

I PETER 2

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Peter chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

If you remember from our previous studies of I Peter chapter 1, Peter is writing to persecuted Christians in the churches located in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.

And the focus of this letter is to encourage them in the faith, not to give up but to have a steadfast endurance as they are going through these tough times and to live a life that is pleasing to God, to have godly behavior in spite of what they were facing!

So far in our study of this letter we have looked at ***THE SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER*** that covers I Peter 1:1-2:12.

This section can be broken down into our ***SALVATION*** in I Peter 1:1-12.

And this was important for them to understand. That God has saved us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And this salvation is incorruptible, it is undefiled, and it will never fade away. In other words, you can't lose your salvation once you come to Christ.

Now some are taken back by that because they feel you can lose your salvation if you don't do certain things and if you do other things that are wrong, yes, you can lose your salvation, at least that is how they feel.

Well, Peter wants these believers and God wants us to understand that can never happen.

How can I be so sure?

Because Peter tells us. He said in I Peter 1:5 that once we are saved, we “**... are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**”

God saves us through Jesus, and He keeps us through His power, not through our power or our good works.

And from there he speaks about the various or multifaceted trials that they were experiencing and how God is using them to help them to grow. They did not lose their salvation; they are growing up in the Lord! Again, Peter said in I Peter 1:9, “**receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.**”

Then, and we began looking at this last time, our *SANCTIFICATION* and that is found in I Peter 1:13-2:12.

And as you can see, I Peter 1:13 opens up with the word “**Therefore**” and the idea here is that all that Peter spoke about previously, he was now going to make application to our lives from the spiritual truths he has just talked about.

Remember what Peter wrote in I Peter 1:13-16, “**Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’**”

In other words, don’t put yourself under the influence of anything that the god of this world, the Devil is trying to influence you with.

You see, his plan is to tempt you to sin, to take you away from God and go back to the old life that we once lived and become slaves to sin and Satan. We are not going to lose our salvation, but we will lose that intimacy with God!

You see, we are a new creation in Christ, the old things have passed away and all things are new in Him! That means, since God has redeemed us out of that old life, we are to live for Him, we are to live a holy life for Him!

And we will see that again in I Peter 2:1-12.

Then, as we continue on in our study of I Peter chapter 2 we will move to the second division of this letter that deals with ***THE SUBMISSION OF THE BELIEVER*** and that is found in I Peter 2:13-3:12.

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in I Peter chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we continue looking at ***THE SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER*** and specifically our ***SANCTIFICATION!***

I PETER 2

VERSE 1

Peter opens up this chapter with the word "**Therefore**" which points us back to the previous point he made regarding the Word of God.

In I Peter 1:23-25 we are told, "**having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.'** Now this is the word which **by the gospel was preached to you.**"

Peter is telling us since we are born again by the power of God's Spirit working through the Word of God we need to put away, eliminate these things from our lives that will only cause division between believers and it will keep us out of God's Word.

In fact, "**laying aside**" is a command in the Greek and it was a term that was often used of the "*stripping off solid or filthy garments.*"

That just makes sense, we need to put those things off!

One pastor put it this way, "*The degree to which those attributes exist in our lives will be the degree to which our hunger for the Word will be diminished. No matter how good the meal my wife, Tammy, prepares for me, if I stop off at McDonald's on the way home and score a couple of Quarter Pounders with large fries, and super-size the whole deal, when I get home, I won't be interested in what she's made.*"

You see, when people stop reading or studying the Word, it's because they're eating the junk food of the world. That's why Peter says, "*First lay aside the junk and then you will desire the milk of the Word.*"

Yes, we once practiced these things but now we are a new creation in Christ and we need to discard them from our lives, don't put back on these soiled garments. Very wise words.

