

1 Peter

Chapter 2

VIII. Desiring the Word - 1 Peter 2:1-3

1 Peter 2:1-3 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

One of the characteristic marks of true believers is a desire for the Word. Job echoes the heart of the believer in Job 23:12 where he says, *I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.* A deep and insatiable hunger for the word is a normal part of the Christian life.

However, Peter points out that an insatiable hunger is based on pure living. When one lives in sin, their hunger for the word is diminished. There is an old saying which goes like this, "Sin will keep you from the Bible, and the Bible will keep you from sin."

In verse one we are confronted with what we could call "relational sins" or "sins against the community." These are sins which destroy the unity of believers and brings chaos and division. Malice (*kakios*) refers to a deep-seated anger and hatred towards others. Guile (*dolon*) refers to duplicity and two-facedness in what is said. Hypocrisy (*hupocritas*) refers to a double-standard in ones life. Acting one way in public and another in private. Pretending one is something that one is not. Envy (*phthonos*) is desiring what others have, either materially or otherwise. Evil speaking (*katalalia*) is that speech which has as its goal the destruction of others, the tearing down of their reputation and character.

When the evil is purged from one's life, then the desire of the Word will come to fore. This desire is like that of an baby (literally infant) who only desires its mother's milk. This milk is sincere (pure) which means that it contains all the nutrients necessary to produce growth and health. This diet of the word then reveals the graciousness of God.

IX. The Believer's Privileges in Christ - 1 Peter 2:4-10

A. Union with Christ - 1 Peter 2:4-5a

1 Peter 2:4-5 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,

The first privilege we have as believers is union with Christ. To make this point, Peter looks back to the OT which pictures the coming Messiah as a stone. In Psalm 118:22-23 we read:

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Christ quotes this passage in Mark 12:10 clearly linking it up with himself. What this reference refers to is that the stone, Christ, was rejected by the builders and thrown aside as useless. However, what was rejected by men was accepted by God, and in fact become the foundation stone for the entire building which we understand to be ourselves in this passage.

B. Access to God - 1 Peter 2:5b

an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we have access to God. In the OT the only person who had access to God was a priest, and then only on a very limited basis. Because of Christ, however, we as individuals are our own priests, and as such have access to God. Furthermore, just as a priest offered up sacrifices to God, so we offer up spiritual sacrifices. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Ourselves

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

2. Praise

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

3. Good works

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

4. Giving of gifts

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

5. Reaching the lost

Romans 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

6. Love

Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

7. Prayer

Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

C. Security - 1 Peter 2:6

1 Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Our third privilege is that of security. The stone which God selected, that is Christ, is an elect stone, one specially selected. When the temple was being built in Jerusalem, the stones which went into its construction were specially selected at the quarries. They were shaped and smoothed before being brought to the construction site. In the same way, believers are specially selected by God and made part of his building. Those that become part of the building need never worry about being cast off.

Those that believe on this cornerstone are never disappointed. The reference in Isaiah 28:15 literally means “shall not run in fear”, fear of being cast aside. Christ will never let us down, nor will he ever leave us. We are secure in him.

D. Love for God - 1 Peter 2:7-8

1 Peter 2:7-8 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Those who believe in God and are redeemed have a love for God. Those that hate God are not part of his family and are his enemies. Many would have us believe that even Christians have hatred for God, but that is not ultimately true. We may be angry towards God, but that is sin and needs to be dealt with as sin.

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

It is also important to note that our love for God is predicated on his love for us. We did not love God, and then he loved us, rather, God loved us and redeemed us which then allows us to love him.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

E. Election by God - 1 Peter 2:9a

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation...

Our fifth privilege is election by God. God chose us, we did not choose him. See the notes on 1 Peter 1:2 for an expansion of this concept.

F. Royalty - 1 Peter 2:9b

...a royal priesthood...

In the OT we never find anyone who was both king and priest with the exception of Melchisedek. After God's revelation of the law the offices of priest and king were kept separate and remained that way until Christ. However, we are not only priests (see above) but we are also royalty, being made part of God's family. As such, we are a royal priesthood.

Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

G. A Holy People - 1 Peter 2:9c

...an holy nation...

