

1Peter 11-04-01a

This is Friday, the 1st of April, 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1 Peter, resuming in chapter 3, verse 8. We'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll get back into the text. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for sustaining us through another week and weaving all of the elements of your plan together in such a wonderful fashion so that we find ourselves once again able to spend time in fellowship and the study of your word.

We ask your blessing on us as we look at this portion of scripture, that God the Holy Spirit will make it meaningful and pertinent for each one of us, that we will live differently as a result of having examined the truth that it contains, and that we will be more motivated and more able to meet each challenge that comes our way in the days that lie ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, for me this has been a particularly interesting section of the 1st epistle of Peter because he has given us a really practical framework for living our Christian life.

So much of what faces us is testing in the area of people, and most of it comes when we are in some sort of conflict. We think things ought to be one way and they turn out another way. We think people ought to act one way and they act another.

We have expectations, we have desires, we have objectives, we have things that we hope to see come to fruition and it all goes haywire. We plan our day, get up in the morning and head in one direction and it all gets diverted into a different direction, and it's usually people related. So when Peter addresses these areas of life that we find in the last part of chapter 2 and the first part of chapter 3, and I think it's really kind of an unfortunate chapter break there, but nevertheless he really began in verse 13 of chapter 2 talking to us about what God has ordained, the structure of human interaction in which we find ourselves.

And this varies from culture to culture and generation to generation, century to century, empire to empire, but the elements of it when it gets down to our level are pretty much the same. And so it gives us these three representative situations. The first one as you remember was slaves and masters, the second one was wives to husbands, and the third was husbands to wives.

But these are representative. They tell us how to act. And this is where we usually drop the ball or trip and stumble, because we're good at seeing what the Bible says about how to act, right? All the law and the prophets are summed up in what? What sums up the whole Old Testament? Two things.

Love the Lord your God, love your neighbor, right? We know that's how we're supposed to act. It's the doing of it that creates the rub. That's the difficulty.

So here Peter says, well, if you're a slave, be submissive. It doesn't matter if your master is twisted or not. Be obedient.

Be commendable. You have this as a calling. If you're punished and you don't deserve it, just bear up.

Well, that's a great description, but where does the strength come from? How do you obtain the wherewithal to actually pull that off and do it in a way that's pleasing to God? It's one thing to hear it and to see it and say, yes, wouldn't that be wonderful? Wouldn't it be lubberly? But it's something else when it's actually happening. We say, well, but wait a minute. I don't think you fully understand the nature of the injustice I'm suffering here.

And oftentimes we just don't even think. We just react. We just lash out.

We fight back. We stomp off. We just totally blow it.

Same thing with wives to husbands or husbands to wives or any analogous situation. I thought this was a partnership. I thought we were more or less equals here.

I thought we were all on the same board. I thought we were all on the same team. I thought we were all in the, you know, rowing in the same boat here.

And now suddenly it isn't that way. And you're expecting me to just sort of knuckle under and sacrifice my pride or whatever it may be. Or same thing when we're supposed to be in charge and supposed to be recognizing and valuing someone.

And we just run roughshod and are unappreciative and insensitive and impatient and so on. So we've got a great description here. You can find a pretty close analogy in one of these three situations to almost anything in life.

You can be a student. You can be in a family. You can be in a company.

You can be on some team. You can be on a committee. Just in fellowship with family or extended family, almost anything will sort itself out episode by episode.

You might just be cooking a Thanksgiving dinner and there's a whole bunch of people buzzing around in a kitchen. Well, somebody's got to sort of be in charge. Whose kitchen is it? Whose pots and pans are they? Whose gas and electricity are you burning? Who bought the food? Who brought the food? Who's, you know, and sooner or later there's some sort of a necessity for things to move smoothly for somebody to kind of say, well, why don't we do it this way? And there's always the risk or the danger of somebody having a bad day or several people having a bad day.

So there's always room for error. There's room for failure. What's difficult is actually doing this.

And the great thing about this passage, back to how I began, the great thing about this is Peter says, look, I'm not only going to tell you what to do. I'm not only going to give you these

representative examples that stretch far beyond just these actual situations, but I'm going to tell you how to do it, how to pull it off. Here's where the power is.

Here's where the ability to do it. The supernatural divine enablement is obtained this way. And then he tells us, how is it? He's been lacing.

He's been interleaving. He's been salting all of these passages almost from the beginning with this clue, this mechanism, this enablement, and it is looking unto Jesus. We have got to get our eyes off ourselves, off of situations and off of other people.

It's all three areas of subjectivity that we pull back from. Subjectivity is what kills us. What is subjectivity? Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances.

When we are caught up in that, we're living a human life. Any godless human can live the subjective life. It takes divine enablement to pull back, to uninvest, to withdraw the personal entanglement, the personal sensitivity and say, I am not going to obsess.

