

1Peter 11-03-18a

This is Friday, the 18th of March, 2011. We continue our study in the Epistle of Peter, 1st Epistle, 2nd Chapter. We'll pause for a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, at the end of each week, when we gather to spend time together in the study of Your Word, we find ourselves once again having been sustained by Your grace and held up by Your righteousness through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is an everlasting source of gratitude and of wonder that You would be mindful of us and visit us with Your grace and Your compassion. We thank You for these sustaining benefits, and we thank You for the opportunity to spend time now in refreshing our understanding of Your plan and purpose and coming to a better knowledge of You through the Lord Jesus and through the things that are contained in Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will superintend and enable each one of us to grasp and lay hold of and preserve in our souls these truths that are so essential to our success as Your people and Your children in this age and in the ages to come. We pray that You will bless us and impart Your truth to us. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, this is a great place that we have come to in the letter that Peter wrote to the scattered pilgrims of the Diaspora because he has sort of turned the corner into the application section, and application is what we like. We like the practical, let's get with it and get it done stuff.

And that's what this is. What's particularly interesting to me is the content of it. If you think about what a pilgrim would need to know as he pilgrimages in his faraway pilgrim lands, it's not stovepipe hats and turkeys, it's not Indians and maize.

They are strangers. They are sojourners. And so, should they go in and conquer and dominate and take charge of their posts and all government property in view? Should they go in and elbow their way into control and into security by force? What is the application for us? Whatever it is that God says through the Apostle Peter to these people who are strangers and dwellers alongside.

They are in this Roman world. They are in this Greco-Roman culture, but they are not of it. They have a different origin.

They have a different purpose. They have a different heritage. They have a different ethic.

They have a different destination. And yet they are immersed in this other culture. Well, it's the same as us.

So, it would be of interest to see what does God tell these people. They've been shoved out. They're out of the nest.

They're out of security. They're out of the land of their birth, so to speak, as a nation. And they are

in immersion in the world.

What God tells them is the same thing He tells us. The time is different. The specifics are slightly different, but the situation is the same.

We have a heritage. We have an ethic. We have a destination.

We have a purpose. We have an inheritance. We have an origin.

We have a relationship with God that is unique and that makes us distinct and separate. So, the message to these scattered pilgrims is the message to us. What is the message? Well, we've seen the background of it.

We've seen the foundation for it in these first paragraphs, this first chapter and a half. And so now, when we get to this section of chapter 2, and He says you are chosen, you remember verse 9? You are special in the genuine sense of the word. You're not just any old body.

You're not just any who. And you're not just any where. And you're not just any time.

God specifically, carefully ordained all of our circumstances. You, right now, sitting there in your skin. Me, right now, sitting here as I am, at this age, with this configuration, with these circumstances.

It was ordained by God. It is a training exercise. It is preparation.

This is temporary. We are heading into eternal life, which is permanent. It's kind of like going through school.

Get your training. Get everything you can get. And then you go out and do the real thing.

Well, this is our training time. And we are very close to graduation. We are very close to entering into that phase where we will put far more into practice and into application than we ever have before.

These are just drills. These are just causes for faith. Causes for perseverance.

Tests to strengthen us and get us ready for what's coming. This is why Peter says in 2.11, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, I plead with you, don't be driven by that which drives the common man. Don't just be an effect produced by the cause of your flesh, your fallen, sinful nature.

You've got to live a different kind of life. Therefore, he says in verse 13, and this is the section we began week before last, Submit yourselves to every ordinance. Do you remember what the word was for ordinance? Who can tell me what the word was in Greek? How good are your notes? Every ktisei.

K-T-I-S-E-I It's not an ordinance. It's not an authority. It is a structure from God.

It is a human situation. We spent some time looking at other places where that word is used. But it is a human order, a human situation, a human structure from God.

So if it's a marriage, and that marriage has enough in it to be deemed of God, it hasn't become abusive beyond the pale. It hasn't become a thing that drags you into sin. Be not unequally yoked together with the faithless.

It doesn't say the unbeliever. It says the apostia, the faithless. There are legitimate grounds for two believers to divorce.

I'm just telling you now. There are legitimate grounds. If you are a believer, and you are doing everything you can to pursue your walk with God, and you are unequally yoked with a faithless person, it doesn't matter if they're saved or not.

If they are faithless, and you're trying to run the race, but you're in a sack race, and the other person has laid down and refuses to move, you've got to get your leg out of that sack so that you can proceed. It's subjective. It's a judgment call.

It's up to everybody. But do not judge a believer that has had a divorce. It's between them and the Lord.