Then Peter lists five areas of sin that need to be dealt with and thus, he makes his readers aware of these things so they could deal with them. They are,

- **MALICE:** This speaks of a person who desires to harm someone else. One writer put it like this, "*Malice nourishes antagonism, builds up grudges, and secretly hopes that revenge, harm, or tragedy will overtake another.*"
- **DECEIT:** This is a word that speaks of dishonesty and it literally refers to baiting a hook. You see, you deceive the fish into taking the bait and you do the same with people! As someone has explained it, "*Deceit falsifies income tax returns, cheats on exams, lies about age, bribes officials, and pulls shady deals in business.*"

- **HYPOCRISY**: This spoke of an actor who wore a mask, and it came to mean someone who is not genuine. Here Peter is speaking of spiritual insincerity, not living what you say you believe. Another writer put it like this, *“The hypocrite is a play-actor, pretending to be someone he is not. He pretends to be happily married when his home is actually a battlefield. He pretends to be spiritual on Sundays, but he is as carnal as a goat on weekdays. He pretends interest in others, but his motives are selfish.”*

- **ENVY**: This is speaking of an attitude of resentment because of what someone else has. Vine’s Expository Bible Dictionary defines it as *“the feeling of displeasure produced by observing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others.”* One author put it like this, *“Envy is still a killer. Women can look daggers at others because of their better homes and gardens, smarter clothes, or superior cooking. A man can praise another fellow’s new car or speedboat but what he is thinking is, ‘I’ll show him. I’ll get something better.’”*

- **EVIL SPEAKING**: The idea here is to defame the character of another person. Again, one author put it like this, *“Evil speaking [or slander] consists of backbiting, malicious gossip, recrimination. Slander is the attempt to make oneself look cleaner by slinging mud at someone else. It may take very subtle forms such as: ‘Yes, she is a lovely person, but she has this one failing . . .’ and then the knife is deftly thrust into her back. Or it may even have a religious pose: ‘I mention this only for your prayer fellowship, but did you know that he . . .’ and then the character is assassinated.”*

What I want you to notice is the word “**all**” could be placed in front of each one of these sins. Now we may not like that, we may try to justify our actions, but if you are going to be able to receive from God through His Word, don’t let these roadblocks prevent God from speaking to you. Remove them from your life!

So this is what we are to remove from our life and now to the positive, now what we are to embrace? And Peter tells us . . .

VERSES 2-3

First you cast out those sins and then you take in the pure, uncontaminated, unadulterated Word of God so that you can grow, mature in the faith.

Let's see if you can answer this question.

“When does a newborn baby want to eat?”

A baby wants to eat whenever, wherever it wants. It has this inborn passion to eat and nothing will stop a newborn from getting the food that it wants!

May we have that hunger for God's Word.

J. Vernon McGee put it like this. He wrote,

My friend, without a hunger for the Word of God you will not grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. You will not develop as a Christian - you will always be in your babyhood.

We must remember that a little baby and a full-grown man are both human beings, but they are in different stages of growth and development. The little one needs milk so he can grow up to become a man.

Now, how does a Christian grow? He grows by studying the Word of God. There is no growth apart from the Word of God. . . .

It is my conviction that the “pure milk of the word” means the ***total*** Word of God. We don't grow spiritually by lifting out a verse for comfort here and there. We need the total Word of God to grow. We need a full, well-balanced diet.

Of course, we start out with milk, but the day comes when we want a porterhouse steak, a good baked potato, a green salad, and maybe some black-eyed peas on the side. And you get all the spiritual nutrition you need in the total Word of God.

- J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible* – Vol. V, p. 689

You see, if you tasted that the Lord is good, that He is gracious, then you are going to want to know Him more and more, you will feed upon the Word of God!

It is as Grudem tells us, *“To drink the milk of the Word is to ‘taste’ again and again what He is like, for in the hearing of the Lord’s words believers experience the joy of personal fellowship with the Lord Himself.”*

Jeremiah tells us, **“Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”** Jeremiah 15:16.

May we have that passion to know God!