I'm not going to grasp and lay hold of. I'm not going to get so wrapped up in this scenario. I'm going to pull back.

I'm going to look to heaven. I'm going to look to God. I'm going to look to Jesus.

The author and finisher of our faith. He really began that way. He said in verse 13 of chapter 2, submit yourself to every created thing, every structure, everything that God put in place for the Lord's sake.

Every human situation, you could almost say, for the Lord's sake. It doesn't matter if it's a king at the highest levels or a servant at the lowest levels. We've got to not be so much in this world.

So how do we do that? We make a conscious, willful effort to look in a different direction. We step back. Unbelievers don't have this option.

Immature believers don't have this option. Mature believers who forget who they are and why they're here don't have this option. We have an alternate view.

Poor old Newton only had Newtonian physics. Einstein only had Newtonian physics to fall back on. It's one view of the universe.

It's this physical $F = MA$. It's a rational, simplistic model, and it works great most of the time. But when you start pushing the envelope, when you start getting into higher, grander things, Newtonian physics starts to break down.

And if you don't have a different view, if you don't have another perspective, and this is what quantum physics is, it's another perspective. It's another way of parsing what's happening. We can get by just looking.

This is how the world turns. This is how the gears of society and human relationships and unbelieving marriages, unbelieving families, unbelievers functioning in companies, they get by. They get stuff done.

There's all kinds of sparks and heat and flame and friction and loss and inefficiency in it, but stuff kind of grinds along. Human progress takes place, but they're stuck in the human view. Peter says, we as believers have got a far superior solution.

We can pull back and pull out of this purely human thing and look at it from a divine viewpoint, a divine perspective. We look at the Lord Jesus. Unbelievers can't look at the Lord Jesus.

Unbelievers have no expectation of inheritance or reward or that the trial of their faith worketh patience. We do. Why would we trade that away? Why would we set it aside? Why would we ignore it and overlook it and live just like any godless unbeliever? It's horrible.

The Lord Jesus Christ died to give us this gift, to enable us to enter into eternal life. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. People typically say, well, that means I accept Jesus as my Savior and I'm going to live forever.

No, that's not what it means. The gift of God is life that partakes of the eternal, that sees the eternal, that lays hold of righteousness and inheritance and the satisfaction of God in heaven and the glorification of Jesus Christ. That's what eternal life is and it's been given to us.

We can take any situation, any challenge, any trouble, and invest in eternity, invest in eternal life. Peter says this is how you do it. So he says, and right in the middle of this, he says, look at Jesus.

Christ suffered and left us an example, verse 21 of chapter 2, even though he was horribly misused. It was all topsy-turvy. He was the King of the Jews.

He was the Messiah. He was the Savior. He was the Lamb without spot.

He was the deliverance. He was the hope. He was everything the Old Testament looked forward to.

He was the Son of God incarnate, the fullness of deity in bodily form, and he was so unjustly treated. I mean, there aren't words to describe how upside down that whole First Advent episode was. You can't get a greater degree of horrific wrongness than the reception the Lord Jesus Christ got when he came to his own people.

He came unto his own, his own received him not, and that's just not even the half of it. When he was reviled, did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten.

He committed himself to him who judges, and this is the key. What are we committed to? Are we committed to vindication in this life, or are we committed to vindication at the throne of grace? We can't vindicate ourselves. The only justice and righteousness that we can claim is what the Lord Jesus Christ obtained for us on the cross and has given us.

He is our righteousness. He is our peace. He is our sanctification.

We can't obtain that for ourselves before God, and we certainly can't obtain it for ourselves here on this earth. So we've got to wake up and recognize where satisfaction, where justice and righteousness and vindication and accomplishment of purpose is, and it's with God. He committed himself to the one who judges righteously.

He bore our sins in his own body on the tree so that for the purpose that we, having died to sins, and it doesn't say died, remember, having gotten away from, having become away from sins, might live for righteousness. This is the one thing I ever heard Dr. Phil say that I thought really made a lot of sense. I've heard enough of Dr. Phil that I don't want to hear any more, but I heard him talking to a troubled couple one time.

It was a man and a woman, and the woman was nagging the man incessantly and endlessly about one thing, and he was constantly finding fault with her, and their marriage was totally on the rocks. And so Phil sat down in front of each one of them, and he said, look, lady, nagging woman, what do you really think, what is your goal here? Why are you nagging? What is it you want out of your husband and out of your marriage? What are you looking for? Well, she said, I just want it to be like it was when we first got married, when we were just infatuated, and everything was great, and he was just such a gentleman, and he appreciated me, and just bent over backwards, jacket in the mud, the whole thing, it was just so great. And Phil said, all right, now let me ask you this, how do you see nagging making that happen? Do you really see a path where this nagging that you're doing day by day is going to do that? Is this a valid path to your goal? Well, when she thought about it in that light, when everybody else looked at it in that light, they thought, well, if that's your goal, this is certainly not the way to accomplish it.