God has called believers unto holiness the same way he called Israel to holiness in Exodus 19:6. As a holy people we are to be separate from the world and sin so that we exhibit God's character and attributes to those around us.

H. God's Possession - 1 Peter 2:9d

...a peculiar people...

Literally we are a people for God's own possession. This carries with it the idea of being purchased. As believers we belong wholly to God and not to ourselves.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Titus 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

I. An Illuminated People - 1 Peter 2:9e

...that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Throughout the Bible darkness is often a metaphor for spiritual blindness whereas light is a metaphor for spiritual sight. One of the great privileges we have as believers is spiritual sight, the ability to see and understand spiritual things. Because we have our spiritual sight, we are to be witnesses to Christ who is the true light that lights every man.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Colossians 1:12-13 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

J. A People of God's Compassion - 1 Peter 2:10

1 Peter 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Finally, we are a people who are recipients of God's compassion. Peter is drawing on the picture painted in Hosea 1:6ff where Hosea's three children were named Loruhammah (not pitied), Loammi (not my people) and Jezreel (scattered). We, who previously were not God's people and not objects of compassion, have been made God's people and objects of compassion by Christ.

X. Living for God - 1 Peter 2:11-20

Starting in 1 Peter 2:11 and continuing on through 1 Peter 3:7 we find out how we are to live as privileged people of God. In this section Peter covers the three major areas of relationships, the Christian as citizen, the Christian as an employee, and the Christian in the family. A person who is a true believer will evidence that in each of these areas of relationships.

A. The General Call to Godly Living - 1 Peter 2:11-12

1 Peter 2:11-12 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Outlining 1 Peter is a nearly impossible task. Whereas Paul's mind was very logical and his writings orderly, Peter seems to mention something, take a detour, and then come back. We find evidence for that here as he returns to the subject of holiness in the life of the believer.

As Christians, we are to live holy lives. Holy lives are characterized by God's character as it shines through the believer. The results of this is godly conduct.

Peter encourages us to abstain from those fleshly lusts which cause us problems in living godly lives. These lusts are said to war against the soul, hoping to bring us to ruin. In many ways this verse is an echo of Paul's struggle in Romans 7. Many believers allow themselves to indulge the flesh and then wonder why they have such a hard time living godly lives.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Why should we live godly lives? So we may put to silence the criticism of the world. If the world ever criticizes us, it should be because of our holy and godly lives, not because of sin in our lives. It is a shame and travesty for a believer to live an ungodly life and thereby bring shame on the name of Christ. Peter tells us that our godly lives will even cause the others to glorify God in the day of visitation (judgment). How do they do this? They do as believers who have been won to God by our godly lifestyle.

B. The Call to Godly Living in Civil Life - 1 Peter 2:13-17

1 Peter 2:13-17 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put

to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

The first manifestation of godly living is in our relationship to government. As believers we are to be sure to obey every law so that we will not be branded as evildoers and troublemakers. The only time we are given license to disobey civil authorities is when we are commanded by them to directly disobey God. Why are we to do this? It is so we may silence the ignorant accusations of evil men. If we are civil troublemakers then we deserve the derision and condemnation of the ungodly. However, if we are model citizens, disobeying only when commanded to directly violate the law of God, then the accusations of evil men cannot stick. Comparing this passage to Romans 13 gives us some practical teaching concerning our relationship to government.

1. Government is Ordained by God - Romans 13:1-2

Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

The first, and most necessary, point Paul must make is that all government exists at the pleasure of God. It is not men that raise up and destroy government, but it is God. We sometimes feel that God is powerless against the forces of evil in government when in actuality he set those governments up in the first place. The scripture is abundantly clear on the fact that God is sovereign in the affairs and governments of men. We find this point brought out in the book of Daniel where God's sovereign control over men is mentioned several times. In fact, God went out of his way to drive this point home to the king Nebuchadnezzar as seen in Daniel 4:29-37 (see below).