They made the decision. They figured out, hopefully, if they did it right and did it biblically, they figured out whether they were unequally yoked with a faithless person. And that's the criteria.

It's not an unsaved person. It's apostia. And you can have somebody that has... There are believers that just lose... Their gyroscope breaks an axle, and they go off into anything, new age, superstition, voodoo, who knows what.

They can get into necromancy and all kinds of strange behavior. They can go into a cult. They can get wrapped up in some sort of a charismatic personality that takes them down the plastic tulip-lined path, and you can't function.

You can't go forward. You cannot any longer honor the Lord. And we are free.

There are very few hard and fast thou shalt nots in the church age. You've got your Ten Commandments, but we have a wide degree of latitude because we are mature. We are called to be mature, to grow up to the standard of a mature man.

And there are times when you have to separate. You would think, well, all believers ought to be in church. It doesn't say, forsake not the assembling of yourselves.

But yet, the Apostle Paul told the church, separate church from this man who is a believer but has

gotten into an evil lifestyle. Separate yourself. Purge him out.

I've turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Well, what if you're a lady in the church and you're married to this guy? Are you going to leave the church and stick with him or are you going to stay with the church and separate? You stay with the church and separate. This is not a license for dissolving marriages, but there is a time.

And it is not anybody else's place to judge. But the principle here is when God is in it, there is a time for countries to divide. Our founding fathers were right to get out from under British rule when they did and how they did and for the reasons that they did.

And yet, honor the king, obey those that have the rule over you, and so on. But there is a time when God is no longer in it. The purpose for which God set up that authority is being horribly abused.

And it is time to get out from under. So this is a very important phrase. Diaton Kurion.

Through the Lord. Whether to the king, to leaders, and so on. Now, as free, verse 16, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice.

You can't grab a technicality and say I'm going to run off with the romantic fling love of my immediate moment because I think God is no longer in my marriage. I see God every time I look in the eyes of this beautiful 22-year-old blonde. No.

Don't use liberty as a cloak for vice. Honor all. Love the brotherhood.

Fear God. Honor the king. We went through that last time.

Now we start in this section about servants. Be submissive to your masters with all fear. What's the definition of fear? Phobos in this context.

What have we said? This is respectful obedience. Phobos in the New Testament almost always when it's talking about godly fear, reverence, it is respectful obedience. Children should respectfully obey their parents in the Lord for this is right.

Same principle in all of these different different structures of human life that God has ordained. As long as it is fulfilling a significant part of God's purpose for it, then we honor it. This is commendable even if the master is scolios, crooked.

Scoliosis. Have you ever seen somebody with scoliosis? Have you ever actually looked at someone with that curvature of the spine? It's a sobering sight. There are people who are twisted in their exercise of authority.

They are scolios. You can have scolios governments. You can have scolios husbands.

You can have scolio parents. You can have a scolio boss, military commander, any area of life that is ordained by God to be beneficial and to have a structure that provides for and nurtures freedom and opportunity can be abused. But, notice, even with a twisted authority, God can still be in it.

Peter doesn't say, if you've got a twisted master, run away. If you've got a twisted master, go to the church and they will protect you and provide sanctuary and then fend off your master and so on. He doesn't say that, does he? He says, be submissive to the twisted.

You can get beaten for your faults and be patient about it. That's not much. But, if you are doing good and suffer and take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

And this is really a paradigm for why we are in this life, isn't it? If anybody asks you, what is the theme of 1 Peter? What's the standard response? What's the one word theme of 1 Peter? Suffering, right? And that's not far off. But, what is the suffering? It's not, oh, I've got sore boils and I'm sitting on the ash heap scraping myself with a potsherd. Suffering can be, I am being submissive to a twisted authority, to an imperfect authority, which all human authorities are.

But, I am enduring. It is abrasive. It is chafing.

It is a weight that I have to carry. It is unfair. It torques my jaws.

It frustrates me. It seems so unjust. Peter says, bear with.

How do you do this? This was the conclusion of our lesson last week. How do you fulfill this command? Remember, turn your conscience. Pull your consciousness and your thoughts and gnawing on the old bone.

It's so unfair. It's so unjust. This is what I should have had.

This is what should have happened. Why can't it be like over there? Look how green the grass is on that side of the fence. We pull out.

We stop obsessing. We stop running through that unproductive loop and turn our conscience toward God. When you do it as unto the Lord.

I am not really serving this authority. This authority is from God. This is diaton kurion.

I am serving God in putting up with this. God has appointed me to be a pilgrim in this particular hostile environment. This is my pilgrimage.

I'm not in Pontus or Galatia. I'm under this chafing authority. God has asked me to do this.