Then he went to the man, and he said, okay, you're constantly belittling your wife, and making her feel bad, and showing all the ways that she's falling short, and so on. But what is your goal in the marriage? What do you really want out of this relationship? Why have you come in for help? What would you like to see happen? He said, well, I'm basically with her. I'd like things to be the way they were at the beginning, when we were just infatuated and in love, and everything was great.

And Phil said, all right, well, let me ask you the same question. How do you see this constant chopping down, and cutting down, and finding fault? Do you see this accomplishing that goal? Is this going to bring it about? How do you see that working? Well, when the guy kind of looked at it in the cool light of day, if that's really your goal, how is that going to make it happen? Do you

know anybody else that constantly was chopped down, and made to feel small, and insufficient, and short of the mark, and all that? And they suddenly got back the infatuation glow that you had when you were dating? Has this ever happened in human history? And this is what we need to look at. In what way are we accomplishing our goal as believers if we leave ourselves invested in the petty involvements, the petty subjectivities of this life? What is our goal? What do we really want out of life? If we're believers who appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ, our goal is to arrive at the judgment seat and have the Lord say, well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of your Lord. Right? Any believer worth the name wants to be approved on the day when the Lord Jesus returns. You want to be happy when Jesus comes back.

You want to be excited that he's here. You don't want to be saying, oh man, that judgment thing is coming. What was I thinking? Who wants that? So if that's our goal, this is kind of like what the couple wanted out of their marriage.

If our goal is that we're running toward the Lord Jesus when he arrives, and not running away, or looking around for some kind of a scrap of garment to cover ourselves because we've got no robe of righteousness. If our goal is to be approved, then how is what we're doing day by day getting us there? Is our treatment of one another, is our investment in petty things, is our eyes on people, and eyes on self, and eyes on circumstances. I really wanted this outcome, and I really was looking for this objective to come true.

I really saw this color of drapes, and I really saw this V8 engine in my car, and I really expected this promotion, and this milestone to be met. How is our obsession with these things getting us to our goal? It's not. Peter says, look, here's how to get there.

This is the way to do it. And sadly, this is where Phil fell short, because when the couple said, yeah, well, I guess the nagging and the chopping down isn't really getting there. But Dr. Phil, for all of his expertise at identifying problems, and showing the shortfall of the current operation, doesn't have the ability to offer soul reconstruction, heart healing, because no human being does.

It's like saying, well, I'll tell you exactly why you got that cough, and you got no endurance, and you can't taste your food anymore. It's that smoking. It's that smoke.

It's all coffin nails. It's cigarettes you're smoking. That's why you're having all these health issues, and coughing up all kinds of stuff, and your clothes smell like an ashtray.

Here's your problem. Well, that's great, but how do I quit? Now, I appreciate you pointing out the problem, but you're not helping me here, because I'm addicted to the things. So give me the power to quit.

Where's that? Well, they don't have it, usually. Same thing here. Peter is giving us the solution, and he says, look at Christ.

How did the Lord Jesus do it? He's our example. He committed himself to the judge in heaven. This is what we have.

This is our quantum physics. This is what gets us past the earthly, and the mundane, and the short term. Look at heaven.

God the Holy Spirit has been given to us. Why? Why have you got the Holy Spirit? Seriously, formulate an answer in your mind. Why did God give you the Holy Spirit? You say, well, let's see.

I believe there's five things, right? Isn't there a list of five things? What does he do? Let's see. He seals. He fills.

He indwells. He baptizes me into the body of Christ, and gives me a gift, right? I know you remembered all five of those, right? He seals into the body of Christ. He indwells.

This is the resident presence of God. You can be disobedient. God the Father and God the Son aren't going to hang around, but you never lose the Holy Spirit.

He is there. He dwells. That's God's mark of ownership, and that's his seal, and he gifts and baptizes.

I can't remember what order I mentioned those in, but of that, what are we talking about here? What does the presence of the Holy Spirit do for us in terms of getting on with it? The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they're spiritually discerned. What are the things of the Spirit? Well, that's so I can understand Scripture. What does Scripture paint us a picture of? I love to tell the story of what? Unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.

Remember the song? The Holy Spirit is here to get us to see what human beings cannot see, what the carnal mind cannot grasp, or hang onto, or hold onto, or be enabled and empowered by. God the Holy Spirit lets us see unseen things above. He is the means by which we commit ourselves to the righteous judge.

That's our ability. Can you understand quantum physics? I've looked at it. I've read about it.

I've been trained in it. I don't understand it. Quarks and discharge a battery, and it's lighter in mass and energy.

I don't get it, but one thing I do get because God has given us the Holy Spirit, one thing all of us get is spiritual truth, the reality of Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of the Father, the reality of the coming judgment, the reality of inheritance, the reality of the eternal future, the reality of eternal life now. We get it. We understand it.