And let’s put this into perspective for a minute. The only way we can guard ourselves against the devil’s lies is to know the truth! Or, as Peter put it, that we constantly desire and feed upon the pure milk of God’s Word.

In other words, Peter is saying that since we’ve already tasted how good the Lord is, as we have fed upon and applied His Word to our lives, it should motivate us to continue craving, feeding and applying God’s Word into our lives every day! May we have that kind of passion for God’s Word and to know Him more!

VERSES 4-5

This is important for us to remember. When we come to Jesus, as Peter speaks of here in I Peter 2:4, and feeding on the Word of God, as Peter just spoke of, are one and the same. Jesus is the Word, and He speaks to us through His Word!

Not only that. Peter speaks of us being a **“living stone”** and being built up into a **“spiritual house.”**

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:20-22, **“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

J. Vernon McGee put it like this, *“The church, the body of Christ, is ‘a habitation,’ a permanent temple, of God in the Spirit. When believers come together in a building to worship, the Holy Spirit is present. In that sense God is in that building. But when every believer has left the building, God has left it also. God is not in any church building anymore than He is in any barroom. Today God indwells believers, not buildings. We have previously stated that God has never dwelt in any building made with hands, and it is a pagan philosophy which places God in a human-made structure.”*

I like that and I think we can put this into perspective when we understand that as a Christian you are a living, breathing **“Holy of Holies”** and everywhere you go and any place you stand becomes **“holy ground!”**

If the Holy Spirit indwells us, and He does. Then God is with us wherever we go and thus, we are the **“Holy of Holies”** and everywhere you go and any place you stand becomes **“holy ground!”** like I have said.

And keep in mind that Peter is not saying that we come to the Lord one time and that is it, but it is a personal and continual relationship we have with Him.

For the Jew, this kind of intimate relationship with God was a foreign concept because they couldn't approach God in their sins.

In fact, it was the priests who offered the sacrifices before God and only the High priest could go into the presence of God and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement!

But Peter says that we are priests not by birth but by the new birth in Christ and thus, we have access to God any time of the day or night and we can point people to God.

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:18, **“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”**

You see, through Christ we can boldly come into the throne room of God and lay our requests at His feet, His door is always open to us through Jesus!

Another point I want to bring out here is this.

Peter is telling us that the Lord is building a spiritual temple not with stones or bricks, but living stones, you and me!

We are told in I Kings 6:7 as Solomon’s Temple was being built, **“And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.”**

Thus, as you are going through this life and you feel like you are getting hammered, you feel like there goes another chip off the old block, understand what the Lord is doing!

He is working on you down here in the quarry of life hammering and chipping away so that when you get to heaven there will be no sound of a hammer or chisel, you will fit in perfectly!

VERSES 6-8

Peter is quoting out of Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 and I want you to think about this. Peter was a fisherman, and for the most part, many thought they were uneducated and untrained men.

And yet Peter keeps quoting out of the Old Testament Scriptures, and that means he had to memorize them. Keep in mind that these books were in scrolls, and they were costly. So to memorize them took time, it took effort and thus, Peter was able to not only know the Word of God but apply those Scriptures appropriately through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

In I Peter 3:15 Peter admonishes us to, **“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”**

We need to be men and women of the Word and as Paul said, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** II Timothy 2:15.

We are to not only know the Word of God, but we are to rightly divide it and apply it to our lives!

And notice what Peter is saying here. Peter is telling us that believers are living stones being built into a spiritual house, but there is a problem.

You just don’t lay stones out; you need the cornerstone or in a sense the plumb line which will keep the building in line.

Jesus is not only the plumb line for this building but the support, the stone in which the rest of the structure rests upon for strength and stability, you and me, the living stones rest upon Jesus and He keeps us in line!

The problem is that the Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus and the reason they rejected Him is because they rejected the Word of God and now are disobedient to God.

How many people today are moving away from the Word of God and by doing so are being disobedient to God?

