

Friday: *Opposites...*

Read: 1 Peter 2:21-25 ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Reflect:

Have we been called to suffer? Yes. But it depends on what is meant by “suffer”. For example, we’re not all called to be crucified (thank goodness), but we will all face some form of hardship due to our faith. The world is hostile towards us (Jn15:18-20).

We’ve been called to imitate Jesus. I realize the WWJD phase is somewhat passed (at least I think) – but the thought behind it is valid. The word for “example” indicates handwriting intended to be copied by children learning to write. Another way of putting this is that Jesus’ life gives us the framework (outline); the individual brushstrokes will be unique to us.

Notice the order in the middle of v24. We have to die to sin before we can live righteously. It’s not by our will power that we live godly lives (phases of that can be achieved...but that can lead to arrogance). His death and resurrection sets us free...

Respond:

Has someone’s model of the Christian life made an impact on you? Have you thanked them?

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and note the similarities to these verses.

The word for “returned” is also used in the sense of converting to Christianity (e.g., Mk4:12; Acts3:19) – have you “returned” to Jesus?

Pray: Confess to God your ‘unlikeness’ to Jesus and your desire to be more ‘like’ Him. Thank God for Jesus’ death and subsequent resurrection. Continue to pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.

Saturday: *Love and Marriage...*

Read: 1 Peter 3:1-12

Reflect:

Anyone else want to preach tomorrow? Just kidding (sort of). For some reason these are touchy verses. I think it has something to do with Genesis 3:16. Yet it also has something to do with unchecked passions. It also has to do with not imitating Jesus. It also...

Roman men were not known for faithfulness to their wives. How does that play into these verses? What about Sarah calling Abraham “lord”? Is this including Abram’s requests in Genesis 12 and 20? What do we make of those instances? What about a husband’s prayers being hindered? OK, does anyone else want to preach tomorrow? I’m not kidding as much any more...

Marriage is difficult. Yet this passage isn’t all about marriage. At least not “human” marriage. Maybe I’ll just focus on verses eight and following....

Respond:

How has this insert been helpful to you this past week?

For those who are married, how is it going? Are you working together as a team? For those who are not married, are you keeping yourself pure while waiting for the day you might be married?

How are you preparing yourself for tomorrow?

Pray: Pray for those God is prompting to come to New Life tomorrow to be obedient and come. Pray that what we do tomorrow is pleasing to God and that lives will be positively impacted by the interactions we have, the singing, preaching, and teaching...pray for a God-honoring day. Thank God for His love.

Change is Necessary, but Not (necessarily) Instant

November 2 – 8

Sometimes it takes a while for things to sink in...

- Acts 1:6 ⁶ So when they (the disciples, including Peter) had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”
 - In other words, when are You going to set up Your earthly Kingdom Jesus? We want it here and now...
 - 1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles...
- Matthew 16:21-23 ²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
 - Peter simply could not envision the Messiah suffering in any way; certainly that wasn’t part of God’s plan...
 - 1 Peter 2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.
- Matthew 26:69-75 ⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all... ⁷¹... another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath... ⁷³... After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.
 - Granted, Peter was obviously in emotional turmoil during this time, but...
 - 1 Peter 2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.
- John 21:15-19 ¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”... He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”... He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.
 - 1 Peter 2:25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

May we all continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Monday: Back to the Basics

Read: 1 Peter 2:11-12 ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Reflect:

After reminding his readers about their privileged status (2:9-10) Peter basically says, ‘but don’t forget that you’re here only a short time – your ultimate allegiance is to the King’. Isn’t it just like us to take a truth of our faith (e.g., grace) and distort it (e.g., not responding appropriately to it)?

Due to our privileged status we have an immense responsibility (e.g., last week’s sermon). Unfortunately, we seem prone to thinking our ‘thoughts,’ ‘feelings,’ and ‘inner desires’ are uncontrollable (e.g., that’s just the way I am). Yet if that was true, would Peter command us to “abstain” from harmful ones? I don’t think so. Neither does the rest of the Bible (e.g., Jas4:1,7-12).

It seems as if we’re ‘back to the basics’ in these verses. Peter has already told us to “think right” (1Pet1:13f), which is also not an uncommon theme in the New Testament (e.g., Matt5:6; Rom12:1f; 2Cor10:4f). In light of thinking right, we need to gain a better perspective on the end of verse 12. It seems many take this to mean, “Even those pagans will glorify God one day...whether they want to or not!” Is that a renewed mind? I don’t think so. In fact, it sounds like a spiteful and vengeful spirit to me (contra 1Pet2:23). Recall what was said about that verse in Sunday’s message (e.g., God ‘showing up’ in a person’s life).

Pray: Thank God that He is at work in and around everyone’s life...pray people become aware of this and respond appropriately. Confess to God the “passions” with which you struggle – ask Him for help. Continue to pray for workers in God’s Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).