We comprehend it because God has placed his Spirit in us to tell us that we are his children,

witnesses with our Spirit, that we are children of God, and through him we cry out, Abba, Father. You can't get that at your local five and dime. You can't get that through philosophy.

You can't get it from Dr. Phil. It is the connection to heaven. It is the connection to Jesus Christ that Peter is talking about here.

So in chapter 3, he says, wives be submissive so that even if they are disobedient, kind of like even if your master is twisted, oh slave, you can win them. They will observe your conduct accompanied with respectful obedience. Your respectful obedience has nothing to do with the quality of your husband.

It has everything to do with the righteous judge in heaven whom we see looking unto Jesus through the power of the Spirit, through the picture painted in the Word of God. That way you have inner beauty. That's where your inner beauty comes from because any shrewish woman, any shrewish person can live in this world and get caught up in the things of this world and its disappointments and its pettinesses and its insignificant conflicts.

The person who has inner beauty, man or woman, high or low, authority or submittor, inner beauty comes as a reflection of looking at Jesus. We're like a mirror. Who is the one who is fair? Who is the lily of the valley? Who is the bright and morning star? Where is genuine beauty to be found? It's in the Lord Jesus.

And looking at him, following his example, that's the inner adornment that Peter is talking about. That's the inner beauty. And that beauty, anybody that has the glimmer of a ghost of a whisper of an interest in God is going to be attracted by the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ reflected in us.

This is how the wife wins her husband without a word. This is how the employee wins his boss without a word. This is how the slave wins his master without a word.

This is how anybody, any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in this world can bear witness to the world without having to go stand on the street corner and hand out tracts. It is the reflected glory of Jesus Christ. We have to be looking at him.

You've got to aim a mirror at a thing before it can reflect that thing. Looking unto Jesus. This is what Peter says.

And this is something we can do. You say, well, you know, you're talking about all these things we're supposed to be doing, but I still wonder how I'm supposed to do it. You cannot decide to love.

You can't decide to be mature. You can't decide, you know, in the absence of anything else to just not sin for no other good reason than you have decided not to. But one thing we can decide to do is to look at our heavenly heritage.

You can do that with a decision. You can decide to do it. God, the Holy Spirit is here to give us that power.

And it takes nothing more than choosing. We have the vision. It's a matter of am I going to look at the earth or am I going to look at heaven? Take no thought for what you shall eat, what you shall wear, right? Sufficient unto the day.

Your heavenly Father knows what you have need of. Look to your Father. Right? It's a decision.

It's a choice. We can do that. You don't have to have a teacup full of the Word of God in your soul to be able to look to heaven, to look to Jesus.

But we do have to decide to do it. You can be a slave. You can be a husband.

You can be a wife. Dwell, husbands, in verse 7 with understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the more precious, delicate vessel. Treat her like the finest china, the best crystal, being fellow heirs of the grace of life.

As soon as you say fellow heirs of the grace of life, where are you looking? Are you saying fellow investors in the stock market, fellow owners of real estate, fellow workers in a company, fellow heirs of the grace of life, where are we looking? It is kleronomia. It is inheritance from heaven, the grace of life now and in the ages to come. Where is the blessing of God on your marriage, on your home, on your family, and on your future? It's looking to heaven so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Notice it is the husband who is assumed to be the prayer leader. He doesn't tell the wives, be sure you adorn yourself so that your prayers aren't hindered. With inner beauty, he says, husband, you'd better be treating your wife right or your prayers are going to be hindered.

These are your prayers on behalf of yourself, your wife, your kids, your family, your future, all the things that you're responsible for as the head of the household. If you are abusing your wife mentally or just in any sort of unkindness, any kind of maltreatment, just psychological mistreatment, that's the end of your prayer life. That's the end of your forgiveness.

That's the end of your washing clean, the end of your sanctification in the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin. It's all the same as the Lord's Prayer. We are forgiven as we forgive others.

But now we come to verse 8. Finally, and if you read this in English, what does it say? Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous. Looks like a bunch of imperatives here, doesn't it? You know what verse 8 is composed of? There's not an imperative in it. It's all adjectives.

It's all adjectives. We are not going to get an imperative anywhere in here. Not in verse 8, not in

verse 9, not until Peter starts quoting from Psalm 34 down in verse 10 are we going to get an imperative.

And then we're going to get a whole string of them. And even these are going to be sort of in the third person. Let him do the following things.

It's an imperative, but it's in the third person. The one who wants these things, here's what he must do. But these are adjectives.

Time for us to pause and take our break. We'll be back in about 10 minutes and we'll pick up here and see why Peter doesn't start with commands, doesn't start with exhortations. He just gives a description.

It's all adjectives. Why? That's where we'll pick up.