We need to learn the lesson that God says what He means and means what He says, and we need to obey if we love Him.

Now because they rejected the Rock, Jesus, instead of being their salvation He has become a Rock of offense to them and that is true of all who reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 21:44, **“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”**

As one author said, *“God has decreed that all who refuse to bow to the Lord Jesus will stumble. If a man insists on going on in unbelief, then he is appointed to stumble.”*

And another wrote, *“Unwillingness to obey makes stumbling a foregone conclusion”*
(J. B. Phillips)

But, if you believe in Him, in Jesus, you will never be put to shame and in the Greek it is written in a double negative which means it can never happen, you are His and no one can take that away! Remember what Peter said in I Peter 2:6, **“... ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’”**

Let me take a minute and I want to show you what the Scriptures say of Jesus being the Rock.

He is the Chief Cornerstone in Psalm 118:22-24.

He is the Stumbling Stone of Isaiah 8:14.

He is the Foundation Stone of Isaiah 28:16.

He is the Supernatural Stone of Daniel 2:34, 45.

And He is the Rock that gave Israel water in the wilderness according to I Corinthians 10:4.

It is as we are told in Deuteronomy 32:31, **“For their rock is not like our Rock . . .”**

There is no Rock like our Jesus!

VERSES 9-10

The things that once exclusively belonged to Israel – their election (chosen), priesthood, and calling are now no longer the property of Israel alone. These are now the property of every Christian, and we have them in a greater and spiritual sense.

This is why I believe Peter is writing primarily to Gentile Christians, they were not God’s people but now they are in Christ!

You see, these things that Peter is speaking of belonged to the children of Israel, but now they belong to all who receive Jesus, and in reality, it is speaking of both Jew and Gentile!

Now here is the thing. With all these privileges that God has given to us, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, having obtained the mercy of God, we are now to go out and proclaim what God has done in our lives, praise Him and let others see what God has done in us and through us so others may enter in!

It is as Paul said in I Timothy 1:12-17, **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

We can all say that and should praise the Lord for taking us out of the kingdom of darkness and placing us into the kingdom of light through Jesus Christ!

I like the way the Warren Wiersbe summed this up for us. He wrote,

All of these privileges carry with them one big responsibility revealing the praises of God to a lost world. The verb translated “show forth” means “to tell out to advertise.”

Because the world is “in the dark,” people do not know the “excellencies” of God; but they should see them in our lives. Each citizen of heaven is a living “advertisement” for the virtues of God and the blessings of the Christian life. Our lives should radiate the “marvelous light” into which God has graciously called us.

After all, we have obtained mercy from God! Were it not for His mercy, we would be lost and on the way to eternal judgment!

God reminded Israel many times that He had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt that they might glorify and serve Him, but the nation soon forgot and the people drifted back into their sinful ways.

We are God's chosen people only because of His mercy, and it behooves us to be faithful to Him.

We are living in enemy territory, and the enemy is constantly watching us, looking for opportunities to move in and take over.

As citizens of heaven, we must be united. We must present to the world a united demonstration of what the grace and mercy of God can do.

As I write these words, the newspapers are reporting "dissensions" among the men who serve with the President of the United States.

These men are not presenting a united front, and the nation is a bit uneasy.

I wonder what the unsaved people think when they see the citizens of heaven and servants of God fighting among themselves.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 903

And now Peter is going to encourage them to live out their faith and to avoid those things that would discredit what they say they believe. Listen to what he says.

VERSES 11-12

Let's look at these two words, "**sojourner**" and "**pilgrim**."

First of all, the Greek word for sojourner is (paroikous) and it literally means "***alongside the house.***"

One writer put it like this regarding this word. *“The word came to denote any person who lives in a country not his own and is therefore a foreigner. The term fits Christians who do not belong to this world’s system but live alongside those who do.”*

That should fit us perfectly, and yet, so many Christians are trying to make this world their home and it is not working for them because this is not their home. And the only way to make it their home is to compromise their faith and that is what some have done!

