned into the lives of the people you minister to back at home and school. It will not only be a blessing to those whom you choose to spend time with, it will further cement what you have learned this summer.

And don't forget – not only do you have the notes to this study, you also have access to the audio recordings as well! If you're not already subscribed to the podcast, you can find the feed and download the episodes at www.pinecove.com. Go to the summer staff login page, log in to your account and click on the podcast link. You will most likely have to download the older episodes manually since only the most recent episode will download.

I'll look forward to next summer when we'll get to do this all over again! In the meantime, don't forget about the opportunity you have at the Forge. If you are interested in applying, please give me a call – I'd love to speak with you about it.

Grace and peace be with you,

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NO MATTER WHAT

Instructions for Teachers & Bibliography

How To Use This Study:

- Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the Text. These notes assume that you are already familiar with the passages being studied, so don't expect to be able to sit down with the note pack and easily walk through the study without a little prep work on your part.
- Step 2: Decide which parts of the passage are the ones you want to focus on. These lessons are NOT designed to teach the lesson for you. You have more things to teach here than you could/should possibly teach in a 30-45 minute lesson. You must decide which parts of the Text and notes are most pertinent to the group you're teaching.
- Step 3: Don't bore or insult your study group by reading the study to them point by point. Instead, have a general outline of thoughts and your own personal illustrations that make the study come alive. Think of these notes like the bone structure and skin. It is your job as the teacher to make the study come to life. Feel free to change the study as you like.
- Step 4: Look for opportunities for application. The thrust of this note pack is focused on helping you, the teacher, prepare well for your study. You will need to encourage application with your small group based on who they are and what your relationship is with them. Whatever the case, don't skip this step – otherwise this study will just be an exercise in information transfer.
- Step 5: Listen to the podcast. AFTER you have done your own personal prep work, you might want to listen to how I taught it so you can get an idea of how much to teach, illustrations, etc. Copy and paste this feed into iTunes to download it:
- Step 6: Copy these notes and distribute them each week to your small group. No need to give them lessons in advance – once per week will be good. Encourage them to use the notes as a guide for the rest of the week for their quiet times so they can dive deeper into the lesson if they would like to.

Remember: These notes are *mine*. You have to make them *yours*. Until the Text becomes something you are passionate about and familiar with you will have a lot to say and nothing to teach. Change this up as much as you want – add more quotes/references. *Make it your own*. The most inspiring and effective teachers are those who own what they teach.

Tough Questions:

It's hard to replace the value of a good question that will keep your students learning even after they leave your study. Each week there will be a question or two at the end of the study that is designed to make your students (and you!) think hard about the subject just discussed. Sometimes the questions aren't even answerable – but that's not the point. The point is that they are engaging the Word on their own (and they're motivated to do so!). Don't worry about your answers – there is more to be learned in the investigation of the question most of the time than in determining what the right answer is.

Sample Schedule for Summertime:

6:50am – Arrive before they do & make sure there is coffee!

7:00am – Start your Bible study promptly on time. No need to waste time asking “how was your week” or “how are you feeling.” They will get that in their small group time. Get straight to the meat – you'll need every minute!

7:40am – If you want to have time for Q&A at the end, plan on ending the study a little early. Then you can have some dialogue about the text or discuss the tough question from the week before.

7:45am – Dismiss the study *promptly*. Do not go over on time as it obstructs the flow of camp.

Bibliography:

There are some excellent resources out there on 1 Peter. As I compiled my notes and thoughts, these were the resources that I found to be the most helpful. If you would like to study further, I would recommend these resources to you first as good entry points. So, to the degree you find this study helpful, you need to know it really comes from the wisdom of these brothers in Christ. I'm just the young guy standing on their shoulders.

Primary Sources:

- Constable, Tom. *Notes on 1 Peter*. 2008 edition.
 - Dr. Constable, a seminary professor of mine, makes his expository notes on the entire Bible available online for free! You can download them at www.soniclight.com.
- Grudem, Wayne. *1 Peter*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries series. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988.
 - This is the most helpful non-academic commentary I've found. It is concise, easy to read and full of great insights. If you had to buy one book on 1 Peter, I'd start with this one.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament Commentary series. Downers Grove: IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
 - This commentary is a nice blend between Grudem and Michaels' commentaries. His volume is more thorough than Grudem's treatment and less of a focus on language than Michaels' work.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary series. Waco: Word Books, 1988.
 - I very much enjoyed Michaels' scholarship and perspective in this much more advanced and scholarly work. Highly recommended for the advanced student.

Secondary Resources:

- Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
 - This is a must-have resource for any lay-leader's library. It is a concise commentary on the entire Bible and offers a thorough, conservative, evangelical interpretation of the Text. Most helpful in understanding the big picture of a book.
- Precept Austin
 - www.preceptaustin.org is a fantastic online resource that has great exegetical bullet points verse by verse through 1 Peter. Additionally, it is a great resource for quotations from well-known Christian leaders, pastors and authors. Highly recommended resource for your Bible study.

Special Thanks To. . .

. . . Jon Foreman, David Wilcox, Gungor, Andrew Peterson, and James Horner whose music helped to drown out all the distractions and keep me focused.

. . . My Forge students. It has been a joy to study and memorize this book with you over these past 5 years. You all have taught me more about this text than any commentary.

. . . My gorgeous, thoughtful and nurturing wife who put so much of her own wants and needs aside to help me write this study. Darcie, your love is a precious gift; I treasure it.

NO MATTER WHAT

A Study of 1 Peter

Week 1: Introduction & 1:1-2

Week 2: 1 Peter 1:3-12

Week 3: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Week 4: 1 Peter 2:1-12

Week 5: 1 Peter 2:11-25

Week 6: Review for Incoming 2nd Half Staff

Week 7: 1 Peter 3:1-12

Week 8: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Week 9: 1 Peter 4:1-11

Week 10: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Week 11: 1 Peter 5:1-14



I hate to admit how much my faithfulness to Jesus waxes and wanes with the ever-changing tide of my circumstances, feelings and the world around me. Sometimes the tide is so indomitable that it is difficult to imagine that I'm not supposed to go in the direction it is taking me. In those moments, it is easy to forget that I have been called out of a world in which I am now an alien.

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If you are a believer in Jesus, then trust God & obey Him...*no matter what.*

Structure of 1 Peter:

I. Introduction & Greeting 1:1-2

II. The Theological Identity of the Community 1:3—2:10

- A. We are Born Again 1:3-12
 - 1. Our inheritance is permanent – giving hope 1:3-5
 - 2. Our joy is complete – giving endurance 1:6-9
 - 3. Our new birth is marvelous – giving revelation 1:10-12
- B. We are Obedient Children 1:13-25
 - 1. Who look like our Father 1:13-16
 - 2. Who respect our Father 1:17-21
 - 3. Who love like our Father 1:22-25
- C. We are a Holy Priesthood 2:1-10
 - 1. Who crave the very words of God 2:1-3
 - 2. Who offer ourselves to God 2:4-5
 - 3. Who build upon Christ the Cornerstone 2:6-8
 - 4. Who proclaim His excellencies 2:9-10

III. The Consequential Activity of the Community 2:11—4:11

- A. Bring Glory to God's Reputation 2:11-12
- B. By Being Submissive Under Authority 2:13—3:12
 - 1. The authority of the government 2:13-17
 - 2. The authority of a master 2:18-20
 - 3. Just as Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father 2:21-25
 - 4. The authority of a husband 3:1-7
 - 5. The authority of God 3:8-12
- C. By Remaining Faithful During Trials 3:13—5:11
 - 1. Even if it means suffering for doing good 3:13-17
 - 2. Because Christ has redeemed you completely 3:18-22
 - 3. Resist returning to your old way of life 4:1-6
 - 4. Love one another 4:7-11
 - 5. Expect to share in Christ's sufferings 4:12-19
 - 6. Shepherd & be shepherded 5:1-5
 - 7. Trust God, resist the devil 5:6-11

VII. Conclusion 5:12-14

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 1 :: Introduction & 1:1-2

Peter's first epistle gives us an easy introduction since its opening is traditional and covers the who, what, when, where and why of his letter. His introduction also "lays a theological basis for their identity... As Peter holds out to them grace and peace, the issues to be addressed in his epistle have not even been raised, yet the resources for addressing those issues – the redemptive work of God through Christ, and the resultant character of the community thus redeemed – are already in place."¹

About the Author:

Simon² was born to his father, Jonah/Joannes (Mt 16:17, Jn 1:42), in Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), a small fishing village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Peter joined in his father's trade and became a fisherman as well (Mt 4:18). He later moved down the road to Capernaum (Mk 1:21-ff) where he lived with his wife (Mk 1:30) and continued his trade. He had a younger brother, Andrew, a follower of John the Baptist (Jn 1:39-ff). Both were raised Jewish but likely spoke both Aramaic and Greek (Mk 14:70). Andrew introduced Simon to Jesus (Jn 1:41).

Upon meeting Jesus for the first time (Jn 1:42), Simon receives from Jesus an Aramaic name, *Cephas*³, which in the Greek New Testament is translated as *Petros* which means 'rock' or 'stone.' During a second meeting, Jesus tells Peter to follow him and become a fisher of men (Mt 4:18-ff). He does - for the rest of his life.

During his time with Jesus, Peter experiences the events that will mark and change his life forever. After being named an apostle of Jesus Christ (Mk 3:16), he begins to follow Jesus and witnesses his teachings, miracles, passion, and resurrection.

Likely the oldest of the disciples, Peter was regularly outspoken and impulsive (Mt 14:28, Mk 14:29, Lk 5:8, Jn 21:7). Jesus even calls him 'Satan' and a 'stumbling block to him' because of his rash disregard for the will of God (Mt 16:23). He was a coward as he denied Jesus three times the night he was handed over (Mt 26:74). He was no stranger to failure as a fisherman or as a disciple as he regularly let his circumstances and feelings get the best of him (Mt 26:51). Yet, he was among the three disciples closest to Jesus (Mk 5:37, 9:2, 14:33).

Peter's eyes witnessed the miraculous – all the time. From the healing of his own mother-in-law (Mt 8:14) to the transfiguration (Mk 9:2-ff), Peter experienced Jesus' ministry first-hand. Consider just some of the events that Peter experienced and/or participated in: he hauled in miraculous catches of fish, walked on water (Mt 14:28-ff), helped feed 5,000 (and 4,000) people with nothing more than a snack, and even pulled a fish out of the sea with a shekel in its mouth – just as Jesus had said (Mt 17:27).

After seeing the resurrected Jesus (Jn 21:1-ff), Peter's ministry began. No longer the disciple, he was the minister. He was the leader of the early church (Acts 1:15-ff) as well as a preacher who led 3,000 people to Christ in his first sermon (Acts 2:41), despite the fact that he was, in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, an uneducated and common fisherman (Acts 4:13). He was imprisoned and released from jail by an angel (Acts 12) and raised Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:40). Though he primarily ministered to Jews (Gal 2:7), he converts the first Gentile to Christianity and helps the early church get through that debate (Acts 12-15). Despite growing up in a small fishing village, Peter ends up traveling the known world to preach the gospel: throughout Israel, Antioch, Corinth, Asia Minor and Rome. According to church tradition, Peter was executed under the Neronian persecution by being crucified upside down – not counting himself worthy of being crucified in the same manner as his Lord.

¹ Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. p.14.

² *Simon* (Hebrew) means "to be heard."

³ *Cephas* (Aramaic) = *Petros* (Greek) = *Peter* (English) – "small rock or stone"

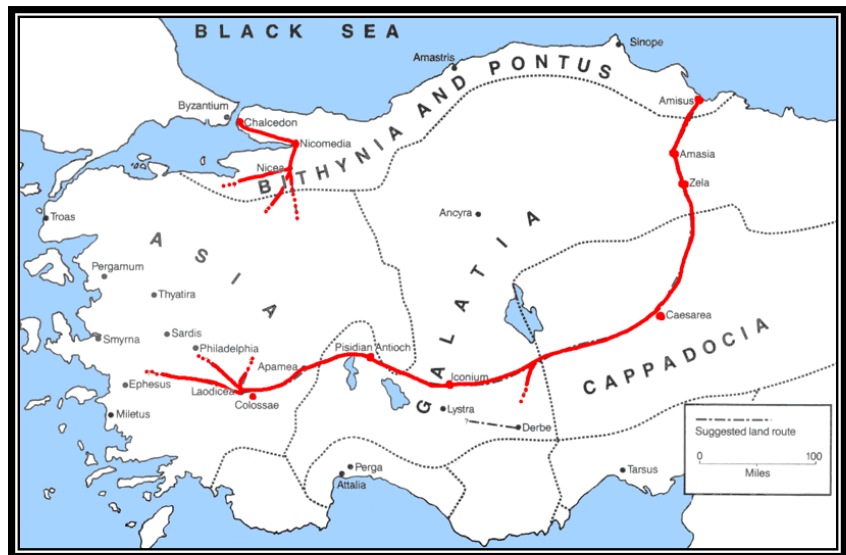
Time & Place of Authorship:

1 Peter 5:13 indicates that Peter is writing to his audience from Babylon. By the first century, Babylon was not the superpower it once had been. Since there is no evidence of a church ever being there or any record of Peter or Mark traveling that far east, it is reasonable to conclude that 'Babylon' is a figurative reference to Rome (as in Rev 16:19, 17:15, 18:2) – which is likely where Peter was when he wrote the letter.

Most conservative scholars agree that Peter's epistle was written between AD 62-64. This would place Peter's authorship of the epistle during the reign of Emperor Nero (AD 54-68). Nero is most famous for his burning of Rome and blaming it on the Christians. Widespread persecution of the church would have begun just after the burning of Rome in July of AD 64. Thus, it is unlikely that widespread, government-sanctioned persecution of Christians was in full-force at the time of Peter's writing. Nevertheless, the context of the epistle gives us plenty to believe that persecution was being experienced in Asia Minor.

About the Audience:

Pontius, Capadocia, Asia and Bythnia were Roman provinces in Asia Minor. The names of the regions were likely arranged to describe the route the letter would have taken, visiting such cities as: Amisus, Iconium, and Laodicea. It is possible that the letter circulated throughout cities in Asia: Colossae, Ephesus, Nicea, Chalcedon and most of the churches mentioned in Revelation. In other words, Peter's letter would have reached "all the major centres of Christian influence in Asia minor" (an area roughly the size of California)⁴.



Because of the rapid growth of the early church in the first century, the churches in this region would be mixed congregations of converted Jews and Gentiles. Based on the evidence within the epistle (1:14, 2:10, 4:3), these regions likely had a Gentile majority who came from a dark and depraved background.

They resided temporarily as aliens in this region – foreigners who were scattered in and amongst the native people of a land not their own. Apparently these believers had been undergoing some persecutions and sufferings and Peter wished to encourage them to stand firm as it would only be getting worse. Peter describes them as a chosen people – whom had only been believers in Jesus for 30 years or less.

The Jewish-ness of 1 Peter:

One of the first things you will notice in studying this letter is that it is a very Jewish book. It quotes from the Hebrew Bible regularly, applies terms to Gentile believers that were used to describe the nation of Israel, and it assumes that the church will assume the same role and function the nation of Israel had (2:9-10). On the other hand, there are several examples (1:14, 2:10, 4:3) that would never be used to describe a Jewish audience – only a Gentile one. So, why would Peter be writing Jewish things to a predominantly Gentile audience?

⁴ Grudem, Wayne. *1 Peter*. p.37-38 (map is also adapted from Grudem, p.19)

Some answer this question by making the assumption that Peter sees the church as some kind of “new Israel” that has replaced the one of old. There is little evidence to support this idea from within Peter’s epistle as he never seems to indicate that Israel has been replaced by the church (one that he would most certainly addressed if he believed so).

It would be more reasonable to think that Peter shared Paul’s perspective on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity as described in Romans 11:13-24. Paul views Judaism and Christianity as one olive tree and both heirs to a single covenant. The Jews have been temporarily cut off from the tree, but will be re-grafted in. The Gentiles have been grafted in as part of God’s wooing of Israel back to himself.

Thus, it will be the opinion of this study that Peter “sees himself and his readers as a community situated in the world in much the same way the Jews are situated, and sharing with the Jews a common past.”⁵ Peter’s hearers are not “simply ‘honorary Jews’ in the sense of claiming for themselves the privileges of ‘Israel; without corresponding responsibilities. The prerogatives are there, but the responsibilities are there as well; even the social stigma of being Jews in Hellenistic Asia Minor (or in Rome) has been transferred to the Gentile Christian congregations addressed in this epistle.”⁶

Peter sees how the church will continue the mission and purpose of God (as God’s chosen people) while Israel’s heart remains hardened. When she is restored (as God has promised) they will both function together as the people of God.

Why Study 1 Peter?

Peter’s writings carry remarkable significance for us today whether suffering is a part of our daily existence or not. In just 5 short chapters (only 105 verses), Peter makes a compelling case for us to stand fast in the grace of God (5:12) by obediently following our Lord no matter what the outcome. Peter reminds us that who God is and what He has done shapes who we are and what we must do. When our activity stems from an identity received from God, our obedience (especially in the midst of suffering) to Jesus Christ will have a three-fold result: praise, glory & honor to God (1:7), holiness in the world (1:14-16), and a sincere love for one another (1:22). As His chosen ones, we are called to consistently bear God’s image to the world regardless of our circumstances.

If there is anything that causes us to deviate from faithfulness it is the fear and insecurity of suffering. Peter expects two things of his audience: 1). That they will suffer⁷ and 2). That suffering should only increase their holiness – not detract from it. Studying 1 Peter will help us to develop a theology of suffering that is not constructed on a foundation of safety and security. As Timothy Keller says, “Members of churches in the west are caught absolutely flat-footed by suffering and difficulty...There are a great number of books on ‘why does God allow evil?’ but they mainly are aimed at getting God off the hook with impatient western people who believe God’s job is to give them a safe life. The church in the west must mount a great new project--of producing a people who are prepared to endure in the face of suffering and persecution.”⁸

Thus, our study of 1 Peter should transform our faithfulness and obedience as we live as aliens and strangers here in a place that is not yet our home. When the difficulties and trials of life come (and for whatever reason), none of them give us an excuse to divert from following Jesus. Seasons of temporary pain and suffering that will give us the greatest opportunity to prove our faith to be genuine.

⁵ Michaels, p. 50 of introduction

⁶ Michaels, 6.

⁷ Suffering is mentioned in 1 Peter 16 times and is the most often repeated word in the epistle. It is a general suffering and should not be assumed to be directly connected solely with persecution. It is, generally, the suffering of life.

⁸ Keller, Timothy. *How Should Churches and Leaders Be Preparing to Address These Big Issues Facing the Church?*

1 Peter 1:1-2

v.1 **Peter is an apostle of Jesus Christ.**

- *Apostolos* literally means ‘sent one.’ An apostle is one set forth by another (of higher authority) with a special commission to represent that authority in a task to be completed.
 - An apostle was someone who was personally chosen by Jesus (the 12 disciples + Matthias & Paul), given authority to proclaim the Gospel and lead the church (Mark 3:14-15, Acts 1:21-22) witnessed the resurrection, and received direct revelation from God.⁹
- Since an apostle was one who was commissioned, you could not make yourself an apostle. You were always appointed by the one with whose authority you were called to bear forth. And since Peter did not commission himself, it is very important that the reader recognizes *the authority of Peter’s message comes primarily from the Sender through the ambassador.*
 - It must have been very pleasant to his heart to write those words, — not “Peter, who denied his Master, “not” Peter, full of imperfections and infirmities, the impetuous and changeable one of the twelve; “but” Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” as truly sent of God as any of the other apostles, and with as much of the Spirit of his Master resting upon him: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ”¹⁰
 - We must remember not to allow our past failures and current imperfections to cause us to forget the purpose for which God has called us in the first place. As Winston Churchill says, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” John Piper drives the point home even more brutally if we choose to wallow in our failure: “Self-pity is the response of pride to failure.”

The hearers are aliens

- This is a typical greeting from Peter to his hearers in the sense that its structure is typical. To identify his hearers as aliens (*parepidemos*), however, is less common. This word describes people who are living as foreigners in a land that is not their own. The figurative use of this word should be in mind rather than the literal since many of Peter’s hearers would have been native to that region – not aliens. Thus, the “term is used metaphorically of Christians who live in this world as foreigners, since their homeland is heaven.”¹¹
 - ‘Alien’ is not a distinction that many of us would want to hang on to. We prefer to be native or ‘local.’ Peter calls them aliens as a reminder that they are not to blend in with the Gentile population. They are to be distinct.

The hearers are scattered

- The word used here is *diaspora* and carries significant Jewish overtones. This word was used to describe the scattering of the Jews among the gentiles after the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 AD.¹² It is strange that he would use this word to describe a predominantly Gentile audience living in a Gentile part of the world. He is comparing the believers’ scattering amongst the godless world with the scattering of the Jews.¹³
 - It is also important to note that Peter doesn’t regard the terms ‘aliens’ or ‘scattered’ as negative. In fact, 2:1 seems to indicate that the condition is actually an advantage – not a disadvantage.

⁹ Note: Jesus is also called an apostle: Hebrews 3:1

¹⁰ Spurgeon, C. H.

¹¹ NET Bible notes on verse 1. www.bible.org

¹² Israel was not re-gathered to the land from that scattering until 1948.

¹³ NET Bible notes on verse 1.