Daniel 2:37-38 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

John 19:10-11 The saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

2. Government Exists to Uphold Law and Order - Romans 13:3-5

Romans 13:3-5 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

The second reason we are given to submit to governmental authorities is that they exist to uphold order in society. In fact, in every government in existence today, there exists a penal and judicial system for dealing with criminals and disrupters to that society. Although we may not all agree on the particular form that government should take, or the specific crimes that should be controlled, all governments, to a degree, fulfill God's purpose in bringing order and control to society. Without governments, we would live in a constant state of anarchy.

As an aside, we need to take a lesson from Christ and the early Christians regarding their reaction to the Roman authorities. Nowhere in scripture or in external literature do we read of Christ or his followers rebelling against the government of their time on "moral issues". By "moral issues" we mean things such as justice, morality, type of government, social issues, taxation, etc. Jesus did not come to overthrow the government of his day, in fact, this was one of the major reasons he was rejected by the Jews. They were not as much looking for a spiritual deliverer as they were looking for a political king. In John 6:15, after the feeding of the five thousand, the people wanted to take Jesus and make him a king by force, but he set them away and would not allow it. Jesus' entire ministry was designed to provide spiritual deliverance from the kingdom of Satan, not political deliverance from Rome. This same attitude carried over into the early Christians. They did not aspire to overthrow or subvert the governments of their day and only disobeyed when those governments directly contradicted the clear commands of God. Instead of Christians becoming more and more involved in the political processes of the day, we should become more and more involved in proclaiming the truths of the kingdom. To do otherwise is to trade the eternal for the temporal. It is not the Church's responsibility to change the external political structures of government but the internal sinful structures of men's hearts. We are called to a higher purpose.

In the process of upholding law and order, the Bible clearly gives the government the right of capital punishment. This is clear, not only in this passage, but throughout the Old Testament as well. The current idea that capital punishment is barbaric and archaic has no foundation in the Bible. In Genesis 9:6 God instituted capital punishment with these words, "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*" By divine decree human governments exist to insure that whenever a murder is committed, the murderer pays with his life. Unfortunately, that is hardly the case today in America. We are so concerned about the rights of murderers and criminals that we throw justice out the back door. We need to return to God's divinely established decrees. By the way, the murder of millions of innocent babies each year through abortion is a crime for which a future payday is coming. A study of the Old Testament will clearly reveal that an unborn child is considered life, and when that life is taken, the perpetrator is to pay with their life. Much more could be said in this respect but we do not have room for it here.

3. We Are to Pay Our Taxes - Romans 13:6-7

Romans 13:6-7 For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore

to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Since government is a divine institution set up by God and since all government draws its power from God, it naturally follows that we, as citizens, are to support that government through the payment of taxes. It is somewhat sad to see many so-called Christians refuse to pay taxes on the ground that they do not approve of the use of those tax monies. Unfortunately, as far as God and the Bible are concerned, that is no excuse at all.

In Matthew 22 we find one of the many confrontations between Jesus and the religious leaders of Israel. In fact, we find four separate confrontations in this chapter, namely, on taxes, on the resurrection, on the most important law, and on David's Lord. However, our interest is in the first one, on taxes. In verse 16 we find the Pharisees and Herodians coming to Jesus to ask him whether it was lawful to pay the poll tax to Caesar or not. Basically, the poll tax consisted of one drachma, or day's wage, for each person. This money was paid directly to the Roman treasury for the support of the government. The fact that this tax was paid with a coin that was considered idolatrous (the picture of the emperor was on one side and the inscription "High Priest" on the other) caused even more problems for the religious minded Jew. The Herodians and Pharisees, interestingly enough, were bitter enemies. However, they had joined forces to try and trap Jesus into saying something that would discredit him in front of all the people. Their question is recorded in verse 17, *"Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?"*. The Herodians, as representatives of the government, would want him to say yes. The Pharisees, as representatives of Israel, would want him to say no.

They thought they trapped him! If he said, yes, then he would be discredited in front of the people who thought it a horrible thing to be required to pay taxes to their Roman oppressors. If on the other hand he said no, then they could accuse him of sedition. What he did, however, was to take a coin and tell them *"Whose is this image and superscription?"*. When they answered "Caesar's", Christ responded *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's"*. What he said in essence was, "Yes, pay the tax but do not give the emperor more than his due, i.e. worship. Give your worship to God". We, as believers, are to support our government through the payment of our taxes although we may not agree with all of its policies. On the other hand, we render our devotion to God and let him take care of the inequities. As Peter so forcefully states in 1 Peter 4:15-16 that if we suffer, let it be because of Christ, not because we are an evildoer or breaker of the law.

