

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 2ND - 3RD, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

PURE MILK OF THE WORD (1 PETER 2:1-3)

Peter has just **demonstrated the glory** and eternal character of God's Word (1:22-25).

- In light of this, **we should receive God's Word with a particular posture of the heart.**
- The term, "**newborn infants**," relates to the references to the new birth (1:3; 1:23).
- If we've been born again, **we should desire the pure milk of the Word of God** so we can grow into our salvation (vs. 2).

God's intention is **always** for us to "**grow up**" spiritually, and the Word of God is **necessary for Christian growth.**

- Regularly **reading**, studying, memorizing, meditating upon, and **discussing Scripture**, helps us experience a **taste of God's grace in our lives** (vs. 3).
- We taste and see that "**the Lord is good**," which gives us an even greater appetite for His Word.

Spiritual growth doesn't come from just **knowing Bible facts**—it comes from choosing to **apply the truth of Scripture to our lives.**

- In order for real spiritual growth to proceed in our lives, there are **five sins of attitude and speech** that we must make a conscious effort to "**rid**" ourselves of (vs. 1).
- "**Rid**" (or "**cast off**," "**lay aside**") is a forceful phrase—it's a term that implies the **violent action we must take** if we're to be free from these things.
- "**All malice**"—this is an attitude like **hatred** that desires to inflict pain or harm on another person. This includes holding grudges or **acting out in a hurtful way.**
- "**All deceit**"—this is **deliberate dishonesty**, where we might speak or act in a **deceptive manner.**
- "**Hypocrisy**"—where **our behavior fails to match the beliefs we claim**; where we're simply "**acting**."
- "**Envy**"—envy is a **resentful discontentment** that desires to possess what belongs to someone else.
- "**Slander**"—to **speak against someone**, to speak about someone behind their back, to gossip.
- Until we make **the conscious decision to "cast off" and "rid" ourselves of these things, our spiritual growth will stall, and we'll stay stuck.**

A SPIRITUAL HOUSE (1 PETER 2:4-10)

Peter has spoken about **believers being chosen and born again** in 1:3-12, and how we're to live in light of that in 1:13-2:3.

- As we **grow into our salvation**, getting rid of sinful attitudes and actions and desiring Christ more and more, we will naturally be drawn closer to one another—becoming **a spiritual house and a royal priesthood** (vs. 4-10).
- We live in a **very individualistic culture.**

As we come to Christ, a living stone, we are **transformed into living stones** (vs. 4-5).

- When we come to Christ, we're surrendering our lives to be used for a spiritual building program—we become **stones added to God's spiritual house, the Church.**
- We become part of the holy priesthood, where we live to offer **spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus** (vs. 5).

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

Prayer, **thanksgiving**, praise, and repentance (Ps. 141:2). The **offering of our bodies to God** for His service (Rom. 12:1-2). Our **financial gifts** (Phil. 4:18). Practical, **loving service to other people** (Mk. 9:41). Our time and **our attention** (Rom. 6:12-14).

- As the **living stones of the Church**, this is how we serve God as His priests!
- If we're being built into a spiritual house, our "**cornerstone**" (the foundation that everything else gets built upon) is **Jesus** (vs. 6).
- This is a quote from **Isaiah 28:16**, and it shows that to the believer, Christ is "**honored**" or "**precious**" in our lives.
- Christ becomes not only precious to us, but He becomes **the foundation** for our lives. We'll never be put to shame when we believe in Him.

Those who **reject the cornerstone and refuse to build on Him** instead "stumble" over Him (vs. 7-8).

- Peter calls Jesus, "**kai petra skandalou**"—a rock of offense that those who reject Him stumble over.
- When we are **confronted by the person of Jesus Christ**, we will either confess He is Lord and surrender to Him, or **we will get offended by that claim** and stumble over it.

That, "**stumbling**" can take on many different forms—flat-out rejection, half-hearted surrender, or **remaking Jesus to be something different than who He claimed to be.**

- Those who, "**stumble**" always do so for the exact same reason—**disobedience** (vs. 8).
- They stumble because they refuse to obey and **believe (free will)**, but at the same time, God has destined that they would **not believe (election)**.

But those who do believe are called a "chosen race, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation" and "a people of His own possession" (vs. 9).

- Why are we so special? **Because we belong to God.**
- We once were without these privileges, and we didn't belong to God's people. But **now we've received His mercy** so that we can live to proclaim His praises (vs. 9-10).

HONORABLE LIVING (1 PETER 2:11-17)

As those who belong to a "**holy nation**," we will be **strangers, exiles, aliens, and sojourners in a culture that's governed by systems** and mindsets of this present world (vs. 11a).

- How do we **live in a world** that is not our home?
- There are two ways we can get this wrong: **isolation** ("*Let's make a Christian bubble! I'll only associate with people just like me.*"), and **syncretism** ("*Let's be just like the world! I can be a Christian and still do _____.*").

1. ABSTAIN (VS. 11)

There are **certain behaviors** Christians just shouldn't take part in.