God has appointed this as my servant task. How well can I carry it out? Well, if this is all he's asking of me, I'm not nailed to a cross. I'm not impaled on a stake.

I'm not imprisoned in a dungeon. I just have to put up with this person that isn't as smart as I am and isn't as righteous as I am and doesn't understand biblical principles of authority and is constantly abusing their authority and being unfair. But this is my pilgrimage.

I look to God. God ordained this. God gave me this assignment.

This is my problem to solve. This is my task to accomplish. I will do it as unto the Lord.

And when we look at it in that light, we really... It's not exactly heaping coals of fire on the head of the person, but if you really want to get back at somebody that's being an ugly authority or an unfair domination, diminish them. Don't blow their importance up and give them exactly what they think they deserve, which is excessive importance and excessive influence. Set them aside.

Marginalizing them is the best way to give them what they deserve. You're a bad authority? I'm not really doing what I do for you. You're a peripheral issue now.

You're a detail of my life. I live my life before the Lord. This is my service.

This is my authority. This is my accomplishment. And in so doing, we lay up treasure for ourselves in heaven.

This is commendable before God. Commendable before God. That's our goal.

How can I execute this? How can I endure this? How can I get through this in a way that is commendable before God? We've parenthesized this person that was formerly right at the center. What puts them at the center of our attention? What magnifies them and gives them more power than they deserve? Fleshly lusts. From back in verse 11.

It's the desire of my flesh to eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth and to try to get back and to character assassinate and lash with the sins of the tongue and try to tell everybody what a rascal this person is. It's fleshly lust. Does that actually accomplish anything? It diminishes us.

It diminishes us. We lose our commendability before God. We lose our opportunity to prepare ourselves for the eternal future, to have an inheritance, to have a reward, to reflect the image of Christ.

You talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face. There's no upside to it. Nobody wins.

It doesn't improve the bad authority. It diminishes us. It displeases God.

What's the upside? There is none. To this you were called, verse 21, because Christ also suffered for us. You think about what the Lord Jesus Christ put up with.

You talk about undeserved abuse, undeserved diminishment, undeserved disrespect culminating in the arrest, in the trial, in the crucifixion. All of the things that were said about Him, the ill

treatment that He received. We were called because Christ left us an example.

How did Jesus do it? Father, not my will, but Thine be done. Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit. Right? He committed no sin, nor was deceit found where? In His mouth.

What's the most likely place for us to sin when we are servants under abusive authority? Sin of the tongue. First thing. You can't even hardly get a mental attitude sin going before the tongue starts malfunctioning.

No deceit in His mouth. When He was reviled, did not revile in return. Sin of the tongue.

When He suffered, He did not threaten. Sin of the tongue. Of course, there's mental attitude sins behind all of these, but notice.

The man who can bridle his tongue has got the power to bring his whole body into subjection. Our weak point is our mouth. All of us.

Our weak point is our mouth. Sometimes it's also one of our strengths, but it's almost as though if you've got an area of strength, there's a flip side, and it's our area of weakness. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return.

When He suffered, He did not threaten. He didn't say, I'll get you, you rascals. I'll get you, you unfair... Don't you realize what I could do? Do you know who I am? Do you know what I really deserve? Do you know where I come from? Do you know what my antecedents are? Do you know who my father is? Do you know how grossly ignorant and unfair everything you're saying is? You morons.

Listen, I could be a speechwriter for the Lord Jesus on everything that was wrong with His treatment, but Jesus didn't do that. How did He not do that? This is my question. You can observe that He didn't do it.

How did He not do it? Most of us in that position, if we had 10,000 angels on call, listen, I could make Hiroshima and Nagasaki look like black cat firecrackers. Their atoms would be dispersed so far in the universe, you'd have to visit 50 galaxies just to find one gram. Jesus didn't do any of that.

Who committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. This is a commitment. This is an assignment.

This is a dedication. We have as our memory verse Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present your bodies a living sacrifice. I think this had a lot more meaning to the Jews who had witnessed Levitical offerings than it does to us.

Present your bodies a living sacrifice. What happens to a sacrifice in the Levitical system? It is

taken captive. It is dragged to a place it doesn't want to go.

Away from all of its fellow members of the flock or the herd. It is bound. Its throat is slit.

It bleeds to death. It is chopped up and burned. Present yourself a separated, captive, slain, chopped up offering.

If we have to put up with a little bit of unfair authority, it seems very mild, if that's all it takes to be a living sacrifice. He committed Himself. Look at what the Lord Jesus did as our example.

Committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. Why is that particular detail? Why does it say He committed Himself to God the Father on high? He committed Himself to the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies. Committed Himself to the God of creation.