C. Submission in the Marketplace - 1 Peter 2:18-20

1 Peter 2:18-20 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?

but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

The second major sphere in which the believer manifests godly character is that of the marketplace (the third being the home). Although Peter uses the picture of masters and servants, he is referring to the employer/employee relationship.

It is easy to submit to ones employer when that employer is gentle and good. However, many people work for employers who do not fit that category. How are they to respond? Peter gives us the answer in verse 18, we are to graciously submit to the good and the bad.

Why is this so? It is because when we are mistreated and patiently endure it, we bring glory to God. In the next section on suffering, Peter points us to Christ who is a picture of righteous suffering. He was not only good, but perfect, and suffered the most cruel treatment from others.

When we do wrong and pay the consequences, we do not bring God the glory, we are only getting our just desserts. When we are exemplary in our conduct, and are mistreated, we take our place with Christ and bring God glory through our patience.

Ephesians 6:5-8 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Comparing Ephesians 6:5-8 with this passage in 1 Peter gives us the following issues regarding our employment:

1. We are to do our work as unto the Lord and not unto men. The character of our employer is irrelevant.
2. We are to do our work even when we do not receive the plaudits from our employers as we may like them.
3. Doing a good job is the will of God. It is not an option for the believer.
4. Our ultimate reward will be from God and not men.

XI. The Example of Christ - 1 Peter 2:21-25

1 Peter 2:21-25 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Right in the middle of his discussion on the Christian and his relationships, Peter develops the concept of suffering as a Christian by looking at Christ, our pattern of suffering.

Peter states that we are called to suffer. Suffering should not be something that Christians find strange or alien to their life. We should expect suffering, after all we have arrayed against us the world, the flesh, and the devil. How are we to face that suffering? By looking to Christ as our example.

- A. Christ did not do any sin, yet suffered as a sinner - 1 Peter 2:22.

The first point is that Christ did not deserve the treatment he received. Even so, we as believers do not deserve the treatment we receive from the world. In fact, Christ told us that the reason the world hates us is because it hates him. It should come as no surprise to believers to find themselves the victims of unwarranted persecution and sufferings.

- B. Christ did not retaliate for his suffering - 1 Peter 2:23a.

It is easy to want to lash out at those who cause our suffering and pain. Yet, when we look at Christ we find that he did not retaliate even though he had the perfect right and power to do so. Instead of calling down God's judgment on our protagonists, we need to pray for their salvation. Even Christ, when dying on the cross, asked the Father to forgive those who put him to death since they did not know what they were doing. God answered Christ's prayer in the salvation of the Centurion and many others.

- C. Christ realized that God was in control of his suffering - 1 Peter 2:23b.

We need to understand that it is God who allows trials and suffering into our lives. It is not mere chance, not is it Satan running amok. When we see all of our suffering as coming from God for our own good and eternal glory, we will not be caught up in the trial. In the words of Paul, we will not glory in the infirmiter but in the infirmities.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- D. Christ realized that God had a purpose in his suffering that transcended the trial - 1 Peter 2:24-25.

Finally, Christ understood that his trial was being used by God to accomplish God's purposes. If it were not for Christ's suffering and death on the cross, no man would be saved. In the same way God has a purpose for our trials that transcend the trial. If we trust God, then we will commit ourselves to him and allow him to work that purpose out in our lives and in his eternal plan.

Verses 24 and 25 are two of the great salvific verses in the Bible. Peter borrows from Isaiah 53:5 when he equates Christ's death with healing and Isaiah 53:6 when he refers to us as sheep going astray. Many would like to use verse 24 to prove physical healing. This is not possible as the context is not that of physical healing, but spiritual healing. The imagery of Isaiah 53 is that of sheep who have strayed from God, and salvation as being the restoration of those lost sheep to God. The end of verse 25 refers to Christ as our Great Shepherd, a great picture of Christ as found in John 10.