Also, the word “**pilgrim**” translates a Greek word that applies to a person who is traveling through a country but who has settled down briefly to live among the native population.

Again, we live in this world, but this world should not live in us. And keep in mind that these two words are not two different truths, but Peter uses both of them to emphasize this single point, this is not our home!

And as you read through this I think you can see the heart of Peter as he pleads with them to abstain from fleshly lusts, the things the world uses to lure you away from God.

You see, those things should not have a hold on us because we are not of this world, we are just passing through on our way home because our citizenship is in heaven.

But there is a battle and the word “**abstain**” is literally saying we are to “*hold oneself constantly back from*” these things that are going to bring us down.

Yes, there is a tug to pull us back into the world and that will happen if we take our eyes off of Jesus and let the lusts of the flesh tempt us!

Remember the story of Lot who lived in Sodom and in II Peter 2:4-9 we are told, **“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) - then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”**

Don't put yourself in a situation where you will be tempted because the battle is on and you need to be wise!

Now, what happens when we succumb to the lusts of the flesh is that we give the enemies of God an opportunity to mock God and the faith we claim to have.

You see, people will read our lives more than they read the Bible and thus, they can learn a lot about our faith, about our God by the way we live our lives!

That, of course can be positive or negative depending on how we are living!

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

Don't give the enemies of God fuel for their fire of disbelief but live in a way that will cause them to desire Christ!

Let me show you what I mean because this is a battle. In the early church many Christians were falsely accused of great crimes. The unbelievers or pagans said that at the communion of Christians they ate the flesh and drank the blood of a baby in a cannibalistic ritual.

Not only that but they said that Christian “*agape feasts*” were nothing more than wild orgies.

And they were also antisocial because they did not participate in society’s immoral entertainment!

And Christians were nothing more than atheists because they did not worship idols!

The interesting thing is that these false accusations, or as we would call it today – ***FAKE NEWS***, fell apart.

How did that happen?

Because the people saw that Christians were not immoral people as they watched the way they lived out their faith.

Barclay put it like this, “The striking fact of history is that by their lives the Christians actually did defeat the slanders of the heathen. In the early part of the third century Celsus made the most famous and the most systematic attack of all upon the Christians in which he accused them of ignorance and foolishness and superstition and all kinds of things – *but never of immorality.*” (Barclay)

May we live in such a way that by our actions we not only glorify our heavenly Father but we are a witness to unbelievers of our faith and we don’t give them ammunition to shoot at us for our bad behavior!

Now we are moving into the second division of this letter that covers I Peter 2:13-3:12 and the focus of this section is, ***THE SUBMISSION OF THE BELIEVER.***

VERSES 13-17

Once again we see Peter open this section up with the word, “**Therefore**” which means he wants to make application based on what he has just said.

What did he just say?

He said, “**Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**” I Peter 2:11-12

Now, because of that, live accordingly, don't be in rebellion!

This is interesting to me because people are always wondering what God's will is for their life, it is one of those questions people often ask.

Here is something that comes from the heart of God, His will for your life, that you submit yourself to the government, you are a good citizen!

You see, we are to obey the law!

Now I know that is hard for some of you to swallow as you look at our nation and the immorality that is going on in our government, as you see how our tax dollars are spent on ungodly things, evil things. And I hear the talk, I hear how Christians respond to government officials and a question I have is this. “***Where in the Bible do you see someone do that?***”

You don't!

I am not saying we agree with everything that they do or say, but we are to respect the position that they have and if we are in rebellion against the government, what is our witness to others? Are we any different than the unsaved and their actions? Are people seeing our talk or our actions and are they being drawn to Christ? That is something each of us have to take to heart as we are out in this world and people are seeing our faith!

And I have heard that some feel our government is much worse today than it was in Peter's day and thus, we have the right to rebel, to protest, to have sit-ins, to cause chaos so we can get this country back on track! I disagree.