Respond:

How have you responded to grace today? How will you tomorrow?

Read 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11. What are some passions with which you struggle? How are you getting help?

Read and ponder these examples of God’s visitation (Gen50:24-25; Exod13:19; Lk7:16; 19:41-44)

Tuesday: God’s Will

Read: 1 Peter 2:13-15 ¹³ Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Reflect:

What is God’s will? It is talked about a lot in Christian circles. Actually, it is even talked about by those with disdain for God (e.g., in a mocking way). God’s will is really quite simple, here Peter explains it as “doing good”. Does not Matthew 22:37-40 fit here? It seems Paul sums it up with love (Rom13:8-10), which fits here too.

The word for “silence” is a strong word. It’s what Jesus did to the Sadducees (Mt22:34). Literalistically it means “to muzzle”. Notice that we aren’t to retaliate against those who speak wrongly against us. Our way of life is to convict them they are wrong and leave them speechless.

Peter wrote these words when a maniac (i.e., Nero) was the emperor of Rome. Yet Peter says to “submit” to him. Now obviously Peter isn’t saying submit if he tells you to do something contrary to God’s will (e.g., Acts4:18-22), but he is saying ‘don’t make it harder on yourself than it already will be’.

Pray: Pray for help to put Matthew 22:37-40 into action. Ask God for the strength to allow your “good deeds” to speak when you’re words might not be heard (cf. Lk6:35). Continue to pray for God’s people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).

Respond:

Do you struggle with “finding” God’s will for your life? What are three ways you’re applying Mt22:37-40? Why not persist in those (or start) for a month and then re-evaluate God’s will?

Have your good deeds ever left someone speechless?

Today is election day. Will you submit to whoever is elected?

Wednesday: The Election is Over

Read: 1 Peter 2:16-17 ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Reflect:

What is freedom? Do we really know? It seems many view freedom as a license to do whatever they want, whenever they want (many limit that to within the confines of ‘the law’ – which negates “freedom” doesn’t it?). Yet it seems that is a mixture of relativism (my view is right for me) and pragmatism (it works) rather than freedom.

The reality is that we are most free when living in submission to those over us. It sounds nonsensical, but it’s true... For us, our ultimate submission should be to God, as His slaves (i.e., “servants”). To be ‘free’ from God’s rule is to be enslaved to our sinful passions; hence not really free...

Verse 17 is chiasmic in thought. The outside verbs are the same (i.e., honor) and are directed toward “human institution” (cf. 2:13). Yet the focus of the verse is on “brotherhood” and “God”. Put another way, we can (and are commanded to) honor those over us authority-wise. Yet this doesn’t mean we “fear” them – that is reserved for God alone. It also doesn’t mean we must “love” them. Yet we are to submit (cf. Rom13:1-7). Remember, Nero was Emperor at this time and he was a despotic ruler, even murdering Christians...

Pray: Pray for our governmental leaders (1Tim2:1-4). Confess to God that you want to live in submission to His will. Continue to pray for God’s Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).

Respond:

How many of your ‘everyday decisions’ (e.g., vacation, vehicle, free time) are influenced by how they might impact the Kingdom?

Struggling with the paragraph to the left? Try this: are you not more free when you drive the speed limit (i.e., you don’t even think of being caught)?

The election is now over. Will you honor Obama or McCain (whoever won)? Read 1Tim2:1-4 for guidance.

Thursday: Focused on God

Read: 1 Peter 2:18-20 ¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

Reflect:

Let’s be honest, this is a hard text because these relationships don’t exist today (at least not in America). Peter’s addressing household slaves; yet these slaves often had large responsibility and many were trained (e.g., doctors, teachers, musicians). In light of those descriptors it’s close to an employee submission. However, slaves didn’t have a choice – they had to serve (they were slaves).

Even though they aren’t direct parallels, we ought to be guided by the principles here. One is respecting the position of whoever is “over” you – regardless of their character. In other words, be a good employee even if you have a lousy boss (remember 2:12). Another is being mindful of God. Notice Peter isn’t saying suffering is good for suffering’s sake – he’s saying without a basis for suffering (i.e., ultimate submission to God), then it’s ultimately worthless.

Remember that Peter isn’t saying to disobey God (cf. Acts4:18-22). But He is saying that we can (and should) put up with a lot more than we are likely to do on our own. It’s for God’s glory (1Pet2:12)

Pray: Pray for your employer to submit to the Lordship of Jesus (or thank God if he/she already has). Pray that you are mindful of God in all you do today. Pray for open doors to spread God’s Word (Col4:2-6) and the boldness to do so.

Respond:

Have you ever had a “crooked” boss? Did you still put in honest work?

In Peter’s day slaves were to obey without questioning – so for Peter to address them ‘raised their status’. Why would Peter do this?

Read James 5:4. Ultimately those who are wicked will get what’s coming to them...but we must temper that with 1 Peter 2:12.