- "**Sinful desires**" is best understood as the desires of our flesh that **oppose the work of God** in our souls.

- Anything that might lead us down the path of **intoxication, sexual immorality, hatred, or any compromise**—we avoid all together.

2. CONDUCT YOURSELF HONORABLY (VS. 12)

When we are **surrounded by unbelievers**, there is a call for us to live above reproach.

- If we profess Christ, we're to be the hardest workers, **the most honest business owners**, the kindest employers, and the most **gracious neighbors and coworkers** we can possibly be.
- If a nonbeliever has had a **bad impression of Christians** because of a previous experience, let them "**observe your good works.**"

3. SUBMIT TO EVERY HUMAN AUTHORITY (VS. 13-16)

As Christians, we should be good citizens who choose to willingly **submit to the government.**

- We obey the government of the land "**because of the Lord.**" Since governments have a **rightful authority from God** (Rom. 13), we're bound to obey them—unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God's law.
- Then **we are commanded to obey God** before man (Acts 4:19).
- But for most of us, the reason we have a hard time honoring "**the emperor**" of our day is not because they're asking us to do something in contradiction to God's law—it's because we **disagree with their policies** and don't like them.
- We can't **use our freedom** as a cover-up for evil.
- We submit to temporary governments because we're free in Christ as **slaves of God** (vs. 16).

4. HONOR EVERYONE (VS. 17)

As Christians, we show respect and great esteem to **EVERYONE**—regardless of their station, status, or orientation in life.

- We **love other Christians and the Church deeply.** We fear God—there is a **respect, reverence, and honor in our lives** for the Lord.
- We honor the "**emperor**"—that's impossible to do when we **use expletives to curse the one God has placed in authority** over us.

SUFFERING LIKE CHRIST (1 PETER 2:18-25)

"**Household slaves**" were domestic workers who were **employed by wealthy families** in the Roman Empire.

- Many of them were well educated and held positions like **doctors, teachers, musicians, or secretaries.**
- If you were a Christian working for a Roman family, chances are you spent most of your time in a "**non-Christian**" working environment.

Peter's instruction is for these workers to submit to their masters reverently—**not just the good and gentle ones, but also the ones who were cruel** (vs. 18).

- It's easy submitting and **honoring your employer when they're not a jerk**—but what if you have a horrible boss that seems to delight in "**picking on**" you?
- What if they're **singling you out because** you're a Christian?

We first must make sure that we're not playing the "**persecution**" card when it might just be that we're a **crummy employee** (vs. 20).

- Disciplinary action in the workplace when we've actually done **something wrong isn't being persecuted for our faith** or picked on.
- But when we're doing good because of "**a consciousness of God**" and we suffer for it, that brings about the favor of God (vs. 19).

Jesus is our example when **we endure punishment that is unjust** (vs. 21-25).

- Jesus didn't **commit any sin and He never was deceitful.**
- When Jesus was insulted, **He never insulted others in return.**
- When Jesus suffered, He didn't threaten retaliation, but **He trusted God** the Father to vindicate Him. Consider the **result of Jesus' response** to suffering.

Because **Jesus was willing to suffer without retaliation**, our sins were atoned for, "**in his body on the tree**" (vs. 24a).

- Those wounds that were given unjustly by a **Roman whip are the very things** that secure our healing.
- If not for Jesus' **patient endurance under the persecution of the ungodly**, we would still be going astray (vs. 25a).

But because of His work for us, we have returned to the Shepherd (**pastor**) and the Overseer (**bishop**) of our souls.

- So how do we **endure when we're persecuted unjustly for our faith** in Christ and our beliefs?
- We **follow Jesus**—we don't insult in return, retaliate, threaten, or **practice sinful deceit.**
- We trust God to **vindicate us in our suffering and believe it will accomplish** much good.

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART.

- How did **the most powerful person to have ever walked the face of the earth** (Jesus) exercise His power? **Isaiah 53:7**, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter..."
- His power was **demonstrated in His ability to practice restraint** and sacrifice for **the sake of love.**

PRACTICING RESTRAINT AND SACRIFICE FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE.

- The **greatest demonstration of truth and power in a world** obsessed with brashness, flashiness, sound, and fury will be displayed by those willing to **practice restraint and sacrifice.**
- We do this through "**ridding ourselves**" of hatred, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all forms of slander, gossip, and **abusive language** (vs. 1).
- We do this through **desiring and craving the word of God** (vs. 2).
- We do this through **daily offering spiritual sacrifices as priests of God** through offering our entire selves to Him, even when we don't feel like it (vs. 5).
- We do this through abstaining from things that lead us to sinful and **compromising behaviors** (vs. 11).
- We do this by living honorably, being good citizens, and **showing respect** to all people (vs. 13-17).
- We do this through enduring unjust persecution like Jesus because **we trust God to fight for us** (vs. 21-25).
- This isn't easy, but this is **what real power looks like! The Christian life is not for the faint of heart.**