The Roman Empire was not a democracy and it was no friend to Christians. Immorality ran from the top of the government officials down to the common people.

And yet, Peter tells us we are to obey the laws of the land.

Jesus tells us we are to pay taxes, (Matthew 22:17-21).

Paul in Titus 3:1-2 tells us, **“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”**

And in Romans 13:1-7 we are told, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because**

of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."

As you know, I am not one for protesting, carrying signs, having sit-ins, causing trouble because I don't believe that is what God has called us to do.

We are to obey the law as long as the law doesn't make us do something that goes against what God says, like making women have an abortion.

Folks, I believe that over 99% of the time this is not the issue in our country, thus, obey the law.

And I think the link with the Roman government and our government is this.

It is beyond question that the Roman government brought to the ancient world a sense of security and peace it never had before.

For the most part the seas were cleared of pirates and the roads of thieves; civil wars were replaced with peace, and tyranny for Roman impartial justice.

I think we are thankful for those who protect us from criminals, fix our roads and the like.

One historian writes, ***"It was the glory of the Roman Empire that it brought peace to a troubled world. Under its sway the regions of Asia Minor and the East enjoyed tranquility and security to an extent and for a length of time unknown before and probably since. This was the pax Romana. The [person under Roman authority] found himself in a position to conduct his business, provide for his family, send his letters, and make his journeys in security, thanks to the strong hand of Rome."***

Now can things change? Of course they can and I believe they will. But let us live out our faith that they will not be able to bring charges against us for our behavior, but we are above reproach. It doesn't mean they will like it, but they can't find anything wrong in what we are doing, at least not yet!

And when they do tell us that we can't speak about Jesus, that we can't teach from the Bible, that we can't gather to worship the Lord, we obey God rather than man!

Remember in Acts chapter 4 Peter and John are placed in prison by the Jewish religious leaders for sharing their faith, by telling people about Jesus, for healing a man who was lame by the power of Jesus.

These religious leaders gathered around Peter and John questioning them by what power they were doing these things, who gave it to them and how do you think they responded?

Today we would call our lawyer, call the newspapers, let people know the injustice that is being done, put the video on Facebook and YouTube, but not Peter and John.

They used this as an opportunity to share their faith, to bring them the good news of Jesus Christ in spite of what was happening to them!

That is a great lesson to learn, don't let the opportunity pass you by, no matter how much you have been wronged!

Then, when the government forbids us to speak of Jesus, then we like Peter can say, **“... ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”** Acts 5:29.

But again, that rarely happens today and our focus is not making this a Christian nation but to bring people to Jesus and by that this nation will once again be great, it will be a Christian nation.

You see, you can't legislate Christianity, but you can turn this nation back to God one heart at a time!

And like Peter said, we are free, we are free in Christ, but Peter wants us not to use our freedom to justify our behavior or to use that freedom as an excuse for sin. We need to use our liberty in Christ by showing love towards people!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this,

Peter named the offices we are to respect. "The king" meant "the emperor." In democratic nations, we have a president or premier. Peter did not criticize the Roman government or suggest that it be overthrown. God's church has been able to live and grow in all kinds of political systems. . . .

Two phrases are important: "the will of God" (1 Peter 2:15) and "the servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16). When we do something in the will of God and as the servants of God, then we are doing it "for the Lord's sake."

God has willed that we silence the critics by doing good, not by opposing the authority. The word "silence" in 1 Peter 2:15 is literally "muzzle," as though the pagan critics were like a pack of yelping, snapping dogs!

Someone may argue, "But, as Christians, are we not free?"

Yes, we are free in Christ; but we must never use our freedom for ourselves. We must always use it for others.

Sad to say, there are "religious, racketeers" who prey on ignorant people and use "religion" to veil their evil actions.