Any time a particular facet or particular detail of God is mentioned in a context, it's there for a reason. Who did Jesus commit Himself to when He was passing this test that we're supposed to pass? How did He do it? He didn't just commit Himself to a God in the abstract. He didn't just commit Himself to the Father in the abstract.

Who did He commit Himself to? What thought went through His mind when He succeeded in doing this commitment? God will judge righteously. God knows. I have been able to completely rid myself of any concern about individuals that I used to just steam 15, 20 years after the fact.

If you've ever been robbed, if somebody's ever broken into your stuff and stolen something, it doesn't matter how much time passes. When you think of it, and you think of the hubris and the injustice and the indignity of having somebody break in and take your stuff, something you had to work for, something you saved for, something you really enjoyed, something you carefully selected, something you can't replace, and somebody, some moron, went in and took it. Boy, I can think up old stuff, and if I wanted to, I could really obsess.

But I succeeded in pretty much getting rid of all of that, even in the short term, because when it dawned on me, God knows exactly who that is, knows exactly where they went, knows exactly what they did. And I can talk to my Father and say, Father, I have two prayers for this person. A, make this thing that they took a blight and a scourge and a festering sore, make everything else around them cursed, make them miserable, and bring them to the point of repentance and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and use this theft as a turning point in their life to convict them and bring them to the point of a change of mind and a change of heart and a useful, productive life in your service.

Amen. Commit to the righteous judge. And it's amazing how flexible and adaptable this is.

Anybody. You can commit them to the righteous judge, and you can pray an imprecatory prayer followed by a prayer for their salvation and blessing, because sometimes that's what it takes. Anybody that's reduced themselves to thievery and abuse and embezzlement and taking your

work and claiming it's theirs or doing whatever else, they're a miserable person.

Ask God to increase their misery and use it as a tool to bring them to the place of repentance. And pray for them. Do good to those who hate you.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. Well, that's how you can do it. And it's very satisfying, especially the first part.

He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. And you think about it. How does a slave bear the sins of his master? This is the comparison.

Jesus unjustly, undeservedly bore our sins. Well, slaves undeservedly, unjustly bear the sins of crooked masters. We who suffer at the hands of any authority, local, personal, or collective and national, it's an injustice, it's an indignity, it's a frustrating thing.

But Jesus bore our sins, and we're pretty happy with that. So we've accepted the principle that it's okay for Jesus to bear our sins. Well, you remember that thing, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us? Our forgiveness is based on the work of Christ.

So if he has borne our sins, then to be like him, and to remember when Paul says, I share the sufferings of Christ, what's he talking about? I am bearing the abuse and the indignities and the suffering inflicted on me by those who are wronging me. And I'm entering into that same example. So that we having died to sins might live for righteousness.

I want to be commendable before God. I want to carry out my duties. I want to live under whatever situation, as a pilgrim, in the world but not of it, in a way that is commendable to God.

Live for righteousness. It's just another way of saying the very same thing. By whose stripes you were healed.

And we get the idea that God may be able to use our example of patiently bearing up under wrong. We think, well, the way to fix this wrong is to go tell them off. And shake our big fat finger in their face and tell them, this is 16 ways that you're wrong and you're unjust and you're unbiblical and shame on you, shame on you.

Where Jesus, how did we become convicted? We look at the work of the Lord Jesus and we think, he took what I deserve so that I could receive what he deserves. which is relationship with God and blessing and righteousness and eternal life. So if we are saved by Jesus' sacrificial endurance of wrong, wouldn't it be great if we can sacrificially endure wrong and be the means of someone's salvation in that sense? I think it's coming around, realizing what a booger they're being.

Not because you've rebuked them and chastised them, but because you are a patient, godly, Christ-reflecting person. And there is a stronger conviction. That's the coals of fire.

That's the doing good to those who hate you and despitefully use you. What's greater, the power of evil speaking or the power of a godly example? It's an easy answer in the abstract. It's a little bit tougher in practice.

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. And if you've got your New King James, what does your text note tell you overseer is the English translation for? Does it say? Episkopos? You have a note for Episkopos down there for overseer? Where did we last see that word? Right at the end of verse 12. By which they may, evildoers, they may by your good works which they observe glorify God in the day of Episkopos.

Day of visitation. We, these pilgrims, he's speaking specifically to these Jewish believers who have returned to the shepherd and overseer of their souls. That's their day of Episkopos.

These people are going to come to the point of recognizing the Lord as Episkopos, the righteous judge, and their eyes can turn to him and they can commit to him just as we are enjoined to do. Well, that finishes out chapter 2. We'll take our break and come back and begin with every husband's favorite passage in 1 Peter 3, verse 1.