The hearers are chosen

- His audience is also *eklektois*. Its formed from *ek* which means 'out' and *lego* which means 'call.' To be chosen means to be called out or selected out of a larger number. In the Greek language, it described something that was "choice" and thus indicated the *inherent* value of the object.
 - *Eklektois* is used 44 times in the New Testament. Jesus uses the word 15 times, Paul 9 times, Luke 9 times, Peter 4 times, John 3 times.¹⁴ It is most often rendered 'chosen' or 'elect'.
 - The people of God have always been chosen out from a larger group.¹⁵ Whether individuals (Noah, Abraham, David, the Disciples) or the nation as a whole (Exodus 19:6), God has been choosing people to become his own possession and representatives on the earth since the beginning of creation. His selection is never based on merit, but only by His divine prerogative.
- Being 'chosen' is meant to be just as encouraging as being called an 'alien' or 'stranger.' If God has chosen me apart from my performance then there is nothing about my performance that can negate His choosing me. Furthermore, if He has chosen me then my life exists for His purposes which are greater than the ones I could dream for myself. Finally, if I am God's elect, then whom have I to fear?

v.2 How were they chosen? ...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

- "Foreknowledge" is the Greek word *prognosis*. [*Pro-* 'before' & *ginosko-* 'to know']
- Many explain foreknowledge as God knowing beforehand all who would receive Him and that's why He chooses them. However the usage of the same term in Acts 2:23 suggests that the atoning work of Christ was in God's mind from the beginning (see also Gen 3:15, 1 Peter 1:20) rather than the Father knowing in advance that the Son would choose to die. We must be careful not to confuse *foresight* with *foreknowledge*.
 - "Election originates in the eternal will and purpose of God the Father. The foreknowledge of God refers, of course, to what God knows beforehand. God's foreknowledge has an element of determinism in it because whatever really happens that God knows beforehand exists or takes place because of His sovereign will. Therefore when Peter wrote that God chose according to His foreknowledge he did not mean that God chose the elect because He *knew* beforehand they would believe the gospel. God chose them because He *determined* beforehand that they would believe the gospel."¹⁶
- "This implies that their status as sojourners, their privileges as God's chosen people, even their hostile environment in Pontus, Galatia, etc., were all known by God before the world began, all came about in accordance with his foreknowledge, and thus (we may conclude) all were in accordance with his fatherly love for his own people. Such foreknowledge is laden with comfort for Peter's readers."¹⁷
 - It is because of this election that the hearers are strangers in the world – not because they have a different ethnicity, custom or heritage. Being elect estranges you from the world in which you live. Now estranged from their former way of living, they should no longer live in it.
- Though we have little time to discuss it here – it is significant to notice the Trinitarian perspective that Peter gives his readers. Among the most notable observations is that the persons of the Trinity, though One, have different roles. The Father doesn't sanctify, nor does the Son use foreknowledge. God is One God, three persons, co-equal and co-eternal, each with a subordinating function within the God-head.
- Thus, our election has its foundation in the will of God the Father.

¹⁴ See Matt 24:31, Jn 15:16, Acts 13:17, Eph 1:4, Rev 17:14

¹⁵ See Deut 7:6, 14:2, 1 Sam 10:24, Isaiah 41:8-9, John 15:15-19, Acts 1:24, 1 Peter 2:9

¹⁶ Constable, Tom. *1 Peter Notes*, p.5-6 (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Thess. 1:4; 1 Peter 5:13; Ex 33:17; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Matthew 7:22-23).

¹⁷ Grudem, 50.

By what were they chosen? ...by the sanctifying work of the Spirit

- Sanctifying work is *hagiasmos* which means to make holy by consecration/purification. The same word and phrase is also used by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
- It is common to think of sanctification as exclusively a work of the Spirit that happens after conversion. Scripture seems to suggest, however, that there is no line to draw between the Spirit's work in conversion and his continual work on the heart of a believer after conversion. See Heb 10:10; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13-14. Sanctification should be thought of as both a necessary part of salvation itself and an ongoing process after conversion through which the believer is conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.
- The setting apart of a believer is first ordained by the Father and then carried out by the Spirit as John 1:12-13 and 6:44 seem to indicate. Peter will say this in the next verse by praising God who has "caused us to be born again." This, of course, does not negate the element of human responsibility – but certainly does remind us that salvation is a gift!
 - "His readers *whole existence* as 'chosen sojourners of the Dispersion...' is being lived 'in' the realm of the sanctifying work of the Spirit. The unseen, unheard activity of God's Holy Spirit surrounds them almost like a spiritual atmosphere 'in' which they live and breathe, turning every circumstance, every sorrow, every hardship into a tool for his patient sanctifying work."¹⁸
- Thus our election happens within the sphere of the agency of the Spirit.

Why were they chosen? ...for obedience to Jesus Christ & sprinkling by His blood

- The end, point, purpose and reason for election is obedience to Jesus Christ (and his gospel as in 4:17). The point of all of God's gracious activity towards us – no matter how we understand it to happen – is so that we will be obedient to Jesus Christ. Without it, Christians are no different than the peace corps. (See Eph 2:10)
 - Since obedience is not the cause but the *result* of being chosen, the purpose of our obedience isn't to gain salvation, but to further conform us into the image of Christ so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.¹⁹
- The sprinkling of blood is another Jewish reference whose meaning is difficult to determine.²⁰ "To 'sprinkle with Christ's blood' means to take a person into the realm of influence of Christ's dying, to align him or her with the One who died. This alignment accomplishes, as the figure expresses graphically, purification and thereby appropriation into a new connection to God."²¹
- "To obey was to accept the gospel and become part of a new community under a new covenant; to be sprinkled with Jesus' blood was to be cleansed from one's former way of living and released from spiritual slavery by the power of His death."²²

Tough Questions:

1. If we have been chosen for obedience, then why do so many Christians disobey?
2. If all of these things are true about you and God is using *all* things to conform you into the image of Jesus (Rom 8:28-29), then why are you so worried and afraid?

¹⁸ Grudem, 52. See also Jn 15:2; Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 4:16-18; Heb 12:10-11; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 4:14.

¹⁹ See Rom 8:28-29

²⁰ Possibilities include: 1. The ratification of Mosaic covenant Exod 24:1-8, 2. Consecration of Aaronic priesthood (Exod 29:21), and 3. Cleansing from leprosy (Lev 14). Option #1 seems the most realistic if Peter is indeed referring to Hebrew history – since at the ratification of the Mosaic covenant the people were vowing to come early.

²¹ Constable, 6.

²² Michaels, 13.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 2 :: 1 Peter 1:3-12

"How, when your *life* is in jeopardy, or your job, or your marriage, or your health, or your respect in the community—how can you rise up with joy and bless those who abuse you and devote yourself to labors of love? To busy yourself for love's sake takes power in the very best of circumstances. But to spend yourself in love to others when your own life is falling apart, that takes a power of soul which is utterly beyond us. If that is what we are called to do, then the power has to come from some source greater than the human soul."¹

1 Peter 1:3-12: We Are Born Again

For Peter, his identity and the identity of his audience was *everything*. Apart from what God has done in His grace (5:12), there would be no occasion for Peter's encouragement. His audience must remember who they are (and whose they are) and that will allow them to function as God's people in the world . . . in *any* circumstance . . . *no matter what*.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Our Inheritance is Permanent – Giving Hope

v.3 The Work of a Loving Father

- "Blessed" is *eulogetos* from which we get our English word 'eulogy' and it literally means to say a good word or speak well of. This entire section is meant to give honor and credit to our Father because of what He has done – not what we have accomplished. What else can we do but praise Him?
- Mercy (*eleos*): is the unmerited offering of blessing(s) toward those who are in desperation and/or misery.
 - It is not until we fully appreciate how utterly lost we are/were that we truly understand how great His mercy is/was towards us. When we forget His great mercy we forget all of what has made us to be who we are.
 - It is this mercy that Peter reiterates in 2:10. Before God was merciful to us we were utterly destitute – without hope and without God in the world. We abhorred him and ran away from His offers just as Gomer fled from Hosea. When judgment was deserved, mercy was bestowed. Instead of divorced, Gomer became a wife. Instead of being an orphan, we became children.
 - "No foreknowledge of the fact that we would believe, no foreseeing of any desirableness or merit on our part, is mentioned here or anywhere else in Scripture when indicating God's ultimate reason for our salvation."²
 - "The quality of mercy is not strained;/ it droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven/ upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:/ It blesseth him that gives and him that takes./ 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes/ the throned monarch better than his crown./ His scepter shows the force of temporal power,/ the attribute to awe and majesty,/ wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;/ but mercy is above this sceptre'd sway;/ it is enthroned in the hearts of kings;/ it is an attribute to God himself,/ and earthly power doth then show likest God's/ when mercy seasons justice."³

¹ Piper, John. *The Power of Hope*. Piper's Easter Sunday sermon from 4/19/81.

² Grudem, 55.

³ Shakespeare, William. *Merchant of Venice*, iv, 1, 182-200. See also Psalm 40:11, James 2:13.

What is now true about us because of our Father's mercy?

1. We are born again (*anagennao*⁴).

- o God gave us life when we were dead. (Ezk 16:1-7, Rom 6:1-11 & Eph 2:1-3)
- o Though it is our second birth, our new birth is really our first. To be born again is to come to life and live life as it was meant to be lived. We were stillborn the first time. We are dead unless God causes us to be born again. We cannot enter the Kingdom of God otherwise (Jn 3:1-15).

2. We have a living hope

- o "A 'living hope' is one that has life in it and therefore can give life to us. Because it has life, it grows and becomes greater and more beautiful as time goes on. Time destroys most hopes; they fade and then die. But the passing of time only makes a Christian's hope that much more glorious."⁵
- o "If Christians are a reborn people, they are spiritually alive, and their hope is alive. Hope in God, as much as faith in God, is the hallmark of their new life in Christ (1:21); their situation corresponds to that of 'the holy wives who hoped in God long ago' (3:5). Their hope, and not simply their faith, is what they must be prepared to explain and defend when they are challenged (3:15). Hope can either refer to an anticipation of good things to come or to the content of that anticipation, the good things themselves."⁶
- o Both our new birth and living hope are made possible through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In so doing, God made possible the way for us to be raised from death to become His children and His people. Without the resurrection we cannot have new birth. (See John 11:24-25, 1 Corinthians 15:16-28)

v.4-5 3. We have an inheritance

- o As 'new born' children of God, our living hope encompasses what we will receive as his heirs within His family since we are fellow heirs with Christ.⁷
- o When we see 'inheritance' and know the Jewish-ness of 1 Peter, we should remember what 'inheritance' has meant for the Jewish people: the Promised Land.⁸ What should inheritance mean for the New Covenant Believer?
 - "The readers have been born anew, not to obtain a family inheritance in the earthly land of Canaan, but to obtain an inheritance in the eternal city of God (away from which they now live as aliens)."⁹
 - "As the Israelites anticipated their inheritance, the Promised Land, so Christians should anticipate ours, the other side of the grave. However ours is not subject to destruction from any source, defilement from without, or decay from within. No one can ravage or pollute it, and it will not wear out or waste away. What is it exactly? Our inheritance is Jesus Christ Himself and the blessings that He has promised us."¹⁰
 - "The 'inheritance' of the New Covenant Christian is thus shown to be far superior to the earthly inheritance of the people of Israel in the land of Canaan. That earthly land was not 'kept' for them, but was *taken from them* in the exile, and later by Roman occupation. Even while they possessed the land, it produced rewards that *decayed*, rewards whose glory *faded away*. The beauty of the land's holiness before God was repeatedly *defiled* by sin."¹¹

⁴ This word is only used by Peter in the New Testament here and in 1:23. It was used in other Greek literature to describe the 'new birth' of trees and flowers in the springtime. I have also heard that new Jewish converts are often called new-born babies (I cannot confirm this yet).

⁵ Piper, John. *The Power of Hope*.

⁶ Michaels, 19.

⁷ See also Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:18; Eph. 1:14, 18; 5:5; Col. 3:24; Heb. 9:15

⁸ See Num. 26:54; 27:7-11; 32:19; 36:3-12; Deut. 2:12; 12:9; Josh. 11:23; 13:14, 23, 28, etc., Ps. 105:11

⁹ Grudem, 57.

¹⁰ Constable, 9.

¹¹ Grudem, 58.

4. We are protected

- o Protected from what? Persecution? Yes. But in the immediate context that hasn't come up yet. The idea may be more along the lines of being protected until they receive the inheritance they have been born into. Until that time comes, their Lord (who has sealed their inheritance for them) expects their uttermost faithfulness (v.2)... no matter what. The inheritance will come though, too... no matter what.
- o "The believer's personal faith or trust in God is the means God uses to guard his people. Thus we might give the sense of the verse by saying that 'God is continually using his power to guard his people by means of their faith', a statement which seems to imply that God's power in fact energizes and continually sustains individual, personal faith."¹²
- o "The salvation ready to be revealed in the last time is the aspect of salvation that we have yet to enjoy, namely, our glorification. When God glorifies us, He will save us from the presence of sin forever."¹³
- o What about people who don't obey? Are they still protected?
 - "There is much misunderstanding about the Bible's teaching concerning the perseverance of the saints. It does not teach that Christians will inevitably continue to persevere in the faith, that is, continue believing the truth, walking with the Lord, or doing good works. It does teach that God will persevere in His commitment to bring all who have trusted in Him to heaven."¹⁴
 - We must remember that the promises Peter is assuring us of are New Covenant promises – not those of the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, they are no longer contingent upon our behavior, but rather, God's initiative in our lives (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-30).

1 Peter 1:6-9: Our Joy is Complete – Giving Endurance

v.6-7 5. We greatly rejoice

- o 'Greatly rejoice' is *agalliao*, a verb which means 'much jumping.' We might say, "In this, you continually jump for joy." Since the rejoicing comes from truth & not from circumstance it is more easily sustained... no matter what.¹⁵
- o "Our joy is based on the happiness of our future with God and the certainty that we will make it there. Christian joy is almost synonymous with Christian hope. That's why Peter says in verse 3 that we were born again into a living hope; then verses 4 and 5 describe the content of that hope; and then verse 6 begins, "in THIS you rejoice." In this you have living, vital, life-changing hope; and in this you rejoice. Our hope is our joy."¹⁶

6. Our trials prove our faith

- o Trials is *peirasmos*, a neutral term used to describe experiences of testing. Anything can be 'used' as a test depending upon who is doing the testing.¹⁷
- o Proof is *dokimion* which can also be translated as 'test', but the emphasis here is more on the response of the one tested rather than the test itself.
- o "This word (*dokimion*) [is] frequently used of testing or refining metal. Peter deliberately employs this analogy to say that situations of testing are occasions when God refines and purifies the faith of his people as precious metal is refined in a fire. The trials (*peirasmos*) burn away any impurities in the believer's faith.

¹² Grudem, 59.

¹³ Constable, 10.

¹⁴ Constable, 10.

¹⁵ See also Matt 5:12 'exceedingly glad', Luke 1:46-47 'rejoice.' The LXX has translated the Hebrew into *agalliao* in these passages: Ps 2:11, 13:5, 14:7, 32:11, 51:8, 118:24; Isaiah 12:6, 25:6-12, 29:17-24, 35:1 to name a few.

¹⁶ Piper, John. *Joy Through the Fiery Test*. Sermon from 10.24.93

¹⁷ Though a neutral term, it can be used negatively when describing an enticement to sin from without or within. God does not tempt us (James 1:13), but he does test us. Satan tempts us, but does not care to test us. Other examples of *peirasmos* are: Matt. 4:1, 6:13, Lk. 8:13, 1 Cor. 10:13, Heb. 3:8, Jam. 1:2, 12, 1 Pet. 4:12, Rev. 3:10.

- What is left when the trials have ended is purified, genuine faith (*dokimion*), analogous to the pure gold or silver that emerges from the refiner's fire."¹⁸
- As a result of all the things that are already true about each one of us who are God's chosen, we should have an entirely different perspective on the circumstances of life as they come to us. *Every trial we face* – not just persecution for our faith – can be viewed in this way. Whether we are facing the loss of a loved one or being alienated for our faith in Jesus, we recognize, as Paul does, that all things “work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). What is the good that all of our circumstances work together for? ...to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).
 - *This is the only plausible reason for joy and endurance that transcends our circumstances. Consider the way these people say it . . .*
 - “The surest way to know our gold is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where He tries it for that end that we may see what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten, broken reed, we must see it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales, that He makes use of to weigh us.”¹⁹
 - “Trials do to faith what fire does to gold. They purify it and show it to be what it really is (James 1:3). Peter assumed his readers would respond to their trials properly.”²⁰
 - “When God puts His own people into the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much. (If we rebel, He may have to reset the clock; but if we submit, He will not permit us to suffer one minute too long. The important thing is that we learn the lesson He wants to teach us and that we bring glory to Him alone.) We may question why He does it to begin with, or why He doesn't turn down the heat or even turn it off; but our questions are only evidences of unbelief. Gold does not fear the fire. The furnace can only make the gold purer and brighter.”²¹
 - “The school of life offers some difficult courses, but it is in the difficult class that one learns the most—especially when your teacher is the Lord Jesus Christ. The hardest lessons for me were in a cell with four walls. The cell in the prison at Scheveningen was six paces in length, two paces in breadth, with a door that could be opened only from the outside...After that time in prison, the entire world became my classroom.”²²
 - “Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith, and it is likely to remain dwarfish so long as it is without trials. Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her: tempests are her trainers, and lightnings are her illuminators... Tried faith brings experience. You could not have believed your own weakness had you not been compelled to pass through the rivers; and you would never have known God's strength had you not been supported amid the water-floods. Faith increases in solidity, assurance, and intensity, the more it is exercised with tribulation. Faith is precious, and its trial is precious too.”²³
 - As we read about and observe the lives of all of our Biblical heroes from both the Old and New Testaments, we see the same type of patient endurance in Job,

¹⁸ Grudem, 64.

¹⁹ Edwards, Jonathan.

²⁰ Constable, 11.

²¹ Wiersbe, Warren. *Be Patient. An Old Testament study*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books. See also Job 23:10

²² Ten Boom, Corrie. *The Hiding Place*. If you don't know about her story, read the book. Worth the read.

²³ Spurgeon, C.H.

²⁴ Wuest, Kenneth. *Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*

²⁵ Michaels, 32.

Joseph, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Jesus, the Disciples, etc. Do you see it in your life? Why or why not?

7. We glorify our Father with our faith

- "It is the approval of our faith which is to resound to the praise of the Lord Jesus. Testing times put our faith to the test, and as we are submissive to God and remain faithful to Him and are ready to have Him teach us the lessons He would have us learn through them, we demonstrate by our actions that the faith we have is a genuine God-given, Holy Spirit produced faith, the genuine article. This faith and its working in our lives is to the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is not the testing of our faith that is to the glory of God, but the fact that our faith has met the test and has been approved, that redounds to His glory."²⁴
- The 'revelation' (*apokalupsis*) Peter is describing should be understood as the "second coming" of the Messiah – but the word more precisely refers to his 'unconcealing'. "The assumption of this epistle is not that Jesus is absent from his people, so that he must 'come.' Rather, he is present with them but invisible; therefore he must be 'revealed.'"²⁵

v.8-9 8. We love Our Savior

- Not 'seeing' him is consistent with v.7. Even though He is not yet in sight, Peter's audience still loves Him. Love here is *agapao* and is in the present tense – meaning that they are continually loving Him. Not being able to see Jesus was obviously not a disadvantage to their ability to love Him. In fact, their love for Jesus was constantly growing in spite of trials & persecutions.
 - Jesus taught Peter well the importance of love: Matt 5:43-44, 22:37; John 13:34, 14:15, 21, 21:15-17. The Apostle John underscores Jesus' teachings further in 1 John 4:7-21. There is no greater characteristic of one who has been chosen by God than love.
- Peter must have written this with a little twinge in his heart as he remembered Jesus' words to him on the shore of Galilee just after the resurrection, "do you love (*agapao*) me?" He had actually *seen* Jesus and his response to Him was, "Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) you." Peter must have been so pleased with these believers that they, having not even seen Him in whom they believe – they are continually loving him with all their heart, soul and strength.

9. We believe Our Savior

- Believe is *pisteuo* and is one of the most common Greek words used to translate 'faith' or 'belief' in the New Testament. It involves not just intellectual assent in the thing believed, but also to regard it as true and trustworthy.
- These scattered aliens had never seen the one in whom they placed all of their faith and yet they had not stopped believing – even during times of difficulty. Their faith (v.5, 7, 8), hope (v.4) and love (v.8) propelled them to look forward to His return and the glorious result of all of their patient endurance.
- "Faith rests on the past, love works in the present, and hope presses toward the future; or, faith looks backward and upward, love looks outward, and hope looks forward... Faith accepts, hope expects; faith appropriates, hope anticipates; faith receives, hope realizes; faith is always and only concerned with the past and present, hope is always and only concerned with the future... We know that faith comes by hearing; we shall find that hope comes by experience. Faith is concerned with a person who promises, hope with the thing promised; and faith is the root of which hope is a fruit. These three constitute the true, complete Christian life and not one of them should be omitted or slighted. We are only too apt to emphasize faith and love and forget hope but, inasmuch as hope is invariably connected with the coming of the Lord, it is a vital part of our Christian life."²⁶

10. Our Joy is Complete in our Complete Salvation

- The source of unspeakable and glorious joy is the salvation that is ours in Jesus through our faith in him (v.3-5). It is the only reason someone could smile in the

²⁶ Thomas, W. H. Griffith.

face of trial, leap for joy in the midst of suffering, or sing praises while being persecuted. It is not a fake joy – nor is it contrived in hopes that it will make one feel better or actually become true. The rejoicing is unspeakable because salvation has already been achieved by Jesus and we simply await its unveiling. Paul echoes this similar sentiment in Romans 6:21-22 saying that the outcome of our sanctification is eternal life.

- o This salvation, however, may not be without great suffering or even death before this great revelation of Jesus Christ. Our souls will certainly see salvation even though we may not find salvation from our perilous circumstances.