A true Christian submits himself to authority because he is first of all submitted to Christ. He uses his freedom as a tool to build with and not as a weapon to fight with.

A good example of this attitude is Nehemiah, who willingly gave up his own rights that he might help his people and restore the walls of Jerusalem.

If we are sincerely submitted to authority “for the Lord’s sake,” then we will show honor to all who deserve it.

We may not agree with their politics or their practices, but we must respect their position (see Rom 13).

We will also “love the brotherhood,” meaning, of course, the people of God in the church.

This is a recurring theme in this letter (1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14). One way we show love to the brethren is by submitting to the authority of the “powers that be,” for we are bound together with one another in our Christian witness.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, pp. 905-906

Exactly!

So we have looked at submission to government and now we are going to look at submission to our bosses at work!

VERSES 18-20

Notice that Peter says we are to be submissive to our masters or boss not only when they treat us kindly, when they are good to us. We are to be submissive to them even when they treat us harsh, unfairly, when they are mean towards us!

“But I don’t like that!”

That is not the issue, God tells us we are to submit to those in authority over us, and here Peter in speaking of slaves to their masters, in our day it is speaking of our boss at work and as we do it is commendable before God.

You see, by your actions, your love, it may open the door for you to share your faith and see your boss come to know the Lord!

That is what it is about, living what you believe and share your faith and then you can speak forth what God has done in your life, but first live it, for that will speak volumes to others.

Isn't that a better way to deal with it than winning the fight but losing the war, the war for his soul?

Of course it is!

Yes, I know, the flesh is ready to fight but the Spirit is calling you to submit and see what God will do through your obedience to Him!

Clarke put it like this, *"It appears from this that the poor Christians, and especially those who had been converted to Christianity in a state of slavery, were often grievously abused; they were buffeted because they were Christians, and because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship."*

Now again, this seems so unfair and yet, for those of us who are still struggling with this idea of treating our evil boss in love, Peter is going to give to us an example that should put to silence any doubt you may still have of how we are to live, how we are to treat our boss even when he is hard on us, harsh to us.

That example is Jesus, of course.

Yes, Peter pulled out the Jesus trump card. Listen to what he said.

VERSES 21-25

I may not like it, but this is powerful, and I have no excuse not to obey what the Lord has shown us here because He is our **EXAMPLE!**

Here's the thing. Jesus was without sin and yet they persecuted Him, they came against Him and He took it all for us. He could have wiped them out, He could have had His angels come and wipe them out, but He didn't do that.

Thus, He is our example and as we suffer for righteousness, not suffering for being obnoxious or being a pest or whatever but suffering for the Lord, we bring glory to Him!

For Jesus, He looked to the Father, committed Himself to what the Father called Him to do and we should follow His example!

As Clarke wrote, *“He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either done or said. In deed and word he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit.”*

And Spurgeon put it like this, *“Which hour do you think of the sufferings of the Lord, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, would be most deeply engraved upon the memory of Peter? Surely it would be that space of time in which he was mocked and buffeted in the hall of the high priest, when Peter sat and warmed his hands at the fire, when he saw his Lord abused, and was afraid to own that he was his disciple, and by-and-by became so terrified that, with profane language, he declared ‘I know not the man.’ So long as life lingered, the apostle would remember the meek and quiet bearing of his suffering Lord.”*

The word that Peter uses for **“example”** is the Greek word, HUPOGRAMMOS, (hoop-ogram-mos') and it speaks of a piece of paper placed over something you want to trace so that the original can be duplicated.

Thus, we are to place our lives over Jesus that we may pattern our life after Him!

But the flesh loves to justify our behavior, don't let it. Submit to God and you won't have a problem submitting to anyone else no matter what they do to you!

Now, the result of the work that Jesus did for us is that He brought healing to our lives and I don't believe Peter is speaking of physical healing here, but spiritual healing for it is written in the past tense, "**... by whose stripes you were healed.**" I Peter 2:24.