1 Peter 1:10-12: Our New Birth is Marvelous – Giving Revelation

v.10- Our Great Salvation

- 12
- The means of our salvation is something that Peter, *a Jew*, proclaims to be light years ahead of anything the Old Testament prophets could have ever conceived. Even the angels were shocked, amazed, intrigued, and astounded by how God fully accomplished salvation for all those who believe in Jesus Christ.
 - “Salvation is the major concept that Peter discussed. He wanted his readers to remember that it included suffering as well as glory. The Old Testament prophets had predicted that Messiah would experience both suffering and glory (e.g., Isa. 61:1-3). However, they did not understand how His suffering and glory would fit together. It is possible to understand that mystery only after Jesus’ earthly ministry.”²⁷
 - o Remember that Peter wanted nothing to do with the suffering for Jesus or with Jesus before He was crucified. As we shall see throughout this letter, Peter has come to understand the role of suffering in the life of a follower of Jesus.
 - So, just as the prophets and angels searched intently for indications of how this salvation would occur, so also should Peter’s readers have just as much (if not more) diligence and perseverance in trial as they await the consummation of all things in the final revelation of Jesus Christ when salvation will be complete.
 - “The salvation and the joy that God has prepared for those who love him, and whom He loves, are mysteries only God can comprehend.”²⁸

Tough Questions:

1. How many commandments do you notice in the first 12 verses? Considering the subject matter of the opening section – what conclusions can be drawn from your observations?
2. Does this passage teach that we cannot lose our salvation? Why or why not?

²⁷ Constable, 13.

²⁸ Michaels, 50.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 3 :: 1 Peter 1:13-25

1 Peter 1:13-25: We Are Obedient Children...

Remember, for Peter, identity is *everything*. Identity comes only from the one who has given us new birth – our Father. Under His fathering of us, God gives us everything we need for life and godliness (also 2 Pet. 1:3-4). After spending the first 12 verses marveling at how great a salvation is ours, he begins to spend the remainder of the letter tackling two challenges:

1. How do I encourage my readers to remain faithful to Jesus *no matter what* painful trials come their way?
2. How do I encourage my readers not return to their old way of living (i.e. the way people are currently living around them now) *no matter what* people say, do, or think?

Many people suggest that the answer to both of those questions is founded in what you believe and should be lived out in how you behave. It is common to hear something like, “Because you have been born again to a living hope, because you have an imperishable inheritance reserved for you in heaven, because you are protected by the power of God, etc... now do these things...” The teaching we hear is typically one of obligation as if we owe God our good behavior for all the good things He has done for us (or He’ll get mad at us if we don’t behave because He did so much and we should be grateful... etc.).

There must be a step in between right belief and right behavior; however, otherwise we just become really good actors... who will *not* remain faithful when things start to get hot.

We are wasting our time when we force theology directly into behavior. The theology must first become a part of who we are – our identity. Why? First, theology is more than just facts and things that should be made into statements of faith. Theology is the study & confession of who God is and who we are in light of who He is. Second, those truths must become our very life if they are to be lived out in and through us. What better illustration of this fact than the nation of Israel herself? Without a change of heart, right behavior will only last as long as your motivation does.

Just like you want your children to live and act rightly without you having to dictate to them how they should live – so also our new birth transforms the way we see ourselves and Our God that we become His obedient children... not because we *should*, but because it is what we have been made to *be*...no matter what.

1 Peter 1:13-16 ...Who Look Like Our Father

v.13 Our new birth is the key to this entire section. Because our Father has caused us to be born again to a living hope, there should be some things that characterize us that haven’t before – and some things that characterized us before that shouldn’t now.

The tone of the letter shifts sharply to the ethical implications that arise from being a child of “the One who impartially judges” all men. Verses 1-12 are focused solely on proclaiming the majesty of our salvation. Verses 13-25 continue the same tone of proclamation and begin to add the implications of our salvation.

It is important to note here that Peter’s imperatives are not given so that we can become obedient children – they are given so that our activity will match who we have become as a result of the gracious activity of our Father on our behalf.

Those who have been born again. . .

1. Have minds prepared for action

- The phrase is literally rendered ‘gird up the loins of your mind.’ Girding up your loins is an idiom that is lost on most modern readers. Since we don’t have a

common experience of wearing robes or tunics every day, it's not as easy to relate to this common expression. As you can imagine it would not be easy to run, work or fight in a robe. So, one would pull up the back of the robe between the legs and tuck or tie it around the waist to have greater mobility.¹

- Remembering the Jewish-ness of 1 Peter, though it is not implicit here in the passage, it is reasonable to assume that the background Peter has in mind for this 'girding' is found in Exodus 12:11 (consider also Job 38:3, 40:7, Jer. 1:17, and Luke 12:35).
- How am I supposed to understand this expression in relationship to my mind? The closest connection we have would be 'gird up the loins of your mind' for the end of a semester exam. The problem with that picture is that we prepare our minds only for that one exam in that one class: we know what to study, when the exam is coming, why we are taking the exam, and that it won't last forever.
- The tests and trials of life (v.6-7), however, are never as predictable or sensible. Rarely do we consider a fight with our parents as comparable to a history exam. We typically never see those coming (and wind up just acting out of our flesh because our minds were not ready). And, yet, both are tests of what we know – *what we believe to be true* – and will demonstrate how complete or incomplete our knowledge/belief really is.
- So, the action Peter's readers should be prepared for is more about having a readiness to be able to see the world as our Father does and to act as He would act if He were us (which He has already supplied for us: 1 Cor 2:11-16). Anything that subverts our minds (thinking) from such readiness should be cast away so that when the test does come, we are ready (see 1 Peter 3:13-17).

2. Keep themselves sober in their spirit

- The phrase means not to become 'drunk in thought.' Drunken thought would be to entertain and cultivate irrational, senseless, uncontrolled thoughts. Most of the world around us helps us forget who we are and whose we are. As soon as we forget, we are unable to act as obedient children.²

3. Have a hope that is fixed

- Peter has been talking about hope since the beginning of the epistle. Only this time, hope is a verb rather than a noun. It is actually the only imperative in this list (having girded your mind...and being sober of mind, *fix* your hope). Thus, it is the main thrust of these three exhortations.
- "If Peter's readers will first know the great truths about their salvation (v.1-12) and then begin a habit of visualizing themselves personally on a path of life leading without fail to unimaginable heavenly reward (v.13), they will be mentally and emotionally ready to strive for a life of holiness before God (v.14-16)..."³ no matter what.
- Our hope isn't fixed on something temporary – but that which is "imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away" (v.4-ff). In much the same way, our hope is fixed on something that is already our possession. We are not like the athlete who trains hard daily hoping to win a gold medal. Our complete fixation on the grace to be given doesn't help us *gain* anything as much as it helps us *remain*.
- Our best defense against the world is our theology. Again, as mentioned at the beginning, intellectual knowledge will not help us withstand the world. Only if it becomes a part of who we are – our identity – does it actually change our behavior and our staying power in a world that is constantly encouraging us to forget the majesty of the grace in which we stand.

v.14 4. Are not conformed to former lusts

- "obedient children" is more literally rendered – 'As children of obedience' – meaning that we have been made into the *kind* of people who obey. Peter is not suggesting that his readers are currently not like obedient children and

¹ For examples of this in Hebrew Bible, see 1 Kings 18:46, 2 Kings 4:29, 9:1

² Peter uses the same word in 4:7 and 5:8. Compare also Mk. 4:19; Col.3:2-3; 1Jn.2:15-17.

³ Grudem, 77.

should strive to become like them. Again, our new birth changes what *kind* of people we are (we used to not be the *kind* of obedient that Peter is describing – as we shall see).

- Conformed is *syschematizo* – a word that is used twice in the New Testament: here and in Romans 12:2. “It means to pattern one’s actions or life after, and reminds these Christians that obedience to God and holiness of life are radically different from a life that follows ‘natural’ (that is, non-Christian) desires wherever they lead. Doing God’s will is the opposite of doing what remaining sin makes us ‘feel like’ doing.”⁴
- Before knowing God, they were ignorant of Him.⁵ The result of their new birth functions much like the Exodus did in the life of the Jew. They were awakened to a knowledge of God and brought out of darkness to be His very own possession as a kingdom of priests and holy nation (Exodus 19:6). There, God made His will known – that they were to be holy as He is. He gave them Law and told them to be conformed to it.
- Here, the picture is much the same for the reader of this epistle – save one difference: verses 1-12. The process and work of the new birth (as made possible by the New Covenant) *causes* Peter’s audience to actually be conformed to what the Nation of Israel refused to become: the image bearers of God.
- “Lusts” doesn’t refer to just sexual desires, but to “all kinds of self seeking, whether directed toward wealth, power or pleasure.”⁶ Our default setting when we are ignorant of God is to be conformed to an image of our own choosing and of our own craftsmanship. Because we have shared in the knowledge of good and evil with Adam & Eve, we have no need to find conformity with anyone. We think ourselves to be self-sufficient sovereigns (gods).
- So, as a result of our new birth as we are preparing our minds, remaining sober and fixing our hope so that we do not reassume the image we once had. Instead we are to grow up into the image and likeness of our Father.

v.15- 5. **Are holy in all their behavior**

16

- “God is essentially holy: the creature is holy in so far as it is sanctified by God. God, in giving the command, is willing to give also the power to obey it, namely, through the sanctifying of the Spirit (v.2).”⁷
- “God’s will has always been that His children reflect His character. The goal of Christianity is not only heaven when we die, but Christlikeness. Jesus’ task was not only remission of sin, but the restoration of the image of God in fallen mankind.”⁸
- It is *vital* to remember that our holiness is only possible because He has called us to be that way (also v.1-3 – also just as He did in Exodus 19:1-8). As his new born children we are to grow up looking like (and so representing) our Father.
- The imperative *be holy* is only the second literal imperative in this section. It does not have the meaning “‘become holy’, as if the readers were not holy already, but with the meaning ‘make holiness your trademark once and for all.’”⁹ Peter doesn’t want to run down to Wal-Mart and pick us up some holiness. He wants us to live out the holiness that is now our *birthright*.
- The motivation for our holiness is to be like our Father. As we shall see, though,

⁴ Grudem, 78.

⁵ This is a big key to us that Peter’s readers were predominantly Gentiles – or at least Gentile-like in their unbelief in Jesus as Messiah (in which case there is really no difference between Jew & Gentile). For additional texts to support what ‘ignorance’ means, see also Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-18.

⁶ Michaels, 57.

⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (1 Pe 1:16). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁸ Utley, R. J. D. (2001). *Vol. Volume 2: The Gospel According to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*. Study Guide Commentary Series (222). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International. now (see also: Rom. 8:29–30; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:7; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:14).

⁹ Michaels, 59.

Peter's use of Leviticus 19:2 is also meant to expand the purpose of our holiness. We are to be the likeness of our Father because we are, indeed, His priests – a concept he will return to discuss more in detail in chapter 2.

1 Peter 1:17-21 Who Respect Our Father

v.17 **6. Have a fearful respect of their Father**

- "If" (NASB) isn't as accurate as the NIV in this case. Peter's expression assumes that his readers are calling upon God regularly – just as a child would regularly call upon his/her father.
- "Fear" (*phobos*) means fear. No special meanings here – really.
- Why would Peter want us to be fearful of our Father? Though not implicit in this passage, I wonder if he is recalling Jesus' instruction to them in Matthew 10:24-39. These were the instructions Jesus gave them just before sending them out (scattering them?) two by two to preach about the Kingdom of God. Though they would encounter people while out that would intimidate them (cf. 1 Peter 3:14), they need to remember who their Father is so they will be able to withstand the temptation to needlessly disobey their Father out of the fear of man. Whatever fear man can generate in our hearts, we must remember our Father is the one that will judge all men without partiality (cf. 1 Peter 4:1-6). The only appropriate object of our fear is our Father. Fear of anyone or anything else is misplaced (see also 1 Peter 2:17, 3:6, 3:14).
- "Fear of God is not inconsistent with loving Him or knowing that he loves us... Fear of God's discipline is a good and proper attitude, the sign of a New Testament church growing in maturity and experiencing God's blessing (Acts 5:5, 11; 9:31; 2 Cor. 7:11, 15; Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Pet. 2:17). Moreover, fear of God is connected with growth in holiness elsewhere in the New Testament (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:12; Rom. 3:18)."¹⁰

v.18-21

- We should fear our Heavenly Father because *He* is the one who has accomplished our redemption at great cost. Our forefathers, mere men, only helped us to remain in our futile ignorance. Sin was our inheritance. Our Heavenly Father, however, never ceases in giving us the *best* of what is His (cf. Matt. 7:7-11, Luke 15:31). Our salvation is top of the line and the inheritance we receive from being His children is righteousness and is of inestimable value (1:3-5).
- We should not underestimate or forget the value of our salvation and new birth for it is the very thing upon which we should fix our hope and the very thing that makes us holy. We have been set free from our past ignorance & slavery and brought into the family of God.
- Again, we should not forget the Jewish-ness of 1 Peter when Peter refers to Messiah as a 'lamb unblemished.' Exodus 12:5 is certainly a point of reference here as Peter must be marveling at how this ransom that has now been revealed and made known to his readers had been in the works long, long ago. Our Father had been thinking of us and planning our redemption even then.¹¹
 - "As the death of the Passover lamb liberated the Israelites from physical bondage in Egypt, so the death of Jesus Christ frees us from the spiritual bondage of sin (cf. Exod. 12:5). In speaking of redemption Peter always emphasized our freedom from a previously sinful lifestyle to live a changed life here and now."¹²

¹⁰ Grudem, 82.

¹¹ A spotless lamb was not only for Passover, but a regular part of Old Testament sacrifice: Num. 6:14, 28:3, 9, etc. See also Jn. 1:31, 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 5:6, 12.

¹² Constable, 18.

1 Peter 1:22-25 Who Love Like Our Father

v.22 7. Fervently Love one another from the heart

- “Peter is not telling his readers to purify their souls but reminding them that they have already done so.”¹³ The means of purification have come just as Peter described in verses 1-12. It is not a ceremonial purification as a Jew would regard it, but a purification that marks every aspect of his readers’ lives as they live no longer as they once did, but now as aliens and strangers and children of God.
- Interestingly, our purification is not for ourselves. It is ‘for a sincere love of the brethren.’ The result of our purification (holiness) is a sincere love that is much like the way our Father first loved us – a fact that John makes the same point about in his epistle. There is no better explanatory verse for Peter’s words than 1 John 4:7-13. A must read when studying this passage.
- “Fervently” is *ektenos* which communicates not only a depth and degree of love, but also an eagerness and consistency. Both *philos* (‘sincere love for the brethren’) and *agape* (‘love one another deeply’) love are referenced here. First, since we are all children of God, we should love one another as anyone should who are from the same family. Peter calls us beyond familial love (that can sometimes be more obligatory) and into faithful love that loves as Christ loved us...no matter what.

v.23

- We don’t love because we are supposed to – we don’t even love because we like to. We love one another because we have been born again. Just as naturally as an apple tree produces apples, so also are we to naturally love one another. Why?
- Because our new birth originates from the very Word of our Father (not just his written words by the way). His imperishable nature becomes true of us when we are born again. We are transformed into the kind of people who aren’t just able to love as He does, but those who *do*.
- We have been made into the kind of people who are now able to love as our Father loves. “Brotherly affection among those who are not literally brothers and sisters is impossible without purification of soul, and that mutual love even in a community of shared belief is impossible without the new birth of which Jesus had spoken in the Gospel tradition.”¹⁴ Apart from the glory of the Gospel – in particular the shed blood of Christ- the church would be nothing more than a glorified Peace Corps. Our new birth is *everything*.

v.24-
25

- “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; and nothing can make him a solid substantial being, but the being born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of God, which will transform him into a most excellent creature, whose glory will not fade like a flower, but shine like an angel; and this word is daily set before you in the preaching of the gospel.”¹⁵
- Peter supports this idea of an imperishable nature of our new birth via the word of God, Peter quotes Isaiah 40: 6-8 to wrap up this idea and propel it into chapter two. If we have indeed been born again – not of perishable origin, but of imperishable – our behavior should indeed reflect that change and be as imperishable as the seed from which it came from... no matter what.

¹³ Michaels, 74. Peter is referring all the way back to v.3, connects it with obedient children in v.14, and concludes here.

¹⁴ Michaels, 80.

¹⁵ Henry, M. (1996). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (1 Pe 1:24–25). Peabody: Hendrickson.

“Remember the gospel is (1) a person; (2) truth about that person; and (3) a life like that person. Jesus expressed the importance of obedience so clearly in Luke 6:46. Obedience is the evidence that we have truly met Him and been changed by Him. Eternal life has observable characteristics.”¹⁶

Tough Questions:

1. Are Christians supposed to fervently love *everyone*?
2. What does holiness look like... On campus? In your family? At camp? In church? While driving? When you're alone? On the internet? When you're 85? With your bank accounts? Can there be more than one 'right' answer to these questions? Why/Why not?

¹⁶ Utley, R. J. D. (2001). *Vol. Volume 2: The Gospel According to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*. Study Guide Commentary Series (224). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 4 :: 1 Peter 2:1-10

1 Peter 2:1-10: We Are A Holy Priesthood...

Our new birth has made us into an entirely different *kind* of person which is why our behavior should necessarily be different than it was before we had been awakened to the glories of the Gospel and the knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only are we born again, but we are born again to become His priesthood – His representatives on the earth. Peter’s focus is still to unpack our identity (because, remember, identity is everything to Peter’s argument) – he will get to the ethics of our identity through the remainder of the book.

1 Peter 2:1-3 ...Who Crave the Very Words of God

- v.1-3 Since we have been born again via the living Word of God, we have a new ability to love one another fervently from the heart. We must remember that we were born again out of a sinful heritage and into the righteous heritage of our Heavenly Father. It would be incongruent for members of His family to continue in their former way of using people as a means to an end. Hence, we have the encouragement from Peter to get rid of those old marks of our sinful heritage in our relationships with other people.
- ‘Put away’ is *apotithemi* and not only has the idea of giving it up or putting it away, but also that the thing being put away is regular/customary/normal.¹
 - ‘Malice’ is *kakia* which we would normally equate with hatred – but malice is more appropriate since the word also suggests you mean to act on the hatred you harbor (or you would inevitably act). The same word is used in 2:16.
 - ‘Deceit’ is *dolos* and involves craftiness/trickery. Same word in 2:22.
 - ‘Hypocrisy’ is *hypokrisis*, the Greek word for play-acting, used to describe how we mask our inward evil under the guise of outward righteousness.²
 - ‘Envy’ is *phthonos* or also jealousy. See Rom 1:29 & James 3:16 for parallels.
 - ‘Slander’ is *katalalia* (only twice in NT) often what we speak of a person when we are jealous or angry with them (instead of choosing to love them).

The key imperative in the first three verses is ‘long for’ or *epipotheo* which means to long for or crave “with the implication of recognizing a lack.”³ Just as a newborn baby is always aware of its need for food and constant recognition of lack for it – so should our cravings be for this same Word that gave us new birth. We should no longer crave the things we used to: malice, deceit, etc. A new birth means we also have new cravings. That new appetite for the Word will, in us, produce a new kind of life/living.

- Romans 6:4 is worth a look in this regard.
- No one tells a baby what to crave – it already knows instinctively that he needs his mother’s breast. The same will be true for us who are born again. We must cultivate this craving rather than the old ones we’ve had from our physical birth. In fact, if you have not been born again from the living Word of God, you will not be able to crave/long for spiritual milk – because you won’t recognize a lack of it. Only those who have tasted know what they are missing.⁴

The process of letting go or putting away of our old way of (what we thought was) living will take some time. It will not be immediate, nor will it be easy (which is what Peter is writing the entire epistle about). But, if we continue to foster our craving for the very words of God (written or spoken), indeed “we will grow up in respect to salvation.” In other words, we will start to look more and more like our Father and demonstrate the evidence of His ransoming of us to Himself... *no matter what*.⁵

¹ Lots more on this word. If you want to keep digging, start here: Romans 13:12; Eph 4:22-25; Col 3:5-8; James 1:21.

² See also: Matt. 23:28, Mark 12:15; Gal. 2:13 for starters.

³ Louw, J., & Nida, E. *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*. New York: United Bible societies, 1991.

⁴ Hopefully this gives you more insight into Jesus’ words in Matthew 4:4 (c.f. Deut 32:46-47).

⁵ See also Ephesians 4:15.

1 Peter 2:4-5 ...Who Offer Ourselves to God

v.4 In verses 1-3, the goal of our craving of the Word is our growth. In verses 4-5, the goal of our coming to the Lord is similar: to be built up. Both verbs are passive for Peter's audience – they are not the ones in charge of the growing or the ones responsible for the building. In the first case the metaphor is agricultural (we originate from an imperishable *seed*, remember?). In the second case it is architectural. In both cases, God means not just to save us, but to see us grow. He has an intention for us as His people (v.9). These two verses are the focus of this section.

"And coming to Him..."

As new born babies, we are/should be continually and habitually coming to Him for sustenance instead of rejecting Him for what we think is better and more trustworthy. So, our coming to the Lord out of necessity is just as much an admission of insufficiency. We should be continually and habitually allowing Him to be the gardener/architect rather than ourselves. Growth in our salvation is always a by-product of our drawing near to *Him* – NOT made-up, laborious, spiritual effort.

"...a living Stone..."

There are several words for 'rock' and 'stone' in Greek. Here, Peter uses the word *lithos* to describe Jesus. This word is used to describe an individual stone that has been cut into a form for use in building. Another common word is *petra* which doesn't describe an individual piece of rock as much as it would describe bedrock (i.e. a rocky cliff, a large rock in the ground). Peter's name, for comparison, is *petros* a word for a small rock (one that you could pick up and throw).⁶

Why would Peter compare Jesus to a *lithos*?

- Because Jesus compared Himself to a rock in Matt. 21:42 as he quoted Psalm 118:22 in reference to himself. Hebrew Bible used this 'stone' imagery about Messiah – a point which was not lost on *Peter* and one that he wanted to emphasize to his readers as an encouragement.

Why would Peter describe the stone as living? Why not 'solid' or 'trustworthy'?

- "Gods of 'wood and stone' are the dead gods of false religions. It is possible that in referring to Christ as the 'living Stone,' Peter intends to accent once again the contrast between Christ and the 'empty way of life that was your heritage' (1:18) as well as the 'perishable things such as silver and gold' that belonged to that way of life. If there is a common denominator in Peter's three uses of the participle 'living' (i.e. 'living hope,' 'living Word,' 'living Stone'), it is the implied contrast with the hopelessness and idolatry of contemporary paganism."⁷
- The other possible interpretation is that living is indicative of the superiority of the New Covenant in contrast to that of the old (see all of 2 Corinthians 3). Jesus is the key piece of the foundation that has been laid by God the Father that accomplishes redemption of His people.
- The final and most simple interpretation would be that he is the living Stone because of His resurrection from the grave. The rock itself is alive, but it is also life-giving. Perhaps Peter means to make a subtle reference to what Paul hints more directly at in 1 Corinthians 10:4?

Why has he been rejected if, indeed, He is so choice?

- The essence of sin is to set one's self up over and against God as a god against Him. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they gained access to a knowledge apart from God. With this knowledge they no longer had need for a knowledge in God – instead they were able to set

⁶ When Jesus addresses Peter in Matthew 16:18, he says, "You are Peter (*petros*) and on this rock (*petra*) I will build my church."

⁷ Michaels, 98.

themselves up as judges themselves as to what was good/evil/right/wrong. The result? Man continues in his 'god-against-God' nature until today – even rejecting Christ because man will never resign his position as judge.

- The parallel to 1:1-2 is clear: Peter described his readers as aliens, strangers, and the choice ones of God. The same words are used here to describe the choice and preciousness of Jesus. It is almost as if Peter is suggesting that Jesus is some sort of model or prototype for all those who will follow in his footsteps.

v.5 "...you also, as living stones..."

"[They] are identified not as those built on the foundation of the 'living Stone' but as 'living stones' themselves. Christ's life is theirs as well, and like Christ they are elect and precious to God. The shift from the singular to the plural of this phrase comes as naturally to Peter as a shift from Christ the *eklektos* to Christians the *eklektoi*... To believe in Jesus Christ and belong to him is in some sense to be like him."⁸

- Another result of our new birth is that we are the same cut and quality stones (*lithoi*) as the living Stone (*lithos*). We are 'living' as well – no longer dead and in ignorance like we once used to be. And our plurality will together manifest itself in much the same way as the singularity of Jesus did while he was performing His earthy ministry. The end result of our being choice and precious living stones is spelled out in Romans 8:29.
- We are his image-bearers in a much more complete and full way than we have ever been able to be before. Our new birth has made us a new *kind* of people.

"...are being built into a spiritual house..."

If we are indeed being built up into a spiritual house, the Builder will need more than one stone to complete the project. Those stones must fit together closely and tightly through any and every kind of circumstance. They are to function together as one.

- The verb here, as many of them have been up to this point, is passive. Stones don't build themselves into a house – they are put together by someone else. It is also important to note that because of the present tense of the verb, the house itself is under construction for the foreseeable future.
- "One of the common criticisms of evangelical Christianity is its weak doctrine of the church. The emphasis lies on the conversion of individuals to personal faith in Christ and little importance is attached to their participation in the church. The idea of the church as an existing "divine society" stretching backward in history and outward to embrace all Christians is passed over in favor of an understanding of the church as separate, voluntary groups of like-minded people."⁹
- Ephesians 2:19-22 is most important to cross reference here.
- 'House' is *oikos* which is the same word that Jesus uses in John 14:2 "in my Father's house." This house built with 'living stones' is supposed to be a place of priestly service and sacrifice – much like a temple would be. However, the Greek word typically used for such a place is *naos* (a place where a deity is worshipped).¹⁰ Peter's use of *oikos* and the word *pneumatikos* before it give us plenty of reason to equate its usage with *naos*, however. We should infer from this passage, however, that a literal building is not in Peter's mind (nor in Christ's). We have become the temple of God – which was His plan all along. Again, our new birth has made us into a different *kind* of people, with different capacities than we had when we were dead in our trespasses & sins. Our Father means to utilize that for His purposes and His glory.

o Mark 14:58; John 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:9-17, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rom12:1-2

⁸ Michaels, 99.

⁹ Marshall, I. H. (1991). *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series (1 Pe 2:4). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

¹⁰ The following verses actually use *oikos* to describe the temple: Mt. 12:4, 21:13; Mk. 2:26; Lk. 11:51; Jn. 2:16.

"...for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices..."

- A deliberate reference to Ex 19:6 where Israel is described as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."¹¹ After the Exodus from Egypt, God expected His newly adopted children not to just belong to Him, but also to represent him on the earth. No longer were they slaves to Pharaoh, they were to be the slaves of the Lord – His very possession that will be ambassadors of His glory. Peter suggests that the role of the people of God on the earth has never changed. The only change is the scope of *who* the people of God are now.
- This is why they are to put off malice, deceit, etc – conduct unbecoming a priest of the most Holy God. If we are to be holy as He is and minister as His priests on the earth, our conduct must reflect our identity. We have not made ourselves into priests – we have been declared as such. As a result it is our responsibility to see our conduct match our identity.
- 'Spiritual sacrifices' make us think of passages like Rom. 12:1-2, 15:16; Phil. 4:18; and Heb. 13:15-16. Peter is not specific as to what these are or how they should be offered. We are left to assume that it has more to do with fixing our hope, being holy as He is, loving one another, putting of our old way of treating people, coming to the Living Stone, etc. In the Old Testament, sacrifices functioned to temporarily satisfy God's wrath against our sin. With that already being accomplished by our Living Stone, our labor as priests is to no longer offer animals but our own selves. In so doing, we will bring more people to the Living Stone to become living stones themselves.
- I like to think this is Peter's "ah-ha" moment as he remembered the dialogue of Matthew 16:18. He had no conception of what the church was going to become then, and now, at the end of his life, he has seen exactly how the church is to function as a body. Every one of us is a priest in the house of God and as we live out this calling *that has been given to us* we become the very abode of God on the earth. To the extent we are faithful to continue coming to our foundation stone will be the extent we accurately represent Him to a lost & dying world.

"Thus Peter encourages Christians to think of themselves as the *living stones* of God's new temple. But what is the appropriate visual image corresponding to this metaphor? We might try picturing ourselves as changed, thinking of ourselves as block-like but animated stones, being fitted into the shape of a large rectangular temple. But that image makes it difficult to understand how Christians can be both the stones of the temple and the priests who offer sacrifices. It is better to change our visual image of a temple, so that we no longer think of a rectangular building made of stones but of an amorphous 'building' that continually takes on the changing dimensions of God's assembled people. The beauty of this new and living 'temple made of people' should no longer be expensive gold and precious jewels, but the imperishable beauty of holiness and faith in Christians' lives, qualities which much more effectively reflect the glory of God."¹²

1 Peter 2:6-8 ...Who Build Upon Christ as the Cornerstone

v.6 Verses 6-10 compose a litany of quotations from Hebrew Bible that support what Peter has just finished unpacking in v.4-5. He makes an elaborate case that 1). the Foundation we are coming to is a trustworthy one even though it has been rejected by men and 2). Those who are living stones built on this foundation are choice stones just as He is and have a purpose to fulfill just as He did. The Living Stone is a prototype of the living stones that come together to build the spiritual house upon it.

1. Isaiah 28:16

- Isaiah was writing to the rebellious leaders of Jerusalem (Zion). With the Assyrian invasion on their doorstep, they were not turning to the LORD for

¹¹ See also 23:22 and Isaiah 61:6

¹² Grudem, 99-100.

deliverance and considered themselves safe. God promised them that any building not built on the cornerstone would be razed to the ground.

- Peter is taking the scope of this passage that was directed at Jerusalem's leadership and broadens it to all people. God has laid a foundation of Jesus Christ and all those who come to Him and build will never be put to shame. Those who reject Him will see their 'buildings' razed to the ground.
 - "choice & precious" – Remember 1:1, 1:19 and 2:4.
 - "cornerstone" – "A cornerstone is the visible support on which the rest of the building relies for strength and stability. Believers trust in Christ much as a building rests on its cornerstone."¹³
 - "not be disappointed" – this is a very emphatic negative in the Greek. Those who build on the LORD's foundation will not have anything to fear when the siege armies come – even when they seem indomitable. God will vindicate those who trust in Him and belong to Him.

v.7 2. Psalm 118:22

- Psalm 118 was part of the *Hallel* (Psalms 113-118), a grouping of Psalms sung during the annual feasts of the Jews. These words would have been frequently on the lips of Jews as went to Jerusalem to celebrate their annual feasts.
- Peter probably quotes this passage in much the same way Jesus did in Matt. 21:42-44. Again the context is broadened from just referring to the religious leadership of Jesus' day to all who set themselves over and above God in their rejection of the One whom He has sent to bring us all to Himself.
- "There are two types of people in this world: those who believe in Christ and those who have rejected Him. This distinction sets up how Peter approaches the remainder of the epistle. "The specific social obligations of those who believe toward their fellow citizens who do not will be the topic of his next major section (2:11-4:11). Peter will shortly make it clear that Christian conduct not only presupposes enemies but is largely defined in relation to those enemies."¹⁴
- If these 'builders' have rejected the cornerstone of the foundation, they will most certainly also reject the 'spiritual house' that is built upon it. This is a point Peter will return to discuss in greater detail.

v.8 3. Isaiah 8:14

- Isaiah was always exhorting Judah (the Southern Kingdom) not to follow in Israel's (the Northern Kingdom) way of arrogant rebellion against the LORD. Isaiah was explaining that, "the Lord will be a sanctuary, a place of safety, for those who believe in Him, but for those who do not believe Him, He will be the means of destruction."¹⁵
- "Jesus Christ was the stone that would have completed Israel had Israel's leaders accepted Him as their Messiah, Israel's keystone. Instead, the Israelites cast the stone aside by rejecting their Messiah. God then proceeded to make this stone the foundation of a new edifice that He would build, namely, the church. Israel's rejected keystone has become the church's foundation stone."¹⁶
- "...to this doom they were also appointed."
 - "The word *destined* is *tithemi*, a term which elsewhere is also used to speak of God's *appointing* or *predestining* a particular event or situation long before it happens, or of God's *establishing* someone in a certain situation not long beforehand but at a certain point in time. It is used in a passive form here without mentioning God specifically, but it clearly speaks of God's activity. Here Peter uses it in direct contrast to its use in verse 6: there, God *established* Christ as a chosen cornerstone in Zion,

¹³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁴ Michaels, 113.

¹⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁶ Constable, 23.

but here, by contrast, God has *established* the rebellious to stumbling and disobedience."¹⁷

- It is unclear as to which is ordained/appointed: their disobedience or the penalty of their disobedience. In either case, the encouragement from Peter is to give believers courage because of their secure position in Christ – not to set up a doctrine of double predestination.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ...Who Proclaim His Excellencies

v.9- One Massive Identity Statement

10 "But you are a chosen race (Ex. 19:5; Is. 43:20-21), a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:6; Is. 61:6, cf. Rev. 1:6), a holy nation (Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6), a people for *God's* own possession (Ex 19:5, Deut. 4:20; cf. Titus 2:14) so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people (Hosea 1:10, 2:23; Rom. 9:25, 10:19), but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

- "God redeemed Israel at the Exodus and adopted that nation at Mt. Sinai as one that would be different from all others throughout history. God wanted Israel to be a beacon to the nations holding the light of God's revelation up for all to see, similar to the Statue of Liberty. He did not tell all the Israelites to take this light to those in darkness, but to live before others in the Promised Land. However, Israel failed. She preferred to be a nation like all the other nations. Now God has made the church the bearer of His light. God has not told us to be a localized demonstration, as Israel was, but to be aggressive missionaries going to the ends of the earth."¹⁸
- "Peter concludes with ideas and words borrowed from Hosea (1:6, 9; 2:1, 23), which show yet fuller aspects of his readers' great benefits. Like Israel when rejected by God, these Christians has at one time been *no people* and *had not received mercy* – they were under sentence of condemnation for sin. But now they have been granted the highest privilege in the universe: *now you are God's people* – not by any merit of their own, for they were deserving only of judgment. All the foregoing privileges are to be traced only to the undeserved favor of God."¹⁹
 - Lo-Ruhamah means "not pitied" and Lo Ammi means "not my people".

"Building on the image of rebirth from 1:23, Peter envisions Christian believers as newborn babies forever, growing not toward adulthood, but toward the salvation God has in store for them (1:5, 9). Salvation is seen not as a last-minute rescue operation from the outside but as the fitting consummation of a process already at work in and among Christian believers. Although the attaining of salvation is a distinctly future experience, the salvation itself is already present in the intention of God, waiting only to be 'revealed' (1:5). The present age, therefore, has a dynamic quality for Christian believers, for they are seen not as standing still while waiting for the new age to dawn but as growing toward the realization of God's purpose for them (as individuals and as a community) and for the world in which they live."²⁰

Tough Questions:

1. What does it mean if I or someone I know doesn't crave the words of God?
2. Can you list out all the identity statements that Peter has used to describe his audience thus far in the letter? Does your conduct match those identity statements? Why or why not?
3. If I'm not acting like a priest, how do I change? [*careful, this is a trick question*]

¹⁷ Grudem, 107-108.

¹⁸ Constable, 25.

¹⁹ Grudem, 113.

²⁰ Michaels, 91.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 5 :: 1 Peter 2:11-25

1 Peter 2:11-25: Bring Glory to God by Being Submissive to Authority

This begins the second half of Peter's epistle. In the first half of the letter he has gone to great lengths to emphasize to his audience that identity is everything. All that the believers need to be sustained in this world comes from who their Father has made them to be. As they stand firm in this grace, they cannot fail. The second half of the letter is far less theological and much more practical in how the believers are supposed to live out their new birth as aliens and strangers in the world. Where the first half focused on identity, the second half focuses on the identity that should consequently flow from that identity.

Peter presents two primary answers to the question, "how shall we live as aliens in our own homeland?" The first answer (2:11-3:12) showcases the importance of submission. The second answer (3:13-5:11) emphasizes faithfulness during trials.

"Christians live a life of hope in this world, solidly rooted in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus and in their own experience of new birth, and joyfully maintained despite the sufferings that they undergo since these are a means of strengthening and proving their faith."¹

1 Peter 2:11-12 ...Bring Glory to God's Reputation

v.11 Verses 11-12 serve as an introduction to the second half of the letter. Essentially each verse says the same thing – one says it in the negative and the other in the positive. Every practical command from Peter for the remainder of the book fits into one of these two categories. Broadly, they boil down to two: be submissive and be faithful.

We bring glory to God by what we do not do:

- The world around us is constantly encouraging us to follow along in what it does (4:4). As aliens and strangers, we must remember that we are not locals and resist the temptation to blend in. In other words *because* I am an alien I will do certain things and I will not do certain things – it doesn't matter whether I am in my homeland or in someone else's; my behavior will be the same... no matter what.
- 'Fleshly lusts' should not be regarded as simply sexual urges, but the broader scope of any desire that seeks to gratify one's self over and against the will of God. It is my 'god-against-God' way of acting that I have inherited as a fallen human being. However, as is implicit in Peter's instruction, the urge to obey my cravings can and should be resisted.²
 - "Such a command implies that inward desires are not uncontrollable but can be consciously nurtured or restrained – a needed rebuke to our modern society which takes feelings as morally neutral 'given' and disparages any who would say that some feelings and desires are wrong."³

v.12 We bring glory to God by what we do

- 'keep your behavior excellent' is the most practical application of what Peter means by offering spiritual sacrifices in verse 5. For many of us, this phrase is all-too familiar as was spoken by our parents over the years, "Be (keep) on your best behavior all the time...or else." Though that is what it means, it should not be obligatory. It should be more a natural opportunity that stands at the door of every believer and asks the question, "Will your behavior match your new birth?" This, of course, is a life-long struggle – but when we find the sweet spot, we need to keep ourselves there without slipping.

¹ Marshall, I. H. *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1991.

² Many helpful Scriptures help to illustrate: Rom 8:13, 13:34; 2 Cor 7:1-ff; Gal. 5:16-21; 2 Tim. 2:22

³ Grudem, 115.

- Why? Because this is how the Gentiles come to believe in and worship the Living God. The word 'excellent' is *kalos*. Its precise meaning is much closer to 'beautiful' or 'good' than it is to 'perfect' or 'without' flaw.' The way we live our lives as alien priests in front of this world is attractive and will be the means through which God will draw people to Himself. Though they may reject you now, if you keep your behavior excellent *no matter what*, it will be the most compelling apologetic for belief in God that a Gentile could ever encounter.⁴

1 Peter 2:13-17 ...By Being Submissive to the Government

v.13-17 Practically speaking, there is no more important word to understand in 1 Peter than this particular word. Not only does it frame much of Peter's encouragement through the rest of the letter, it also is a difficult and often controversial word for many Christians today to understand. The term itself is not mysterious, but *why* Peter urges his readers to be submissive is what we ought to focus our attention upon.

'Be subject' is *hypotasso* [hupo = by/under; tasso=to draw up in order/arrange]. The word is straight-forward; it means to submit to *someone else's* orders or directions.⁵

Westerners have a difficult time with this word because freedom isn't just a value in the West – it is a human right. Why should I submit to someone who is corrupt? Why would I want to be submissive to someone who just wants to use me? Why would Peter call us to be submissive weaklings who don't stand up and fight for our right to freedom? He will spend the remainder of the middle section answering that question.

Why Submit to Government?

Although we don't have the time to unpack the Biblical revelation of God-ordained government, we can notice a few things about what Peter is wanting his readers to understand about how they are to behave in *any* government *no matter what*.

1. Our submission to our government, no matter who is in power, is an opportunity for us, as foreigners, to keep our behavior excellent among them (v.12).⁶
2. It is for the Lord's sake, not ours. Our behavior collectively, as living stones, will demonstrate the quality of our foundational Living Stone. While on the earth he demonstrated this very same obedience to the government of the Roman empire – why would we do any differently? We should do this even though we know they will reject our foundation anyway.
3. It is the only way to silence the ignorance talk of foolish men. Eventually, even if we are convicted of wrongdoing and crucified for it, if we continue to do what is right, men will stand in the silence of their own guilt and shame (remember what the Roman soldier said at the cross?) because they, themselves, have no foundation upon which they are built.

The most important observation for our study here is that there are no qualifications for our obedience to the governing authorities on any level. Peter doesn't say, "If your president is a moral man, then do all he says." There are no qualifications for obeying our government except one: if they command you to sin. Otherwise *even if they rulers are unjust, corrupt, or malicious* our Father has asked us to be submissive to our government...no matter what. We use our freedom to practice obedience (v.16). "We may not be able to respect certain government officials because of their personal

⁴We must have a theology of good works. Most of us think that phrase to be a little taboo because we were raised in a culture that so strongly emphasized to us that we are 'saved by grace. Yet, the Biblical precedent is there and quite compelling (especially with regard to our relationship with Gentiles): Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10;

⁵ For other examples of where this word is used, see: Luke 10:17, Rom 8:7, 13:1, 1 Cor 15:28; Eph. 5:24; Tit. 2:9; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5, 22 to get started.

⁶ Of course the only exception to this rule is if the government forces me to do that which God has declared to be sinful. Then, *and only then*, am I permitted to disobey (see Romans 13:1-7; cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Titus 3:1-2).

behavior or beliefs. Still we can and should honor them because they occupy an office that places them in a position of authority over us. We honor *them* because they occupy the office; we do not just honor the office. Peter commanded us to honor the king and all who are in authority over us, not just the offices they occupy. We may not respect someone, but we can and should honor them by treating them with respect. Respecting people and treating them with respect are two different things. Feeling respect for someone is different than showing respect for someone. Honoring others is our responsibility; earning our respect is theirs."⁷

1 Peter 2:18-20 ...By Being Submissive to Your Employer

v.18-20 Not only did Peter expect his readers to be submissive to government, he also expected them to be submissive to their masters. Not all of Peter's audience would have been slaves, but it is possible that many of them could have been. In whatever case, the model of submission Peter expects of a slave is exemplary for all the believers.

'Servans/Slaves' is *oiketes* which is a less-common word than the commonly-used *doulos* which is typically translated the same way. This word has the general connotation of more of a household servant rather than one that would be used for labor in the field. It is *vastly important* not to apply our modern understanding of the term 'slave' to this word Peter uses. In his day, being a slave/servant was an honorable way to make a living. In fact, many servants enjoyed a close and loving relationship with their master (see Luke 7:1-5 and the fact that Peter suggests that some slaves have unjust masters – implying that others were just).

The closest parallel we have to a slave/master relationship today is employee/employer. "The word 'employee', though not conveying the idea of the absence of freedom, does reflect the economic status and skill level of these ancient 'slaves' better than do either of the words 'servant' or 'slave' today."⁸

Just as he could have said with regard to our government, Peter expects slaves to be submissive to any kind of master they have – evil or good (and for the same reasons). The way we live our lives as the new born children of God has much to say about Him and the Gospel as well.

- "Respect" is *phobos* which is where we get our term *phobia*. No matter how much we disagree with the lifestyle of our employer, his position demands our respect for if we displease him, not only do we bring reproach to our Lord but we will also be out of a job! The only exception to this, of course, is if he commands us to sin.
- "Harsh" is *skolios* the Greek word from which we get scoliosis (having a crooked spine). It is especially in these situations that Peter is encouraging his audience to stand firm in their new birth and not to acquiesce.

"In all social relationships our conduct should spring out of our reverence for God and our desire to do his will. The fundamental question must always be: What does God want me to do? What Peter says here is a principle of general application."⁹

"The actual verb meaning "suffer" appears for the first time in the letter in this verse and recurs in 2:20, 21,23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1, 15, 19; 5:10. Twelve of the forty- one New Testament occurrences of the verb come in this brief letter, together with four of the sixteen occurrences of the noun form (1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 9). These figures indicate clearly that suffering is a major theme in 1 Peter."¹⁰

⁷ Constable, 32.