That does not mean we can't receive physical healing in Christ, but that is not what this verse is saying as Peter quotes out of Isaiah 53:5.

I know that the faith teachers use this to justify that everyone should be healed, but again, that is not what this is saying. In fact, how many years do this faith teachers live? Maybe 50, 60, 70, 80 but I have never seen any faith teacher live to be 110 or older, why? Because they get sick, this body falls apart and they die. I guess they did not have enough faith to live! No, we will die in these bodies of flesh, that is just what the Bible tells us.

J. Vernon McGee put it like this,

By whose stripes ye were healed." Healed of what? I notice that when so-called faith healers use the words, "by whose stripes ye were healed," they refer to Isaiah 53:5 rather than to this verse in 1 Peter, because Peter makes it evident that the healing is of sins. I certainly agree that the Lord Jesus came to be the Great Healer—but the Great Healer heals of sins. No human physician can handle that problem. And Peter's use of these words from Isaiah 53:5 reveals that the prophet Isaiah was not speaking primarily of physical healing but of that which is more important and more profound, healing from sin.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible – Vol. V, p. 695

And Peter closes with this, **“For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”** I Peter 2:25.

Make no mistake about it, sheep are not very bright animals, and they have no natural defense system to protect themselves by.

You have never heard of killer sheep, have you?

Of course not.

And sheep without a shepherd wander aimlessly and get themselves in all kinds of trouble.

Now you know why the Lord likens us to sheep!

Peter’s point is that before we were saved, outside of Christ we were wandering aimlessly, there was not direction to our life. But then the Great Shepherd came and brought us into His sheepfold, and He is watching over our souls. This was accomplished by His atoning work on the cross of Calvary.

Peter put it his way in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, **“For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit.”**

That is what our Lord has done for us and all we must do is receive that free gift!

Regarding the work that Christ has done for us, Leon Morris makes these remarks. He said,

Redemption is substitutionary, for it means that Christ paid the price that we could not pay, paid it in our stead, and we go free.

Justification interprets our salvation judicially, and as the New Testament sees it Christ took our legal liability, took it in our stead.

Reconciliation means the making of people to be at one by the taking away of the cause of hostility. In this case the cause is sin, and Christ removed that cause for us. We could not deal with sin. He could and did, and did it in such a way that it is reckoned to us.

Propitiation points us to the removal of the divine wrath, and Christ has done this by bearing the wrath for us. It was our sin which drew it down; it was He who bore it. . . . Was there a price to be paid? He paid it. Was there a victory to be won? He won it. Was there a penalty to be borne? He bore it. Was there a judgment to be faced? He faced it.

- Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, p. 405

Leon Morris goes on to say regarding the significance of Christ's substitution,

To put it bluntly and plainly, if Christ is not my Substitute, I still occupy the place of a condemned sinner. If my sins and my guilt are not transferred to Him, if He did not take them upon Himself, then surely they remain with me. If He did not deal with sins, I must face their consequences. If my penalty was not borne by Him, it still hangs over me.

- Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, p. 410

But folks, He did Redeem us, He did Justify us, He did Reconcile us for He is our propitiation for our sins.

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, **“For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].”**

The Living Bible puts it like this, **“For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us!”**

That is very humbling when you realize what the Lord did for you and me!

As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about.

Submission is looked down upon today and yet, if Jesus did not submit to the Father, where would we be today?

Still lost in our trespasses and sins with no way out!

But He did submit to the will of the Father and completed the work He was sent to do.

Thus, may we follow His example as a servant, submitting our lives to the Father and to those in authority over us, humbling ourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift us up and by our actions, a soul might be saved!

Folks, when you think about it, that is what is important, so important that God sent His Son to pay in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary.

Thus, may we die to self so that our life may shine brightly for Jesus and draw others to Him! It is like Jesus said in Luke 15:10, **“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”** May we have that perspective as we live out our faith and glorify our Father in Heaven!