⁸ Grudem, 124.

⁹ Marshall, I. H. *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

¹⁰ Marshall, I. H. (1991). *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

1 Peter 2:21-25 ...Just as Jesus has Modeled for Us

v.21 In my opinion these are the most important verses in the entire letter. They serve as a kind of center of the wheel from which all of the rest of Peter's ethic that he is unpacking for us radiates. These verses answer the question 'why?'. Beyond just bringing God glory, beyond it being an effective way to shut the mouths of the wicked – our ability to be submissive to governments, masters, etc. is directly related to our ability to subordinate ourselves to our Heavenly Father.

- "It is as though the apostle could not turn his eyes to the cross for a moment without being fascinated and held by it. He saw more in it habitually, and he saw far more in it now than was needed to point his exhortation to the wronged slaves. It is not *their* interest in it, as the supreme example of suffering innocence and patience, but the interest of all sinners in it as the only source of redemption by which he is ultimately inspired." (1951:57)¹¹

"Example" is "*hypogrammon*, literally 'underwriting', appearing only here in the New Testament, refers to a writing or drawing that a student reproduces.¹² A *hypogrammon* would be the original work placed under a paper and traced to match the original.

- Peter brings up the example of Christ's suffering as the ultimate servant (who suffered unjustly at the hands of evil men) to the Father as the basic idea he is trying to get his audience to grasp.
- However, suffering is only *one* part of the example that we are supposed to follow. What enables Jesus to suffer so righteously in the face of such injustice? Not will power. Not resolve. Not biting his tongue. His submission to the father had everything to do with His willingness to entrust Himself to the Father.

"Entrust" is *paradidomi* which literally means 'to hand over.' The same word is used to describe how Judas handed over Jesus to the chief priests (Mk. 14:10) and is used *frequently* in the account of Jesus' passion-week as he is handed from authority to authority for trial, punishment and execution. In particular, it is a word that deals with the handing over of right or authority.

- When we suffer, typically the first thing we appeal to is our rights. Instead of clinging to His rights as an innocent man, Jesus handed over His life to His Father – trusting that He would not only bring Him deliverance, but also bring judgment upon His oppressors as well.
- "Peter prefers to describe the sufferings of Jesus in terms drawn from the portrait of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 53. As such he is not concerned simply to present the facts of Jesus' suffering but rather to explain its theological significance: Jesus suffers as the Servant of Yahweh and fulfills his destiny to bear the sins of others and so bring them to God."¹³

Just as the result of Jesus' suffering on our behalf was blessing for all those who would entrust themselves to Him, so also our patient and righteous handing of ourselves over to God will cause/allow those who have not yet placed their faith in our suffering servant to do so and be able to glorify God alongside us on the day of visitation (v.12).

It is important to remember that this section is not calling us to suffer – it is calling us to be submissive, ultimately, to our Father. Just as Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father so also should we. When we remember who we are and whose we are *that* is the source of a lifestyle that will remain faithful to God *no matter what*.

Tough Questions:

1. Do you mean what you say when you call yourself a "servant of God" or "follower of Jesus?"

¹¹ Denny, James as quoted in Marshall's commentary.

¹² Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor.

¹³ Marshall, I. H. (1991). *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 7 :: 1 Peter 3:1-12

1 Peter 3:1-12: The Influence of Submission

We focused on the importance of submission last week and why submission is what we are called to as followers of Jesus. For Peter, submission is one of the best ways that we can live as aliens and strangers among the Gentiles who are treating us poorly. To illustrate, Peter gives us four examples of submission: to government, to masters, to husbands, and a general exhortation to live in harmony with one another.

The center of the wheel for Peter's exhortations is 2:21-25. Like spokes on a wheel, all of his illustrations and exhortations radiate from that central passage. Jesus is a prototype for how we are to live submissively in our various relationships. Submission for Peter is not passivity nor is it mindless subservience. It is an act of trust in our Heavenly Father that allows us to demonstrate loyalty and devotion – even when we are mistreated - in such a way that has a transformational influence on all whom we serve.

1 Peter 3:1-7 ...in a Marriage

v.1-6 “In the same way” wives are to be submissive to their husbands. In the same way as whom? Peter isn't specific. “The similarity intended is apparently in motive (‘for the Lord’s sake, 2:13), in extent of application (to good or harsh masters, 2:18, or husbands, 3:1), and in attitude (with healthy apprehension of their displeasure [or fear of God] 2:18 and 3:2), as well as in the main concept of submission to an authority (2:18 and 3:1).”¹

Ultimately, I believe that a wife's submission to her husband is to be *homoios* to Jesus' submission to His Father in 2:21-25. Once again – just as we saw with government and with obeying masters, there are no qualifiers here for the wife's submission. Peter urges the wife to be submissive no matter what – even if they are afraid (3:6). This behavior is consistent with someone who entrusts themselves to their faithful creator (2:23) rather than taking matters into their own hands.

Thus, there is little else that we need to explain here when Peter commands wives to be submissive to their husbands. We already have several illustrations of the command, so, instead of re-hashing the same thing again, we will spend more of our time looking at Peter's practical picture of a submissive wife.

The Picture of a Submissive Wife:

1. She respects and submits to her husband...no matter what (3:1-2, 5)
 - “...if any of them are disobedient to the word...” is an indicator that it is possible that some of the husbands Peter was referring to were not just agnostics but *apeitheo* (a strong refusal or rejection) to the word - unbelievers.
 - In Peter's day, it was customary for women to adopt the religion of the man they married. So, in any case where the wife was a believer and the husband was not, she was already in a place of significant insubordination.² Peter's command to be submissive isn't to encourage her to adopt her husband's religion – nor is he contradicting himself. He is saying, “You're already on thin ice if he's still married to you knowing that you're a Christian, so don't compound the problem by being disrespectful or insubordinate in other ways (even by suggesting that he become Christian to match you).”
 - “Particularly in the mixed marriage the wife should be submissive to her

¹ Grudem, 135.

² This type of insubordination is, of course, permissible in Peter's eyes since she would never enter into worship of Roman gods and goddesses. I believe this is why Peter doesn't even mention the exception.

husband so that the husband will not be put off from the gospel. As an unbeliever he is not yet ready to grant his wife the freedom given by a Christian husband. For the wife to claim that freedom unilaterally would be disastrous. She must exercise her freedom in Christ precisely by being willing to submit to the restraints imposed by her marriage to an unbeliever.”³

- There is a point to her submission: to win her husband over to Christianity. As we discussed in 2:11-12, the most influential evangelical polemic in the life of a Gentile who is treating a believer poorly is a lifestyle that demonstrates faithfulness to Jesus Christ (following in the example that he has laid down for us). She realizes that restraining her will is the most effective way to bend the will of her husband. So, she submits herself for the Lord’s sake as well as for the sake of her husband.⁴
- Peter’s illustration of submission is Abraham’s wife, Sarah (3:6) who obeyed her husband, Abraham. Submit is *hypotasso* (to arrange under) and obey is *hypakouo* (to listen under). Only he who is submissive is obedient and only she who is obedient is submissive. They are two sides of the same coin.
- It is unclear why Peter chooses Sarah as an example or which specific event in Sarah’s life Peter is referring to. Nevertheless, the big idea is that she was willing to call him “Lord” (*kyrios*).
- “Examples of holy women in the Old Testament support Peter’s exhortation. Purity of life (v.2) and a submissive spirit (v.5) have always been a godly woman’s lasting source of beauty and attractiveness. Sarah is chosen as a specific example of a woman who was submissive to her husband. She obeyed Abraham and called him her master. That is, she recognized him as the leader and head of their household (Gen. 18:12). Like other holy women of the past, Sarah put her hope in God. This kind of conduct gives women the spiritual heritage of Sarah.”⁵

2. She keeps her behavior excellent...no matter what (2:12, 3:2, 6)

- A wife must keep her behavior chaste (*hagnos*) and respectful (*phobos*) in the eyes of God as well as in the eyes of her husband. If those two don’t line up, then she must choose the eyes of God even if “they slander you as evildoers” (2:12). As much as is permissible, though, a wife should be chaste and respectful in the eyes of God and in the eyes of men.
- “A pagan married to a Christian woman must be able to see that his wife’s conduct is ‘reverent’ and ‘pure’ by Roman standards even though she cannot join him in the worship of his gods. These virtues, while directed toward God and not toward her husband, are nonetheless for her husband’s benefit.”⁶
- For a woman who has entrusted herself to her Heavenly Father (2:23), this should not be a problem. Jesus consistently modeled excellent behavior in the eyes of both God and men throughout his life (Luke 2:52). As she lives out her identity as a new-born, choice, priestly child of her Heavenly Father – even if someone brings a charge against her, she will not need to defend herself.

3. She makes herself beautiful to God...no matter what (3:3-4)

- “Adornment” is *kosmos* from which we get our word ‘cosmetic’. We adorn ourselves with things that make us more attractive or beautiful. The way the locals make themselves beautiful is found in what they put on their physical

³ Marshall, I. H. *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP.

⁴ I do not think there is advice here from Peter for wives to endure physical, emotional or sexual abuse from their husbands. I think Peter would counsel such women to separate (not divorce) from their husbands and remain in submission to them without remaining in proximity to them – still hoping that they can win their husbands to Christ for the Lord’s sake.

⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Michaels, 158.

⁷ Compare 1 Timothy 2:9-10

⁸ Marshall, I.H.

bodies. Aliens and strangers in this world make themselves beautiful by adorning their character.

- Peter is not condemning the braiding of hair, jewelry or fine clothing. The NASB translation is helpful in this regard that “your adornment should not *merely* be...” those things. Peter simply suggests that external/temporal adornment is not the only source of what makes a woman beautiful. In fact, such externals do little to make you beautiful in comparison to the character of your heart.⁷
- “The inner self, of course, is not the invisible nature of the person but the whole person determined by the inner nature. Peter contrasts what a woman does with her outward appearance by her own effort and what is done by means of the divine gift that works outward from the inner personality. This is what matters to God, and his people should share his standards of judgment.”⁸
- “Gentle and quiet” are not words that are used exclusively to describe women in the Biblical text. It seems that these two particular words are more associated with the proper picture of submission than with the female gender.
- “Gentle” is *praus* which is most often translated as “meek” or “humble” (see also Matt. 5:5, 11:29, 21:5) – and was a word used to describe the character of Jesus. Although it communicates tenderness and graciousness, it does not communicate a quality of weakness. In fact, *praus* is more accurately defined as power under control and was often used to describe the status of a horse that had been broken and bridled (see also Numbers 12:3).
- “Quiet” is *hesychios* and doesn’t just mean silence from verbal speech but can also carry meaning of tranquility, without turmoil, or peaceful. Her demeanor attitude is like a calm sea even on a stormy day. She is not stirred by her circumstances to rise up and curse or slander if she disagrees or has been wronged. She may not even feel the need to speak because she has so wholeheartedly submitted herself to her Heavenly Father (2:23).

4. She resists being motivated by fear...no matter what (3:6, 14)

- Fear (*ptoesis* – used only here in the NT) is not something that should cause wives to deviate from their submission to their husbands – nor is it a suitable excuse for disobedience or insubordination. It is unclear what the source of fear may be (either the husbands themselves or some other circumstance). The NLT is the more helpful translation here:
 - “This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.”
 - “Following Abraham meant trusting God in uncertain, unpleasant, and even dangerous situations (Gen 12:1, 5, 10-15; 13:1; 20:2-6, 12; 22:3) just as Sarah did while with Abraham.”
- Any woman who is characterized by a gentle and quiet spirit (as defined above) must be able to maintain that characterization even when the waters of life become tumultuous. This is not a condition for becoming a daughter of Sarah, it is a characteristic of a woman who is already her daughter. Such women are proved to be her daughters when they face various trials.

Peter expects women to be influential in the lives of their husbands. Instead of simply using their mouths, Peter encourages them to be winsome with their character and submissiveness (as illustrated in the same attitude displayed in Jesus from 2:21-25). Any woman who behaves in that way will be unique among all women and will not be able to be slandered or accused of wrongdoing. Instead, she will likely gain the respect of her husband. Peter encourages Christian wives to recognize the influence they can have and wield it for the Lord’s sake. Submission does not mean being passive.

The Picture of a Sensitive Husband:

"In the same way" is in the same way as it has been for citizens in relationship to government, slaves to masters and wives to husbands. They are all patterned after Jesus' entrusting of himself to his father on our behalf.

It is assumed here by Peter's language that the husbands he is addressing are believers. It should also be assumed that the husbands should behave this way regardless of the response of their wives. Peter is outlining four duties for the husband:

1. He avoids a one-dimensional relationship with his wife... *no matter what*
 - There are only two commands given to husbands in this verse and 'live with' is the first of them. The term "refers to the marriage relationship in both its social and sexual aspects."⁹ As many men are accused of doing – they will generally spend more energy developing the sexual part of the relationship to the neglect of the social aspects of the relationship. Peter's encouragement is for husbands to develop every aspect of their relationship with their wives.
 - The value of a woman to a man (and vice versa) should extend far beyond the sexual dimension. In fact, without the other intimate parts of a relationship present, sex becomes more and more utilitarian and meaningless. Both women and men know this – and yet counselor's offices are filled with marriages that are falling apart for this very reason.

2. His wife is not a mystery to him... *no matter what*
 - How does a man cultivate a multi-dimensional relationship with his wife? He is to live with her in an 'understanding way.' The term here is *kata gnosis* which means 'with knowledge.'
 - It is not only the responsibility of the husband to live with her in a *kata gnosis* way – it is his privilege. Many men joke about how women are impossible to understand; it is fruitless to even try to understand a woman. Though a man's wife may be mysterious – that is no excuse for him not to pursue her and know her well. Sherlock Holmes never said, "Hmmm, this case seems mysterious – I don't think I shall look into it." It would be nonsense because detectives are supposed to investigate and solve mysteries! The same nonsense would be true of a husband who didn't understand his wife.
 - "One of a husband's primary responsibilities in a marriage is caring for his wife. Caring requires understanding. If you are married, what are your wife's greatest needs? Ask her. What are her greatest concerns? Ask her. What are her hopes and dreams? Ask her. What new vistas would she like to explore? Ask her, and keep on asking her over the years! Her answers will enable you to understand and care for her more effectively."¹⁰

3. He treats his wife with gentleness & honor... *no matter what*
 - The ESV translation here is more helpful than the NASB since husbands are not trying to understand their wives *because* they are weaker (which is what the NASB seems to imply). The ESV rightly picks up what is the second imperative for the husband (in participial form): to honor his wife. "The word 'honor' is the translation of the same Greek word in 1:19 translated 'precious.' Christian husbands are to deem the [wives] which God has given them precious, and are to treat them with honor."¹¹
 - "'Woman' translates a rare word (meaning more literally 'the feminine one'). It suggests that Peter looks to the characteristic nature of womanhood or femininity and suggests that a wife's 'femaleness' should itself elicit honor from

⁹ Michaels, 168.

¹⁰ Constable, 42.

¹¹ Wuest, K. S. *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

her husband.”¹²

- I have regularly heard the explanation of this verse illustrated in this way. Women are like fine china – precious and priceless, but also very fragile. One cannot be careless in the handling of fine china. In fact, it is precisely because the china is so valuable and so ‘weak’ that it must be treated with the utmost care. If china was worthless it wouldn’t matter how you treated it.
 - Most commentators agree that what Peter means by ‘weaker’ is probably a general statement about how females are weaker than males – not in resolve, character, intellect or morality, but simply in physical strength.
 - In comparison to 3:1-6, some wives likely had unbelieving husbands that were not good to them. Whether they were taken advantage of or even physically abused, the unbelieving husband probably did not see the woman as valuable to him beyond a sexual partner.
 - The Christian husband is called out from treating women as lesser human beings and, instead, showing them honor since both husband and wife are heirs and have the same inheritance (see 1:3-5).¹³

4. He prays for his wife and family...no matter what

- The first observation we make about Peter’s conclusion for husbands is that he assumes that the husband is a praying man. He additionally assumes that the husband doesn’t want his prayers to be hindered. Prayers can be hindered by the ones praying (being distracted), or by God (enacting discipline).
- “So concerned is God that Christian husbands live in an understanding and loving way with their wives, that he ‘interrupts’ his relationship with them when they are not doing so. No Christian husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. An no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife ‘in an understanding way, bestowing honor’ on her. To take the time to develop and maintain a good marriage is God’s will; it is serving God; it is a spiritual activity pleasing in his sight.”¹⁴

1 Peter 3:8-12 ...in a Church

v.8-12 Peter wraps up the first part of the second half of the book by giving a set of instructions to all of his readers regarding how we should treat those within the church (v.8) and those outside the church (v.9). Verses 8-9 are Peter’s thoughts on Psalm 34:12-16 (which we’ve already seen Peter quote in 2:3) which he quotes immediately following in verses 10-12. Notice the parallels:

--Psalm 34:12-13 = 1 Peter 3:8

--Psalm 34:14a = 1 Peter 3:9a

--Psalm 34:14b = 1 Peter 3:9b

--Compare 1 Peter 3:8-12 also with Romans 12:9-21

A Picture of the Church:

1. They live in harmony with one another... no matter what. (3:8; Ps. 34:12-13)
 - ‘Harmony’ is *homophron* which is *homos* (together) and *phren* (thinking) – used only here in the NT. Peter doesn’t exhort his readers to live in melody with one another – but harmony. It is possible to be different and yet unified just like it is possible to sing different notes and still make beautiful music. Yet, those notes can’t just be any random notes – they all have to line up together and compliment one another or else those notes just create chaos.

¹² Grudem, 143.

¹³ I do not believe this verse is a defense for the egalitarian position, however. Women and men are equal in their value, but they are different in their role within God’s economy. God has designed man to be the head of the family and the church just as he has designed woman to be a helper and nurturer of the family and the church. Just like 2 brothers will both receive an inheritance from their father – both brothers will not receive the same things (or even the same quantity).

¹⁴ Grudem, 146.

- Harmony doesn't just happen by itself. For harmony to exist everyone who is 'singing' together must be sympathetic, loving, kind and, most importantly, humble. Though we are each unique individuals, when we live together in community we have to think on behalf of the community instead of ourselves. Even the most skilled operatic soloist knows the difference between singing a solo and singing within a chorus.
 - When life becomes difficult or even full of suffering, my first inclination is not to look out for my community; I look out for myself. That's a worldly way of approaching trial and suffering. Instead, as new born choice members of the Family of God, we should show preference to one another and place their lives above our own (Phil 2: 1-12) – *especially* when we encounter various trials.
2. They do not repay evil with evil (3: 9a; Ps. 34: 14a)
- The New Testament is filled with passages that cover this theme (Mt. 5: 44; Lk. 6: 27-29, 35; 23: 34; Rom. 12: 14, 17-21; 1 Cor. 4: 12; 1 Thess. 5: 15). Jesus exemplifies it in the Gospels and has given us the example for us to follow in his steps (2: 21-25). Instead of taking matters into our own hands, we are to entrust ourselves to our Father and that He will handle the judgment side of things on our behalf – our responsibility is to be faithful to Him in the interim just as Solomon suggests in Proverbs 20: 22.
 - Do not repay evil with evil because . . .
 - It is not the way we have been treated by God (Ps. 103: 10; Rom. 5: 8)
 - Evil is only overcome with good (Rom. 12: 21; Eph 2: 7; Titus 3: 4-7)
 - It is kindness that leads sinners to repentance (Rom 2: 4; Acts 14: 17)
 - Evil is unnecessary for those who are of the family of God. Just as Jesus was not intimidated or provoked by the cursing that was hurled at him just before his death, the same should be true for us. Evil should not be persuasive or enticing to us *especially when evil has been done to us unjustly*. There is no reason to abandon our holy calling and commit evil because we have been unjustly treated. This must be true among the members of the church before it can ever be true of the way we treat those outside the church.
 - What difference would there be between a believer and a non-believer if the believer repaid evil for evil? None. That's a problem.
3. They are a blessing to all who are around them (3: 9b; Ps. 34: 14b)
- "Rather than returning evil, Christians are to seek peace (*eirenēn*; cf. 1 Peter 1: 2; 5: 14) and pursue it (Ps. 34: 14). Peace is pursued by returning a blessing when an insult is given. "Blessing" (*eulogountes*) here means to speak well of someone. Jesus said, "Pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5: 44), and Paul wrote, "When we are cursed, we bless" (1 Cor. 4: 12). This is the compassionate way that Christians should pursue peace. As a result, believers inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3: 9; cf. 1: 4; 3: 7), for the eyes of the Lord (v. 12) watch over the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer. The "eyes" and "ears" of the Lord are figures of speech, anthropomorphisms which attribute human physical characteristics to God. Here the figures emphasize God's watchful oversight and careful attention to His people's needs (cf. 2: 25)."¹⁵
 - "As Christians we can live on one of three levels. We can return evil for good, which is the satanic level. We can return good for good and evil for evil, which is the human level. Or, we can return good for evil, which is the divine level. Jesus is the perfect example of this latter approach (1 Peter 2: 21-23)."¹⁶

Tough Question:

1. How have you justified repaying evil for evil in the past? What do you think would have happened in that situation if you would have repaid evil with blessing?

¹⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁶ Wiersbe, Warren.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 8 :: 1 Peter 3:13-22

1 Peter 3:13-22: Remain Faithful During Trials

1 Peter 2:11-12 is the preamble to the second half of the book. Peter's desire is for his readers to abstain from fleshly lusts and keep their behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that they may glorify God. The implicit question his readers would have asked is, "how then shall we live as aliens and strangers?" His answer is twofold: with submission (2:13-3:12) and with faithfulness (3:13-5:11) no matter what. This section begins the second part of the second half and focuses on what faithfulness looks like for an alien who is standing fast in the grace of God.

"Here Peter begins a new section dealing specifically with the problem of persecution by unbelievers. Although this theme has been hinted at in 1:6; 2:12, 15, 19; 3:1 and 9, this is the first time Peter confronts persecution as his primary subject and deals with it at length."¹

1 Peter 3:13-17 ...even if it means suffering for doing good

v.13-17 Peter's opening question is rhetorical. If God will punish those who do evil (v.9, 12), then what do those who do good have to fear? Whom do they have to fear?² As you live out your calling in front of the world without engaging in fleshly lust and by keeping your behavior excellent – the world will have no grounds to accuse you.

It is also possible here that Peter is suggesting that someone who is 'zealous for good' will be able to neutralize an evil person altogether. When a believer encounters evil and repays it with evil – the evil perpetuates and grows larger. When a believer repays evil with good – it becomes increasingly difficult for the evil person to continue to heap evil upon the good and the evil shrinks until completely overwhelmed by good.

This should be the norm. Christians *will* encounter evil in this world. To the extent they are ready to overcome evil with zealousness for good, the evil will be eliminated.

However, Peter recognizes that there will also be special circumstances when the evil will be so great that a zeal for good might not be effective in repelling evil right away. Even in those circumstances there is *still* nothing to fear because Jesus taught that suffering in his name is a privilege – not a curse (Matt. 5:10). In light of these potential circumstances, Peter gives the following exhortations to his audience:

1. Do not fear [c.f. Isaiah 8:12]

- Peter quotes Isaiah 8:12-13 as an example of what he means. It is interesting that Peter returns to Isaiah 8 in this context. The remainder of chapter 8 is reminiscent of 1 Peter 2:5-10.
- The Greek phrase here is literally 'do not fear the fear of them.' They are not to be afraid of their threats or other attempts to make them give into fear. Fear would be the absence of faith – the absence of faith in the reality that God will punish those who do evil.
- "Peter quoted the Lord's exhortation to Isaiah when the prophet learned that the people of Judah and Jerusalem would not respond to his ministry positively (Isa. 8:12-13). God promised to take care of Isaiah, and He did. Though Isaiah eventually died a martyr's death, he persevered in his calling because God sustained him. This is what God will do for the Christian, and it gives us the courage we need to continue serving him faithfully in spite of persecution."³
- There are manifold examples in the Scriptures of not giving in to fear in the

¹ Grudem, 151.

² See also Ps. 56:4; 91:7-10; 118:6; Is. 50:9; Matt. 10:28-31; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:18; Rom. 8:31.

³ Constable, 45.

face of trouble, persecution or even death. As a perfect example, Revelation 2:10 says, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

2. **Sanctify Christ as Lord** [c.f. Isaiah 8:13]

- 'Sanctify' is *hagiazō* which means to set apart, make holy or regard with reverence. In this case, it has the same sense as Matthew 6:9 ("Hallowed be thy name") where the name of God is to be set apart to be revered and feared (as opposed to the men who are threatening violence).
- Instead of giving way to fear and intimidation, Peter exhorts his audience to focus their hearts (faith?) solely on Jesus, the Messiah, and his Lordship not only over their own lives, but also their circumstances. Even though this verse seems to have nothing to do with v.14, the connection can be seen easily in Isaiah 8:13 that has the same exhortation.
- "Thus the sense of fear or reverence for the Lord rather than fear of men is reinforced... To reverence Christ as Lord means really to believe that Christ, not one's human opponents, is truly in control of events. To have such reverence in your hearts is to maintain continually a deep-seated inward confidence in Christ as reigning Lord and King."⁴
- "Just as God's holiness is made known among the Gentiles through his people, Israel, so Christ's holiness is made known by Christians who confess him as Lord even in the face of interrogation and threats. The task of a holy people is to make known to the world the Holy One who called them."⁵
- This is the key to fearlessness in the face of imminent danger. When you know that you have the Lord of all creation as your advocate and Messiah, you do not need to fear. Courage to suffer comes not from the absence of fear, but rather the faith that is able to master it.

3. **Be gentle and reverent with unbelievers** [1 Peter 2:21-25]

- When we are not afraid of death or pain because we have set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts, we have an ability to transcend our circumstances of suffering and treat our captors or persecutors with a gentleness (3:5) and reverence that is holy and unlike any other person they have mistreated before – in fact it should be so holy (unique) that it prompts our persecutors to ask about the hope that is within us. We do not need to resort to our own strength or muscle to overpower those who persecute us because we have placed our faith in the Lord. Just as Jesus entrusted himself to the Father instead of reviling in return (2:21-25), so also should we.
- "The words "give an answer" [*apologia*] are the translation of a Greek word used as a legal term in the courts. It means literally "to talk off from," and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. He presented a verbal defense. The exhortation is to Christians to talk the Bible off from the charges preferred against it, thus presenting for it a verbal defense."⁶ Paul is a good example of this idea in Acts 22:1-21; 24:10-24; 26:1-23, 25-29.
- Not forgetting the author of this book, we also have to think that Peter's denial of Jesus is somewhere in the back of his mind here where he neither gave a defense nor was he gentle with his speech (Matt. 26:69-75).

⁴ Grudem, 153.

⁵ Michaels, 187.

⁶ Wuest, K. S. *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁷ Marshal, I.H. 1 Peter 3:17.

4. Keep a good conscience & suffer for what is right

- This final exhortation takes us back to Peter's initial exhortation at the beginning of the second half of the book in 2:12. A Christian's behavior before, during and after persecution should be so blameless that the persecutor would be either ashamed of himself, repent, and 'glorify God on the day of visitation,' or be put to shame when he is judged by Our Father 'who impartially judges each mans conduct' (1:17).
- The temptation to return evil for evil is the most difficult to resist when we are being falsely accused or when our faith is wrongfully attacked. In these moments we must not become like those who are persecuting us – we must remain holy in our behavior and keep our behavior excellent.

"Peter again makes the point that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil... If we are going to suffer at all, it is better to suffer persecution than to be punished for breaking the law (2:19–20; 4:15–16). Such patient endurance of persecution is a powerful form of Christian witness. It is also possible that Peter means that to suffer persecution from men for doing good is better than to incur God's judgment for doing wrong."⁷

1 Peter 3:18-22 ...because Christ has redeemed you completely

v.18 There are three snapshots of Jesus Christ in Peter's epistle (2:21-25, 3:18-22, 4:1-2) and all are significant benchmarks in Peter's argumentation. As we discussed in the first part of the second half 2:21-25 serves as the chief example for how submission is supposed to look. Here, in his second portrait of Christ, Jesus is the example of how faithfulness during trial leads to ultimate victory – the exact point he wants to encourage in his readers through the remainder of the letter.

- "Peter now reminded his readers of the consequences of Jesus' response to unjustified persecution. He did so to strengthen their resolve to rededicate themselves to follow God's will wholeheartedly and confidently. He also wanted to assure them of their ultimate triumph in Christ."⁸
- "Once again Christ provided the perfect example. He suffered for doing what was right (2:14). His sinless life provoked the unjust hostilities of evil men. However, He did not fear men but trusted Himself to God. Christ clearly stated His purpose and committed Himself to a course of action. He died in mankind's place, keeping His conscience clear (c.f. 2:23). As a result He received tremendous blessing and reward in His own resurrection and exaltation."⁹

Verses 17 & 18 are closely connected. Verse 18 seems to be the answer to the implied question that must have been coming up in the minds of Peter's audience ever since 2:13, "Why would/should we suffer when we are innocent?"

Peter's answer is sublime. The very Gospel itself is the instance of a guiltless man suffering the punishment of a guilty man at the hands of sinners. It is by Christ's patient suffering for doing good that the entire human race is redeemed from sins once for all. To the degree that we model this same ethic/lifestyle in our own lives (*though it may cost us our own lives!*), we present this very same Gospel to the Gentiles so that they may come to know God as we do.

- "Peter proceeded to explain the significance of Jesus' resurrection and exaltation not only for believers but also for the whole universe. Whereas the previous example of Jesus stressed the way He suffered while doing good, this one emphasizes the theme of Jesus' vindication, which is major in 1 Peter following the quotation of Psalm 34 in 3:10-12."¹⁰

⁸ Constable, 46.

⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Constable, 47.

The theological ramifications of this one verse demand our attention because they clearly explain the substance and extent of Christ's atonement on our behalf. Specifically, Jesus' death was . . .

1. **A death for sins** – (see also 1 Pet. 2:24; Gal. 1:4; 1 Cor 15:3; Heb. 10:12) Jesus did not just suffer for sins, he died for them (ones He Himself did not commit). Jesus did not die for wrongs he had committed – He was guiltless. Instead his death wasn't just for sin in general, but for all sins. "The death of Jesus is like a sacrifice in that it takes away sin and cancels its effects. Sin no longer stands between sinners and God to render them liable to judgment."¹¹ Peter's language here is reminiscent of the Jewish sacrificial system and should not be overlooked. Furthermore, one cannot fully appreciate the reality of the atonement of the cross of Jesus without first considering the main reason it was necessary in the first place: my sins.
2. **Once for all** – (see also Romans 6:10; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10). Jesus' sacrifice will never happen again because there is no need for it. Those who have been washed clean by His atoning blood no longer have any need for further cleansing. His atonement was complete, sufficient, and satisfactory to God's wrath (unlike the regularity and repetitious nature of the Jewish sacrificial system). Some have incorrectly substituted the understanding, "once for all *people*" when the correct understanding would be more appropriately, "*once* for all *time*."
3. **A just substitute for the unjust** (see also Isa. 53:11; Rom. 3:24-26; 5:6-10; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:21) Jesus was qualified to bear the punishment that we deserved because He Himself was without sin. If He had sin of His own, he would not have been qualified for He would have died for His own sins just as you or I would if we were put to death on a cross. His death completely satiated the wrath of God for my sins and the sins of all who would believe on Him.
4. **Effective in bringing us to God** – (see also Rom. 5:1-2; Heb. 10:19-22). Nowhere in any other world religion do you find a god bringing people to himself. Yet, here, we have a picture of Jesus as our Good Shepherd leading us back home (2:25). What has previously prevented us from having fellowship with God has now been removed. "The word "bring" in the Greek text means literally "to lead to." It was a technical word used of one who gained an audience at court for another. He brought his friend into the good graces of the reigning monarch. Just so, our Lord Jesus by dying on the Cross and paying for our sins, satisfied the just penalty of the broken law which we incurred by our disobedience, and removed for us that which barred our access to God. Thus as lost sinners receive Him as their Saviour, they are led into the presence of God the Father by God the Son, dressed in a righteousness, Christ Jesus Himself who brings us into the place of the unlimited favor of God."¹²

"The contrast *put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit* fits in with the whole letter's emphasis on the relative unimportance of temporary suffering in this world compared to the enjoying of an eternal inheritance in the next. Our Lord willingly suffered physical harm, even death, for the sake of eternal, spiritual gain. Peter's readers should not therefore be surprised to find themselves 'following in his steps.'¹³

¹¹ Marshall, I. H. (1991). *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

¹² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

¹³ Grudem, 156.

v. 19-21 Verses 19-21 "contain some very difficult exegetical problems."¹⁴ Not only are some of these verses difficult to translate and extract meaning from, they are also difficult to understand. For every teacher and preacher, this is by far the most difficult section of the letter to deal with because it is hard to understand what Peter means to say. Thus, commentaries reveal a *wide* variety of opinions on the numerous issues here.

Frankly, as I study these three verses, I have no idea where to begin to explain to you all what they mean as a whole. If you are teaching and need a quick, concise overview of many of the views on these verses, I highly recommend visiting Dr. Thomas Constable's website, www.soniclight.com, to download his commentary on 1 Peter. It will be a good friend to you. ☺

There are a few points to note in these verses:

- Grudem's commentary makes a *very* interesting parallel between the situation of Noah and the situation of Peter's audience. Both were minorities surrounded by a hostile majority, both were righteous in the midst of the wicked, both live under the certain coming of God's judgment, etc.¹⁵
- God would bring Peter's readers safely through their trial just as He had brought Noah safely through his trials into a whole new world. God had done this for Noah even though he and his family were a small minority in their day. Furthermore as God judged the mockers in Noah's day, so will He judge those who persecuted Peter's readers."¹⁶
- The problem remains as to *when* Christ preached to these "spirits." Peter's explanation of the resurrection of Christ (3:18) "by the Spirit" brought to mind that the preincarnate Christ was actually in Noah, ministering through him, by means of the Holy Spirit. Peter (1:11) referred to the "Spirit of Christ" in the Old Testament prophets. Later he described Noah as "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). The Spirit of Christ preached through Noah to the ungodly humans who, at the time of Peter's writing, were "spirits in prison" awaiting final judgment."¹⁷
- "Baptism saves Christians now as the water that floated Noah's ark saved him and drowned his unbelieving antagonists. It does not save us by cleansing us from defilement, either physically or spiritually, but by announcing publicly that the person baptized has placed his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism now delivers (saves) us from the consequences of siding with the world (cf. James 1:21; 2:24; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Col. 3:8-9; Heb. 10:22). Baptism is the evidence that a person has made a break with his or her past life and is taking a stand with the Savior. It is a pledge (translated "appeal" in the NASB) springing from a good conscience (i.e., a conscience that is now right with God; cf. v. 16)."¹⁸
- "Peter's point in his comments about baptism was this. In water baptism his readers had made a public profession of faith in Christ in their community. This had led to persecution. However by that act of baptism they had also testified to their ultimate victory over their persecutors. Because they had taken a stand for Jesus Christ they could be sure that He would stand with them (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12)."¹⁹

v.22 Peter concludes chapter three with a rousing summary of the power that Jesus wields even though he endured suffering and death unjustly. Ultimately *all things* are under Him (*hypotasso*) – even the lives of those who would be persecuting Peter's audience, even the circumstances that cause them various trials, even the hearts and minds of the people they love the most. This is what enables us to remain faithful to Jesus in times of great suffering and trial... this is the grace in which we stand... no matter what.

¹⁴ Constable, 46.

¹⁵ See Grudem p. 160-161

¹⁶ Constable, 51.

¹⁷ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁸ Constable, 51.

¹⁹ Constable, 52.

"The vindication of Christ lays the basis for the vindication of the Christian believer, and Christ's vindication is total... Yet even though Peter views Christ as fully vindicated and enthroned in heaven, his vindication is only in principle, not in hard, earthbound fact... Peter knows as well as his readers that the forces of evil have not literally be routed, nor their voices finally silenced, yet he offers them a vision of assurance that Christ in his journey to heaven has broken the back of evil; whatever they may have to suffer, they have no need to be afraid, nor even surprised when they realize that Christ himself was 'put to death in the flesh' before he was 'made alive in the spirit.' Vindication is real and Christ's vindication belongs precisely to those who suffer."²⁰

"Jesus Christ's ultimate victory in spite of temporary persecution should be an encouragement to any suffering disciple of the Savior. Verse 18 describes the saving work of Jesus Christ. Verses 19 and 20 refer to His ministry of proclaiming good news to those destined for judgment, which ministry we in our day must continue faithfully, as Noah did in his. Verse 21 stresses the importance of confessing Christ publicly in baptism by reminding us of what baptism does and what it does not do. Verse 22 reminds us of our ultimate vindication and destiny."²¹

Tough Questions:

1. Did Christ die for all people or only for those who would believe in Him?
2. Can you make more correlations between Peter's audience & Noah?

²⁰ Michaels, 220-221.

²¹ Constable, 53.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 9 :: 1 Peter 4:1-11

1 Peter 4:1-11: Maintain Faithfulness Especially During Trials

Faithfulness doesn't happen by itself. It must be chosen. Daily. ... no matter what.

"Since Jesus Christ has gained the victory, Peter urged his readers to rededicate themselves to God's will as long as they might live. He wanted to strengthen their resolve to continue to persevere. He resumed here the exhortation that he broke off in 3:17."¹

I. H. Marshall offers a most helpful introduction to this chapter that is worth its length:

"Stores that sell things to wear no longer advertise them as "clothes" but as "fashions." And though the very name indicates how short-lived any particular style of clothing is, it encourages us to purchase the latest, most up-to-date apparel so that we will not fall out of step with the perceived majority (or at least the trendsetters). We don't want to look old-fashioned, odd or as if we are unable to afford to live in style.

What is true of clothes is true of habits. Smoking is advertised as the "adult" thing to teen-agers, so that they will start the habit young. Once they are "hooked," they won't ask whether or not it is fashionable. The consumption of alcohol is similarly pushed as the "in" thing for everybody. So much so that even Christians, whose traditions have warned them against use of a drug with an appalling record for stimulating crime, danger on the roads and disease, are lured by the trend.

One might suppose that Christians living in a hostile environment would want to shun all that reeks of paganism, but in practice things are not so simple. In the first place, everyone of us is weak and attracted by what the writer to the Hebrews realistically calls "the pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25). Even though we know that certain activities are wrong, we are still attracted by the element of pleasure that they contain. In a weak moment we are prepared to disobey. Second, we can have genuine uncertainty as to whether a particular activity is right or wrong (and whether earlier generations made the right decisions in "gray areas") or as to where we draw the line. Third, we know that Christ prayed for us to remain "in the world." We must not cut ourselves off from the very people to whom we are trying to bear Christian witness. How do we keep in touch with a pleasure loving, affluent society? And finally, we are all tempted to conform in order to avoid being thought of as killjoys by other people.

To these kinds of struggles Peter addresses himself in this section. He asserts that, despite the pressures of society, Christians should live as the people of God, following the example of Christ. He stresses in various ways that his readers must regard themselves as being done with sinful pleasures."² (... no matter what)

1 Peter 4:1-6 ...by choosing to resist your former way of life

v.1-2 "Therefore"

- What is the 'therefore' there for? The immediate referent is likely 3:18 because the Greek construction of 'suffered in the flesh' in 4:1 is very similar to 'died for sins' in 3:18 ('died' is the same Greek word that is translated 'suffered' in ch 4). Peter is meaning to get back on track with the idea that he left in 3:17 of suffering for doing good – lifting up Christ as our ultimate example of what that should look like.
- We should also see the 'therefore' also pointing as far back as 2:21-25 as well. 4:1-2 is the third time Peter has used Jesus as an example to his readers (2:21-25, 3:18-19, 4:1-2). This final example ties all three of them together to give us the full picture of what it means to do the will of God instead of the will of man.
- So, if we have been chosen for obedience to Jesus (1:2), then our behavior must match His. What Christ has done in the *past* must influence the choices we make in the *present* and in the *future*. He will not make our choices for us.

¹ Constable, 53

² Marshall, 4:1.

“Arm yourselves with the same purpose”

- ‘Arm’ is *hoplizo* – a military term used to describe soldiers who would arm themselves with heavy armor just before going into battle. There is another Greek word for arming one’s self with light armor that Peter declines to use here.
 - Do you remember the scene from *Braveheart* at the Battle of Sterling? The Scottish Nobles are outnumbered 3: 1 and feel like they have to negotiate some sort of truce with the English. The Scottish militia sees how grossly outnumbered they are and don’t want to die just so that the nobles can have more lands. William Wallace shows up and delivers his famous “Sons of Scotland” speech and convinces the militia to stay and fight. Afterwards he approaches his friends:
 - Stephen: “Fine speech. Now what do we do?”
 - Wallace: “Just be yourselves.” [Wallace begins to ride off]
 - Hamish: “Where are you going?”
 - Wallace: “I’m going to pick a fight.”
 - Hamish: “Well, we didn’t get dressed up for nothin.”
- This is the only imperative in 4: 1-6 and the idea is very similar to Hamish’s quote in the movie. The Scottish were there and ready to fight, but without a proper attitude they were willing to give up on the fight and go home to continue to live under English tyranny. They were not lacking in *ability* to fight – they were lacking in *purpose* (NIV translates it as “attitude”). Wallace redefines their reason for fighting and those men go into a battle of seemingly insurmountable opposition after arming themselves with Wallace’s attitude and find themselves victorious.
- What is this ‘attitude’ that Christ has exemplified for us? I think it is the attitude of suffering for doing good (i.e. Christ chose the will of the Father (good) and that led to suffering) as exemplified in 3: 17-18 as well as the attitude of submission and trust that Jesus models in 2: 23. Instead of taking matters into his own hands, he was willing to turn His life over to the Father and do His will (c.f. Lk. 22: 42). In much the same way as Wallace inspires the Scottish troops with his attitude/purpose with regard to freedom, so also Peter holds up Jesus’ attitude/purpose with regard to doing the will of the Father... no matter what.

“He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin”

- “The interpretation of the final clause is debated:
 - (1) The person who is prepared to undergo unjust suffering shows that he holds firmly to a principle, in this case, opposition to and refusal to sin;
 - (2) the person who has died—that is, with Christ in his baptism (as in Rom 6: 1–7)—has died to sin and thus ceased from sinning;
 - (3) the person who is persecuted is purified from sin by his sufferings;
 - (4) since it is death that brings the sinful flesh to an end, the Christian must be prepared to suffer death just as Christ did (the person who has this “insight” and who willingly bears persecution is already committed to dying to the flesh in principle);
 - (5) the person who has died is Christ; in dying he has finished with the sin that he was bearing for others and put it behind him.”³
- “The phrase *has ceased from sin* cannot mean ‘no longer sins at all’, for certainly that is not true of everyone who has been willing to suffer for doing right, and several passages in Scripture rule out the idea that anyone can be absolutely free from sin in this life (1 Ki. 8: 46; Pr. 20: 9; Ec. 7: 20; Jas. 3: 2; 1 Jn. 1: 8). It rather

³ Michaels, 225-229 as quoted by Marshall. Option #1 is regarded as the traditional understanding. #2 is a possible ‘spiritual’ understanding of Peter’s meaning. Options #3-5 are generally disregarded from a conservative evangelical perspective as the ideas of penance (#3), for lack of a better term: “jihad” (#4), and that Peter is talking about Jesus and not his audience (#5) lack Biblical support.

⁴ Grudem, 167.

⁵ Marshall, 4: 1.

⁶ Constable, 53.

⁷ Marshall, 4: 2

means 'has made a clear break with sin', 'has most definitely acted in a way which shows that obeying God, not avoiding hardship, is the most important motivation for his or her action.'"⁴

- "When people are prepared to say no to their human nature by submitting voluntarily to the pain of persecution, they show most clearly that they are opposed to seeking the pleasures of sin enjoyed by their human nature."⁵
- Consider these Scriptures closely in regard to this particular idea: Romans 6:2, 7, 11; Gal 2:20; 5:24; Col 3:3-5.

"so as to live...no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

- This verse serves to explain the second half of the previous verse in what it means to cease from sin. (See also: Rom. 7:4; 14:7; Eph 4; 5:7-8; Col. 3:7-8; Tit. 3:3-8). It is the main idea of the entire section (and in some cases could be argued the theme of the entire letter) and boils down much of what Peter has been encouraging his audience to do into one simple phrase.
- "'Flesh' refers to one's mortal lifetime on earth, not to carnal living (cf. 3:18; 4:6)."⁶ It is important to remember that living 'in the flesh' isn't sinful. The Greek word *sarx* is used to describe both our mortal body as well as our so-called 'sinful-nature.' Peter uses the term 7 times and not one of them refer to our 'fallen' condition. Paul, on the other hand, uses the same word to describe the sinful nature of humanity – but himself even uses the term as Peter does: Gal 2:20.
- "the lusts of men" should be seen in parallel to 1:14. "Lusts" is not sexual urges only, but *epithymia* – general selfish cravings of men who do not have their minds set on the will of God. Again, our new birth into our Father's family makes us aliens and strangers to this world – *not locals*. The locals follow their selfish cravings wherever they lead & call them good. We, on the other hand, follow our craving for God's Word (2:2) which is also His will.
- Matthew 16:21-25 is an interesting parallel to this particular idea. Surely Peter learned this lesson well while at Caesarea Philippi as Jesus was saying, "Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." What was it that Peter didn't want Jesus to do? Suffer. What did Jesus go on to teach immediately following? "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
 - **What does it mean to live for the will of God?**
 - 1 Pt. 2:15; Ps. 143:10; Mat. 7:21; 12:50; 21:31. Mar. 3:35. Jn. 1:13; 7:17. Ro. 6:11; 12:2; 2 Co. 5:15; Ga. 2:19, 20; Ep. 5:17; 6:6; Col. 1:9; 4:12; 1 Th. 5:18; He. 13:21; Jas. 1:18; 1 Jno. 2:17.
- A good paraphrase of this entire section reads: "Persons who are prepared to suffer demonstrate that they have a particular attitude toward certain principles. Jesus was prepared to suffer, and therefore he must have had this attitude. Since you have been called to suffer like Jesus did (3:14–18), you should also adopt the same attitude as he had. (It would be foolish merely to suffer without holding the principles which his sufferings demonstrated that he held.) You will find that this attitude acts like armor in protecting you from temptation. For the particular attitude which Christ had is related to sin. It can be summed up in the saying: A person who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin."⁷

v. 3-6 The final four verses of this section are simply a more elaborate explanation of the first two. Peter illustrates how we can live for the will of God particularly in how we choose not to live the way we used to live – regardless of how intense the pressure may be from the locals around us.

- Peter next points out that there are two opposing ways of life for the Christian to choose. The first of them, which is inconsistent with the very nature of being a Christian, is to live in accordance with the desires of human beings... The second

way of life conforms to the will of God”⁸ even if that requires the suffering/death of the believer for doing the will of God.

- For the believer to re-engage with any of these behaviors either in giving in to the pressure or out of retaliation would mean that they would be acting out of their new identity that God has given them. Our Father did not save us from the dominion of darkness so that we may continue to live there. God will deal with evildoers in due time – however, we must be determined not to become evildoers ourselves (a theme we’ve seen since Peter’s exhortations to slaves back in chapter 2).

“For the gospel has...been preached even to those who are now dead”

- “Because everyone will give account of his life to God (v. 5), Christians preach the gospel. We do so to enable people to give that account joyfully rather than sorrowfully (cf. 1 John 2:28). In Peter’s day Christians had preached it to other Christians who had already died. Even though these brethren had experienced judgment for their sins by dying physically, they lived on in a new spiritual sphere of life since they were believers (cf. 3:18). Physical death is sin’s last effect on believers during their earthly lives.”⁹
- “The word *this* refers back to the subject of the previous sentence, the final judgment. In other words, ‘It was because of the coming final judgment that the gospel was preached, even to those who believed in Christ and then later died.’ In this way *the dead* means ‘those who are now dead’ (when Peter was writing), though when the gospel was preached to them they were still living on the earth... The fact that they died should not trouble the minds of those left alive, for, short of the second coming of Christ, the gospel was never intended to save people from physical death... it will save them from final condemnation.”¹⁰
- To get the idea from this passage that the gospel can be preached to people who have passed away who had not previously believed it is an inappropriate understanding of Peter’s words & the entire mission of the church since the ascension of Jesus. Further, why would anyone need to change their way of living on the earth now if they could simply believe the gospel after they died?

1 Peter 4:7-11 ...by loving one another

v. 7 While on the topic of judgment and the end of all things, Peter gives further exhortations to believers corporately on how they are to behave and relate to one another especially given that the entire course of redemptive history is very close to its end. Since that is the case – since everything is almost complete and fulfilled, we must prepare not only our hearts, but also our behavior so that our Savior may find us being good stewards of what he has entrusted to us (Matthew 24:44-51). These exhortations are not solely issues of stewardship, but also issues of survival. The end of all things is at hand, but it still is not here yet. For the church to survive and continue to have an impact on the world in which God has placed it – there must be cohesion, unity, and love.

We may even argue that Peter is now presenting the positive ways to live for the will of God (4:2) now that he has dealt with the negative. In general, Peter presents four commands to his readers that warrant not only our understanding, but also our obedience as we continue to live in these final moments of redemptive history:

1. Pray.

- Of all the excuses that I have for my lackluster prayer life, distraction and lack of time are frequently at the top of the list. Peter is clear, here, however, that

⁸ Marshall, 4:3-6

⁹ Constable, 54.

¹⁰ Grudem, 170-171.

there are no legitimate excuses for not praying. In fact, we should make sure that those excuses are not present so that our prayers will not be adversely affected. As we saw in chapter 3, prayer is an essential part of the work of a believer - it is not optional. It must not only be protected but also strongly pursued by each believer.

- "The idea is not simply 'so that you can pray' (NIV), but 'in order to pray more effectively, more appropriately', Christians should be alert to events and evaluate them correctly in order to be able to pray more intelligently. Peter's words also imply that prayer based on knowledge and mature evaluation of a situation is more effective prayer (otherwise there would be no relationship between begin 'sane and sober' and one's prayers). What this verse teaches could well be put into practice when reading the newspaper, listening to the news, travelling to work, and so on."¹¹

v. 8 **2. Love one another fervently**

- "In relation to their fellow Christians, Peter considered it most important that his readers keep their brotherly love at full strength (1:22; Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Thess. 5:8, 15; 1 John 4:7-11). The same expression occurs in non-biblical Greek to describe a horse at full gallop and a runner straining for the tape at the finish line of a race."¹²
- "Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offenses, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound – to Satan's perverse delight (cf. Heb. 12:15; by contrast, 1 Cor. 13:4-7). A similar idea is expressed in Proverbs 10:12: 'Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.'¹³
- Peter doesn't expect the congregations to be perfect in all of their behavior, but he does expect them to love one another to the hilt. Just as Peter eliminates our excuses for not praying in 4:7, so also does he eliminate our primary excuses for not loving other people as God has loved us: their sins.

v. 9 **3. Show hospitality to one another**

- Hospitality is a lost art in the West. We keep our doors locked and only let people in whom we know well and have something to offer us in return. Stories like Genesis 18:1-8, 19:1-3, and 24:19-21 illustrate a completely alien picture of hospitality than what we are typically accustomed to. Strangers are a threat to us – not an opportunity to practice love and service as if we were serving God Himself.
- We also have to remember the context of Peter's readers that their "churches" were not held in multi-million dollar buildings. For the church even to have the opportunity to gather together required the hospitality of families to open up their homes (many times a great risk to themselves) for the gathering of believers.
- In much the same way as a wanderer in the desert needs the hospitality of those who live in the desert, so also the church needs the hospitality of its own people, as a practical means of loving one another, to be able to survive – especially in the types of circumstances Peter's audience found themselves in.
- Grumbling always negates hospitality. If one grumbles about the offering of hospitality, then they are not offering hospitality to begin with.

v. 10-11 **4. Serve one another in Jesus' name**

- Every believer receives at least one gift (*charisma*) not for personal use, but for use in maintaining and building up the church (2:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11). The gifts

¹¹ Gruedm, 173.

¹² Constable, 56.

¹³ Grudem, 174.

themselves are not specified by Peter here, but are living breathing manifestations of the manifold (*poikilos*) grace of God (again, that we are to stand firm in... no matter what). We are to employ (*diakoneo*) gifts as representatives of God himself – using them as He would will us to use them rather than using them to advance our own lustful ambitions.

- “Peter offered two basic ways of serving that represent two types of gifts as examples. Those who can share a word from God should do so by presenting what they say as God’s Word, not just as their opinion. Obviously God’s words are more important, and the way we present them should reflect their significance. Those who can serve by providing some other kind of help or assistance should do so realizing that God has made their service possible.”¹⁴
- For God to get glory for the service we render one another is not simply a matter of saying, “I give glory to God,” after we are done speaking or serving. Glory should go to God without verbally having to attribute it to him. How? First, that the gifts are used for others and not for one’s self. Second, God should be seen as the ultimate source of the service done on behalf of the church. His work in His children is unmistakable and if we need to verbally attribute glory to God then it’s quite possible that we haven’t been serving in such a way that His glory is recognizable. Finally, we must recognize that apart from what God has graciously given us we would be impotent in our ability to serve Him and bring glory to Him. Our ability to even lift a finger to complete a task is His gracious gift to us – not to mention the ability to do it in a supernatural way.
- Are you speaking/serving the church? If so, are you doing it in such a way that defies human involvement and leaves only God’s grace as the obvious source of the strength you’ve utilized to complete the service? Again, Jesus modeled this well for us while he was on the earth (John 14:10-11) and we are simply to follow His example. He regarded others as more important than himself (Phil. 2:1-11) which enabled Him to serve His creation in ways that were unimaginable (what was it like for Jesus to wash the dust off of the feet of men He created – not to mention die for them!).

“This passage is transitional. Looking backward, it serves as a kind of postscript to 2:11—4:6 (and in particular to the promise of vindication developed in 3:13—4:6). Its closing doxology forms an inclusion with 2:12: God is ‘glorified’ in the ministry of Christian believers to one another, just as Peter had earlier envisioned their enemies glorifying God on ‘the day of visitation.’ Looking ahead, the passage also anticipates on a small scale the issues to be developed more fully in 4:12—5:11.”¹⁵

Tough Questions:

1. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If so, how are you employing them? If not, *WHY NOT!?* It is poor stewardship of the grace of God that has been given to you for you to be ignorant of what your gifts are, first of all, and, second of all, to not think of it as *your* responsibility to make sure you know what they are! Don’t know how to figure that out? *Ask someone who does!* The time has come for you to stop soaking up the blessings of other people’s gifts and start putting yours to work in the church.
2. How will you obey at least one of the commandments in these 11 verses *today*?
3. What should Christian hospitality look like in our modern day? Is it just about welcoming people into your home and feeding them? What else could it be?

¹⁴ Constable, 57.

¹⁵ Michaels, 254.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 10 :: 1 Peter 4:12-19

1 Peter 4:12-19: 10 Things To Remember While Suffering

Peter has consistently been encouraging his audience to 'stand fast in the grace of God' (even though he hasn't specifically stated those words yet). He elaborates on what the grace is in the first half of the book (1:1-2:10) and then proceeds to describe what it looks like in day-to-day living (2:11-5:11). It is only when we stand firm in the grace of God that we are able to be submissive to those over us (2:11-3:12) and faithful to our Father who has sent us (3:13-5:11). Without God's grace, we are hopeless in this world.

Given the "Amen" of the previous section, there is some debate regarding whether or not this next section is a continuation of the previous thoughts in 4:1-11 or a new idea altogether. What is important for our study here is to notice that Peter picks up on some themes that he has already discussed in 1:6-8 and 3:13-17 to elaborate on them here a little further.

"When we experience something that is really hard to bear and that appears pointless (in contrast with the harsh sting of an antiseptic cleansing a wound), we immediately ask, Why is this happening to me? This question is a protest against the fact that we suffer while others do not and presupposes that suffering ought not to happen to anyone. Peter "answers" this question in this section of the letter. He gives a number of reasons for having a different attitude, one of joy rather than outrage. Then he goes on to warn his readers about a possible danger to be faced. Finally he stresses that suffering is an occasion for praising God and that Christians should face it with tranquility and persist in doing good."¹

I felt a helpful way of organizing this section would be to make a list of the 10 things I think Peter wants his audience to remember in the face of suffering:

1 Peter 4:12-16 Keep On Rejoicing

v.12 **1. Do not be surprised**

- Why not?
 - Jesus told his disciples that the world would treat them this way (Matt. 10:24-25; Lk. 6:40; Jn. 13:16; 15:18-21; 16:1-4; c.f. 1 Jn. 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:12).
 - I should be prepared for action, sober in spirit, with my hope fixed (1:13).
 - He is our example that we should follow in His steps (2:21). If He suffered why should we be surprised when we encounter the same?
 - We trust in our Heavenly Father & have no fear (2:23; 3:13-17; 4:19).
 - "The fact that unbelievers are 'surprised' at your behavior, Peter says, does not mean that you should be 'surprised' at theirs."² (see 3:14b & 4:4)
- Harsh treatment from unbelievers would not be a 'strange' ordeal. Especially in Peter's day, suffering should be closer to the norm. Actually, for the Christian being embraced by unbelievers would be 'something strange' that should surprise us.
- The "fiery ordeal among you" is a general way of describing pain, persecution, difficulty, etc. It has in mind a loose translation of Proverbs 27:21 as a picture of what happens to the believer during suffering just as Peter illustrated in 1:6-8.
 - "The verse could also be aptly applied to the historical reality of the Neronian persecution. Christians were blamed for the burning of Rome. Some were covered with pitch and used as living torches to light the imperial gardens at night. Peter may have believed that the provincial officials were likely to follow their emperor's example and stake-burn Christians in Asia Minor."³

¹ Marshall, I. H. *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press

² Michaels, 260.

³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- “This is an admonition to know what God is like. This is an admonition to have a true and deep theology. If you know that God sometimes wills for his people to suffer as 1Pe 4: 19 says; that God’s judgment begins with Christians to test us as 1Pe 4: 17 says; and that if suffering befell the King how much more his subjects as 1Pe 4: 13 implies; then when your fiery ordeal comes you will not be surprised. You will not raise your fist and say, “Where is God now when a young missionary and father of two children is shot through the heart?” You may weep for the pain, you may be angry at the sin of the killers, but you will not be surprised. Your knowledge of God, learned from 1 Pet. 4: 12-19, will not let you be thrown into confusion or uncertainty. God is the all-powerful Creator and God is faithful to His people.”⁴

2. Suffering conforms us into the image of Jesus

- “Testing” is *peirasmos* and is the same term Peter used in 1: 6 when he spoke more generally about this idea. Here, he gets more specific and suggests that these ‘trials’ don’t always come upon you because you’ve done something wrong. Regardless of their origin and reason for coming to you, they are opportunities for you to demonstrate your quality – who you really are as a chosen one of God. Just as a Spanish test demonstrates how well you know the language, so also the way we endure suffering will demonstrate how well you know and trust your Father.
- In any case, the tests come not to prove us wrong, stupid, or failures. They come to help us to see that we are, indeed, in Christ, that He can be trusted, and that we are becoming exactly who He has designed us to be (see also Romans 8: 28-29).
- “Thus Peter is saying (1) that suffering under persecution should be seen as a means of testing faith and (2) that such testing is something to be expected in the Christian life and should not be regarded as strange. The rationale for such testing is spelled out more fully in 4: 17, but already in 1: 6–7 Peter had indicated that successful testing leads to future experiences of praise, glory and honor. The strong faith of Christ’s people redounds to his glory.”⁵

v. 13 3. Remember what enables you to keep on rejoicing

- Instead of being shocked, surprised, or defensive when we encounter harsh treatment by unbelievers, we should as Paul does in Colossians 1: 24, rejoice ‘to the degree’ that we participate in the sufferings of Jesus. Thus, the more the suffering the greater our rejoicing should be.
- How is this logical? First, we know that we are God’s ‘beloved’ (4: 12), chosen (1: 2), priesthood (2: 10). Second, we understand and know that our suffering is not permanent (1: 6, 5: 10). Third, we know that God uses even the suffering of life to conform us into the image of His Son (Rom. 8: 28-29). Fourth, Jesus and all who are in Him will rise victoriously over evil and wicked men (1: 17; 3: 10-22; 4: 17-18).
- “Our present experience as we suffer for Christ’s sake is similar to a pregnant woman who feels discomfort and even pain as she anticipates her due date. When she gives birth, however, joy at the delivery of her child replaces the pain that she felt during her pregnancy. Similarly we groan now, but the hope of future joy should encourage us to hang on (cf. 2 Cor. 4: 17-18).”⁶
- “So that at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation” looks back on 1: 7-8 and is the same word for ‘much jumping’: *agalliao*. The grace of God is the only thing that can cause me to jump joyfully as my personal suffering increases. If I am not rooted and firmly standing in God’s grace, I will be washed away by the overwhelming pressure and threats of this world.

v. 14 4. Remember that suffering *for the name of Christ* is a blessing

- We must remember that all of Peter’s discussion about suffering in this particular section revolves around suffering for the name of Jesus. Peter does not have in

⁴ Piper, John. Sermon entitled *The Holy Spirit Will Help You Die*.

⁵ Marshall, I. H. (1991). *1 Peter*. The IVP New Testament commentary series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

⁶ Constable, 58.

mind the natural suffering that comes from living life. Here he is specifically talking about the suffering that will come to believers at the hands of unbelievers. We must be careful not to attribute these verses to suffering in general, but only for the name of Jesus Christ.

- 'Blessing' is the same word that Jesus uses in the Beatitudes (*makarios*). It literally means happiness or the condition of happiness. So, Peter is saying, "Happy are those who share in the sufferings of Christ." It's not a blessing in that we are receiving a gift as much as it is a privilege to be able to give our very lives in the same manner as our Savior gave his. We are happy because we are not abandoning our Savior to save our own necks. The fact that we are not abandoning Him – even when faced with death – *proves* (*peirasmos*) that we are, indeed, who we have claimed to be.
- Grudem recounts the story of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna's, martyrdom. He was martyred in 155 AD when a Roman proconsul gave him the choice of cursing the name of Christ and making sacrifice to Caesar or death. "Eighty and six years have I served him and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" The proconsul threatened him with burning, and Polycarp replied: "You threaten me with the fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment. Why are you waiting? Come, do what you will." "I have respect for your age," said the Roman officer. "Simply say, 'Away with the atheists!' and be set free." By "the atheists" he meant the Christians who would not acknowledge that Caesar was "lord." The old man pointed to the crowd of Roman pagans surrounding him, and cried, "Away with the atheists!" He was burned at the stake and in his martyrdom brought glory to the name of Jesus Christ.
- "But more important is the fact that thinking about your own death for Christ will help you live for Christ as you should. A true Christian must be willing to say, "I will not renounce Christ even if it costs my life." But as soon as we say that it makes a whole lot of things in our lives look ridiculous. I will die for you but I can't find time to sit and read your teaching each day. I will die for you but prayer doesn't seem real. I will die for you but I can't talk to Jim about you at work. I will die for you but I can't support your cause with more than 10% of my income. One of the best ways to bring wonderful Christ-honoring changes into your life is to measure your way of life by your willingness to die for Jesus."⁷
- Paul offers some very helpful insight in 2 Corinthians 1:1-7.

5. The Spirit will be with you

- No matter how difficult the suffering that Peter's audience would face, they would have the assurance of the abiding presence of God's Holy Spirit with them that would keep them faithful in times that require extreme devotion.
- Again, passages like this one eliminate our worry and our excuses for being afraid in times of great distress. We have been given everything we need to do all that God requires of us. Fear of pain and fear of punishment are never legitimate reasons for unfaithfulness to Jesus. If anything, they should embolden us.
- When we look at this passage closely and consider what Peter is encouraging his readers with, we realize that the presence of the Spirit here is not an indication of victory over one's oppressors. The presence of the Spirit will not bring a reprieve of the suffering. If anything, the presence of the Spirit will help the believer to die faithfully while giving God great glory in the process.

v. 15-16 6. Make sure you suffer for doing what is good (v.19 also)

- "Peter stressed that persecution was no excuse for lawlessness. Christians were not to retaliate (3:9). Physical violence was not to be met by murder. Confiscation of property was not to be compensated for by theft. No matter what their trials, Christians were to do nothing that would justify punishing them as criminals (cf.

⁷ Piper, John. Sermon entitled, *The Holy Spirit Will Help You Die*.

2:19; 3:17).⁸

- We should not become like our tormentors. If they are evil to us, we should repay them with kindness and with blessing (3:9, 15). In so doing, we demonstrate that we are not afraid of them and will not be intimidated by their threats – no matter what it may cost us. If they harm us, they will harm an innocent person and then heap even more judgment upon themselves (3:16).
- 7. Do not be ashamed of the title ‘Christian’**
- See also: Mark 8:38; Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 1:8-12; Phil.1:20.
 - It is likely that the term “Christian” (used only 3 times in the NT) was a derogatory term used to describe those who were loyal to Jesus Christ instead of to Caesar. To be branded a Christian was an insult of the first degree. It was an act of treason to Rome and punishable by death.
 - “The mark of a Christian is that he experiences deeper and greater joy in being dishonored with Christ than he does in being honored by men. Peter knew what he was talking about. He had experienced it. According to Acts 5:41, after being beaten with the other apostles, he “left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name (of Jesus)”. If you admire and love someone tremendously, and you get lumped together with them and treated the same way, it is a great honor.”⁹
 - If we are suffering for what is right, what have we to be ashamed of? The only thing that will bring us shame is the reproach of men as they revile us – which we have already pointed out is a blessing if we suffer for the name of Jesus. So, just as fear of pain is not an excuse for unfaithfulness to Jesus, neither is shame.
 - When we aren’t afraid of pain and when we aren’t afraid of the shame that is associated with following Jesus, these are further ‘tests’ that demonstrate that we are, indeed, who God has made us to be.

8. Do not stop glorifying God. (see also Acts 5)

- Instead of being ashamed, the believer is to set himself/herself about the business of glorifying God – no matter what the consequences. This means that *especially* when we are being mistreated for things we did not do we should so reflect our Father’s presence within us that we accurately represent Him to our tormentors. Even when pushed to the most painful ends we are still found faithful. This is something that an unbelieving world will find unbelievable (since there is little they have that they would endure such pain for in their own lives).
- Here, I think John Piper’s saying is most appropriate: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him” – especially in this context. God will be glorified as we live our lives under His will. He will not need us to verbally say, “I want God to get the glory for this, okay?” Our lives will bring great glory to His reputation as our persecutors treat us with contempt and we do not respond in kind.

1 Peter 4:17-19 Keep On Entrusting Yourself to God

v.17- **9. Obey the Gospel... and help others to as well.**

- 19
- As Peter said in 4:7, ‘The end of all things is near.’ Judgment is coming for everyone and will begin with the family of God first – even now before things are all over.
 - Verses 17-18 serve as an encouragement to Peter’s readers that the sufferings that they will/are enduring will only last for a time – they will soon end. On the other hand, those who do not believe the gospel will be experiencing suffering of a much more intense nature for all eternity.
 - “The picture is that God has begun judging within the church, and will later move outward to judge those outside the church. The refining fire of judgment is leaving no one untouched, but Christians are being purified and strengthened by it – sins

⁸ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁹ Piper, John. From the sermon, *The Holy Spirit Will Help You Die*.

are being eliminated and trust in God and holiness of life are growing.”¹⁰

- “The concepts in 1 Peter 4:12-19 are closer to the picture of Malachi 3: the Lord himself is acting as a refining fire, purifying the priests (‘the sons of Levi’; cf. 1 Peter 2:5, 9) so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 2:5). Then the judgment which began at God’s house (the temple, Mal. 3:1) will move from there to unbelievers, no longer as a purifying fire but as a judgment of condemnation – which brings us directly back to 1 Peter 4:17.”¹¹
- So, if Peter’s readers have now become the temple of God themselves, they should expect the same kind of refining to occur within them (proving them to be, indeed, His chosen ones) before it moves outside to those who have rejected the Cornerstone (proving them to be, indeed, disobedient) and the judgment that they will receive.
- If our refining is painful and we are the ones who have obeyed the Gospel and are going to be proved righteous by such refining – how much worse will it be for those who do not believe in Jesus? The refining fire will not refine them; it will consume them completely.

10. Entrust yourself to your Faithful Creator

- The last command here wraps up so much of what Peter has been encouraging in his audience not just in this section, but in the entire book. In view of whom our Father has made us to be as his new-born and choice children (the grace in which we now stand, 5:12), we should respond to the suffering that He wills for us with submission and faithfulness in all circumstances. We know that our Father will deliver us safely through the trial and vindicate us if we have been wronged. Therefore, we have no excuse for living like the Gentiles and acting as they do. We have the opportunity to continue to do what is right in spite of any fearful circumstances we may face.
- The picture for us is of Jesus as he prayed in Gethsemane. God had willed for this suffering to come upon His only Son. Because Jesus trusted His Father, He submitted Himself to His will (“not my will but yours be done”) and remained faithful in the face of intense suffering and pain. He is our example that we should follow as we resign ourselves to our Father’s will – *no matter what*.
- “While this may at first seem harsh (for it implies that at times it is God’s will that we suffer), upon reflection no better comfort in suffering can be found than this: it is God’s good and perfect will. For therein lies the knowledge that there is a limit to the suffering, both in its intensity and in its duration, a limit set and maintained by the God who is our creator, our savior, our sustainer, our Father. And therein also lies the knowledge that this suffering is only for our good: it is purifying us, drawing us closer to our Lord, and making us more like him in our lives. In all of it we are not alone, but we can depend on the care of a *faithful Creator*; we can rejoice in the fellowship of a Savior who has also suffered (v.13); we can exult in the constant presence of a Spirit of glory who delights to rest upon us (v.14).”¹²

Tough Questions:

1. Why would a ‘loving’ God allow – *even will* – His people to suffer?

¹⁰ Grudem, 181.

¹¹ Grudem, 183.

¹² Constable, 60.

NO MATTER WHAT

Week 11 :: 1 Peter 5:1-14

1 Peter 5:1-11: Faithful Leadership is Essential During Suffering

Leadership is a necessary component of any movement or community. When suffering and/or persecution is added to the mix, leadership is even more essential to the survival and faithfulness of the community. Now that Peter has dealt at length with what faithfulness looks like for the individual as he/she suffers faithfully, he now directs his attention to the church itself to give them some final leadership principles and guidelines that will serve them well as they continue to live out the purpose God has designed the church for... no matter what.

This also represents the conclusion of Peter's general remarks to his audience in Asia Minor. It is hard to believe that Peter has been able to establish so much truth in so few verses. Peter made absolutely certain that his readers knew exactly what the grace of God was (1:1-2:10) and how to stand fast in it no matter what (2:11-5:11). Peter knew exactly how to encourage his audience in such a way that their behavior as aliens and strangers in this world would not be determined by the local culture around them, but rather by the identity they had received from their Heavenly Father. To the degree they were submissive and faithful to Him they not only brought Him glory, but also won people over to Christ by the way they lived their lives.

1 Peter 5:1-5 Shepherd & Be Shepherded

v.1 **"Therefore"**

- The inevitability of the coming judgment & the eventual reality of suffering for the name of Jesus would require special, Christ-like leadership from those in charge of the churches in Asia Minor.
- "It is likely that the thought of judgment beginning from the house of God (4:17) prompted Peter to focus on the need for purity of heart before God in relationships among those in the church, beginning with the leaders of the church."¹
- "In congregations where elders are in charge, the elders have a unique responsibility to prepare the 'house of God' for the 'judgment' now beginning. Everything demanded of them under 'normal' circumstances is demanded with far greater urgency because of their 'time' (cf. 4:17)."²

"I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder"

- Elders is *presbyteros* which is a word that designated a man that was older in years. In the days of the early church, the term came to be used to describe the position of leadership for the early church (Acts 11:30; 15; 20:17; Titus 1:5).
- Peter identifies himself as a fellow elder (*sympresbyteros*) and lumps himself into the same category of the leaders to whom he is writing. This is somewhat surprising, of course, since Peter is not just any elder – he is an apostle (1:1), the outspoken leader of the early church (Acts 1-2; 15), and the one whom Christ said He would give the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:19). Why does Peter not spotlight his authority here?
 - If judgment is coming to the house of God and Peter is an elder too, then he will be judged along with his fellow elders. So, rather than making an appeal to authority through his apostleship, he identifies with them as an elder on their level. He is modeling for them exactly what he is about to instruct them to do with each other (5:3, 5).
- The term 'elder' doesn't describe a kind of leadership as much as it indicates who is in leadership. Peter will get to the specifics of what spiritual leadership should look like shortly – but before he does, he makes it clear who the leaders are in the first place.

¹ Grudem, 185.

² Michaels, 291.

“A witness of the sufferings of Christ...a partaker of the glory...”

- Apart from his designation of himself as an apostle in 1:1, we haven't learned much about Peter since. In verse one he describes himself as an elder, witness, and partaker. Each one of these designations is significant because if he sees himself this way, then his fellow elders should see themselves this way too.
 - Elder: is *presbyteros* and is a designation of leadership. Though Peter doesn't explain how one becomes an elder, age seems to be an important criteria (with no mention of previous experience being necessary).
 - Witness: is *martys* from which we get our English word, martyr. “Witness does not just mean that he observed Jesus suffering, which he did. It means he shared Jesus Christ's sufferings and bore testimony out of that experience.”³ The suffering the church in Asia Minor was undergoing was obviously a direct parallel in Peter's mind.
 - Partaker: is *koinonos* which has the same root as *koinonia* which is translated as ‘fellowship.’ To the degree that leaders shepherd their people through the same sufferings of Christ, they will also share in the glory that is to be revealed (4:13).

v.2-4 **“Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight”**

- Leadership is all about shepherding. In this particular case, it is all about shepherding a flock that is under your stewardship, *but does not belong to you*. The flock belongs to God, therefore He expects you to treat His sheep in a certain way to accomplish a certain goal.
 - Shepherding is a metaphor for leadership throughout the Bible. Psalm 23 is the most famous, but there are several others that are worth our attention: Isaiah 40:10-11; Ezekiel 34; 37:24; Micah 1:1-5a; John 10; 21:15-17.
- The Greek word for shepherd is *poimaino* and it literally means ‘to tend.’ In an interesting play on words, the word ‘flock’ is the word *poimnion* and which comes from the same root. In fact, *poimaino* is the same word Jesus uses when He asks Peter to ‘tend my sheep’ in John 21:15-17 (undoubtedly the backdrop for this section). “Oversight” is the word, *episkopeo*, which can also be translated as ‘bishop’ or one who acts as an executive over the church.
- Shepherding is a unique form of leadership because it requires the shepherd to be ‘among’ his flock as well as ‘over’ his flock. “He must be “among” his people so that he can get to know them, their needs and problems; and he needs to be “over” his people so he can lead them and help them solve their problems.”⁴ It is very easy for the shepherd and the sheep to over-emphasize one dimension of the shepherd's role to the detriment of the other.
- “Peter's exhortation to his fellow elders was to take care of those under their charge as a shepherd cares for his sheep. In other words, elders are responsible for the pastoral work of the local church. A pastor is usually an elder who functions as a shepherd... Pastoring includes the duties of feeding, leading, guiding, guarding, and providing for the needs of those in the church, as a shepherd does for his sheep.”⁵

Contrasts Between a Hireling and a Shepherd:

In John 10:1-18, Jesus contrasts Himself with the false shepherds that had been shepherding the flock of Israel. In verse 12, Jesus begins to describe a hireling in direct contrast to His ministry of being a good shepherd. Though Peter does not allude to a hireling or to Jesus' words in John 10, I believe they formulate an appropriate parallel to 1 Peter 5 and our understanding of Peter's exhortations to elders about what their shepherding should look like and what it should not look like.⁶

³ Constable, 61.

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Pe 5:2). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

⁵ Constable, 62.

⁶ It is important to notice again here that identity always precedes activity with Peter. Just as he outlined the new identity of the believer in 1:1-2:10 before explaining how they should behave in 2:11-5:11, here he does the same by reminding

1. A contrast in attitude

- Hirelings "Have To": When a hireling is faced with the tasks of leadership, they will rarely see them as opportunities to serve. Instead they will see a myriad of tasks & chores that they are stuck with. Their heart is clearly not in the role that they have signed up for. Any time we act out of duty, it is a clear indication that our heart is not in the thing we are doing – which is never a good attitude to have when you are in a position of leadership. It will never promote faithfulness and endurance especially during times of suffering and persecution.
- Shepherds "Get To": Shepherds, on the other hand, see the responsibilities of leadership as opportunities to serve and lay their lives down for the sake of those whom they serve. In their eagerness to serve God and do His bidding, they are eager to tend his flock. In fact, they count it a privilege that they 'get to' exercise oversight over the flock – not a burden. With this kind of leadership in place over the church, it doesn't matter what kind of trials or difficulties come. These kinds of leaders will shoulder the load no matter how heavy, monotonous, or dangerous it becomes (1 Tim. 3:1).

2. A contrast in motive

- Hirelings "Get": The primary motive for any hireling in doing anything is and will forever be, "what's in it for me?" So, the only true opportunities in life are those that will bring the hireling the most benefit at the lowest personal cost. As a result, the only cause they believe in is their own prosperity at the expense of those whom they lead. Any time the cost begins to exceed the benefit, the hireling will abandon his post for greener pastures for himself – leaving his flock behind in the barren wasteland without a second thought.
- Shepherds "Give": Unlike hirelings, shepherds are not frightened by the costs of leadership. In fact, shepherds will *eagerly* take on personal loss for the sake of those whom they serve. As owners and stewards of who has been entrusted to them, they are not motivated by the bottom line for themselves. Instead they are motivated by being good stewards of what God has entrusted to them – longing to be found faithful when he returns for what is His. As a result, shepherds are eager to give themselves completely to the flock (Phil. 2:3-7).

3. A contrast in method

- Hirelings "dominate": The most enticing thing about leadership for a hireling is the power that comes with the position. What makes it enticing is the uncertainty the hireling will have about his duration of power. The more insecure the hireling is about being able to keep the position of leadership, the more severely the hireling will wield power. But instead of wielding power to protect and provide for the flock, the hireling will use power to protect and provide for himself – even if that means using the power on the very people that keep him in power.
- Shepherds "exemplify": Instead of using power to dominate others, Shepherds know how to produce the very change they desire to see in their followers by exemplifying it in their own lives. They don't resort to threats, shouting, or politics – instead they begin the process of change by first changing themselves. In so doing, their example will not only motivate the flock it will also start to replicate itself. Instead of feeling intimidated by the flock and feeling the need to grasp for power, shepherds find it easy to live out an authentic relationship with God in front of their followers. (Luke 22:24-30; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12)

the elders of their identity and then reminding them of the behaviors that are consistent with that identity (not so that they can become elders by doing these things, but because that's the way elders ought to behave).

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Pe 5:4). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Pe 5:4). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

⁹ Constable, 64.

- “Everything in the local church rises or falls with leadership. No matter how large or small a fellowship might be, the leaders must be Christians, each with a vital personal relationship with Christ, a loving concern for their people, and a real desire to please Jesus Christ. We lead by serving, and we serve by suffering. This is the way Jesus did it, and this is the only way that truly glorifies Him.”⁷

“When the Chief Shepherd appears”

“Jesus Christ is the *Good* Shepherd who died for the sheep (John 10:11), the *Great* Shepherd who lives for the sheep (Heb. 13:20–21), and the *Chief* Shepherd who comes for the sheep (1 Peter 5:4). As the Chief Shepherd, He alone can assess a man’s ministry and give him the proper reward. Some who appear to be first may end up last when the Lord examines each man’s ministry.”⁸

- We must remember that elders, as high up in leadership as they may be, are ultimately *under*-shepherds beneath Jesus Christ Himself who is our only Shepherd.

“Unfading crown of glory”

The crown (Gr. *stephanos*, garland) of glory that does not fade probably refers to glory as a crown that will come to every faithful Christian when Christ returns. It is probably not a material but a metaphorical crown (as is the crown of righteousness in 2 Timothy 4:8, the crown of life in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10, and the crown of joy in Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).²⁰⁴ The reason for this conclusion is that the biblical writers described the crowns in figurative language (glory, righteousness, etc.), not in literal language (gold, silver, etc.; cf. Heb. 2:9). Elders who are faithful now will receive glory that will not fade when Jesus Christ returns.”⁹

v.5 **“Younger men be subject to your elders”**

- “Be subject” is, again, *hypotasso*, the same word for submission we have been studying since chapter 3. Apparently, “younger men” is literally “younger ones” and includes females as well as males¹⁰ so there is no need to restrict this guidance only to young men only.

“Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another” (Proverbs 3:34; Jas 4:6)

- “All Christians, regardless of our age, should put on humility as a garment, (i.e., let it be what others see as we serve; cf. 3:8). The Greek word translated “clothe” is a rare one that comes from a word referring to the apron that slaves put on over their regular clothes. This garment prepared them for service (cf. John 13:4-15). We should be ready and eager to serve one another rather than expecting others to serve us (Mark 10:45).”¹¹
- “The exhortation is to put on humility as a working virtue which would make all the other virtues what they should be, thus workable in the Christian scheme of things. The other virtues such as kindness, generosity, justice, goodness, longsuffering, when saturated with humility, are most acceptable and praiseworthy, but when seen in a proud person, are like clanging brass or a tinkling cymbal.”¹²

1 Peter 5:6-11 Trust God, Resist the Devil

v.6-7 While on the subject of submission and humility to elders and one another, Peter zooms out on the same subject to give us a big picture perspective. It serves as a fitting conclusion not only to this section, but also to the entire book. He has been talking since 2:11 about what our lives should look like here on this earth as aliens and strangers. Here in the last few verses he gives three exhortations to his audience that could effectively sum up the entire second half of the book:

¹⁰ Constable, 64.

¹¹ Constable, 65.

¹² Wuest, K. S.. *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

1. Trust God

- The very thing that brought us our salvation must be the very same thing that sustains us in times of difficulty and persecution. He brought us new birth and has given us an imperishable inheritance as he brought us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Just because the circumstances of life change from good to bad doesn't mean our trust in His ability to continue to sustain us should change along with it. In the same way we trust the mighty hand of a surgeon to perform a complex brain surgery, so also must we resign ourselves to the mighty hand of God to not only deliver us from trouble, but also sustain us through it.
- "The command humble yourselves (*tapeinōthēte*) could be translated "allow yourselves to be humbled." Those who were suffering persecution for Christ's sake could be encouraged by the fact that the same mighty hand that let them suffer would one day lift (*hypsōsē*, "exalt") them up (cf. James 4:10).¹³
- Jesus has always been the model for us in this regard as we have studied this epistle. 1 Peter 2:21-25 serves as the most practical example of what trust in God should look like in our own lives. There are a host of Scriptures that encourage us to trust God (casting our anxiety upon Him): 1 Sa. 1:10-18; 30:6; Ps. 27:13, 14; 34:15; 37:5; 55:22; 56:3, 4; 142:4, 5; Mat. 6:25-26, 33-34; Mar. 4:38; Lu. 12:11, 12, 22, 30-32; John 10:13; Phi. 4:6; He. 13:5, 6.

v. 8-9 2. Resist the Devil

- As easy as it must have been to blame Nero & Rome for the suffering and persecution the church had and would face, Peter encouraged his readers to remember that their real adversary isn't flesh & blood – but the devil himself (c.f. Eph. 6:12).
- The devil *can* be resisted and, therefore, *should* be! His encouragement is very similar to James 4:6-10 in that we are not to defeat the devil or retreat from him – we are called simply to resist. The only possible way to be able to resist his schemes is to be aware of them through a sober spirit (*nēpsate*; cf. 1:13; 4:7) and an alert mind (*grēgorēsate*; cf. 1 Thes. 5:6, 10). We cannot afford to live in this world thinking that the devil does not exist (as the Gentiles do). We must always remember that our enemy is alive, actively stalking us, and seeks to destroy us. We should respect him as a stealthy adversary, recognize his camouflaged schemes, and thoroughly expose him when he reveals himself. Our watchfulness will not only enable our personal resistance to the enemy, but we will also be able to watch over one another to keep him at bay – *expecting* our resistance to be *effective*.

v.10-11 3. Wait for Reinforcements

- If you were a part of a small band of soldiers trapped behind enemy lines, you would have to do some very specific things in order to survive. You would stay awake and alert for any signs of the enemy's presence. You would formulate a plan of defense if the enemy should attack (for attacking the enemy is not a survivable option). You would begin to ration your ammunition and food. You would attempt to communicate with your commanders if possible and request assistance. And, finally, you would have to wait...and wait...and wait for reinforcements to come to your rescue. The situation was no different for Peter's audience. His final words to his readers before he concludes: "Hang in there – reinforcements are coming." They have hope that no matter what happens – even if they die before reinforcements arrive – their Heavenly Father will restore all that was broken, lost, taken and damaged. He will come back in dominion, destroy our enemy, and rescue us to be with Him forever – no longer under the threat of attack. This is our living hope (1:3) that enables believers to endure to the end... no matter what.

¹³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B. *The Bible knowledge commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1 Peter 5:12-14 Conclusion

v.12 **“Silvanus”**

- “Silvanus is the Roman form of the Greek name Silas. This Silas may very well have been Paul's companion on his second missionary journey. Silas may have written this epistle as Peter dictated it or in some other way assisted in its composition. Peter may have taken the pen from Silvanus at this point and written the conclusion himself, as was common (cf. Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17). It seems more probable, however, that Silas carried this epistle from Peter to its first destination. It would have been more customary for Peter to mention Silas at the beginning of the letter if he had had some role in its composition.”¹⁴

“This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!”

- This is the thesis of the epistle. “This” refers to 1:1-2:10 – Peter’s detailed description of the manifold grace of God that has been lavishly given to those whom He has chosen. Peter spent the remainder of the book, 2:11-5:11, illustrating to his audience what standing firm in the grace of God looks like.

v.13 **“She who is in Babylon”**

- “She” is most-likely the church in the town from where Peter wrote this epistle. Some say that he is referring to his wife, but most commentators think that is unlikely. “It is best to understand Babylon as a reference to Rome... Just as in the Old Testament Babylon was the centre of worldly power and opposition to God’s people, so in the time of the New Testament Rome is the earthly centre of a world-wide system of government and life which opposes the gospel. Yet there Peter is in the midst of it.”¹⁵

“My son Mark”

- “John Mark was Peter's protégé. Many scholars believe Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome and that Peter's influence is apparent in what he included in that record of Jesus' life and ministry. There is considerable evidence for this in the second Gospel.”¹⁶

No better way to conclude our study of 1 Peter than with the opening of 2 Peter: (1:3-15)

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.”

¹⁴ Constable, 68.

¹⁵ Grudem, 201.

¹⁶ Constable, 69.