

Monday - 1 Peter 1:22–2:3

We have been born again through the seed of God's Word

Insight

1:25 *"The word of the Lord stands forever."* Throughout this section, Peter places special emphasis on the enduring nature and perfection of the Christian faith.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. Verse 22 contains insight into how we have become believers and what we should do as God's people. Focus on each of these statements and describe what you are as a Christian.
 - "purified yourselves" *When we believed, we purified ourselves.*
 - "by obeying the truth" *We came to obey the truth, which means to believe God when he says we are saved only through Jesus. We were purified through faith in his sacrifice.*
 - "so that you have sincere love" *Through faith we became new creations, willing and eager to serve the Lord. We serve him by loving him and our fellowman.*
 - "love one another deeply" *It seems odd that Peter says we do love (in the previous phrase) and then says that we ought to love. But this is normal. Because of what we are, we love. Because we still have a sinful nature, we need to be encouraged to grow in love.*
2. Verses 23 and 25 also give us insight into what we are as Christians. Focus on each of these statements.
 - "been born again" *We grow in love when we remember the great blessing God has given us when he enabled us to be born again into his family.*
 - "through the living and enduring word of God" *God's Word has power. It both informed us of our salvation in Christ and then worked in our hearts to believe. It will never fade away.*
 - "This is the word that was preached to you." *Peter links Old Testament prophecies with the message of preachers like himself and Paul. The Word that brings Christians to faith will never pass away.*
3. To what is the "therefore" of 2:1 referring?

Apply

4. How should we be like newborn babies?
5. How can the quotation in 1:24,25 help us age gracefully?

Summary - We have been born again by the unfading Word of God. Desire that Word like newborn babies.

Answers

- 1) See above
- 2) See above
- 3) It is referring to the fact that we have been born again through the Word of God, which cannot fail. Because we are born again into a new life, God wants us to put away the sins that are part of our old life.
- 4) Babies show their desire and their need for milk, as well as their appreciation of it. They are very single-minded and definite in making clear what they want. That's how we should be toward God's Word.
- 5) Since the Word doesn't "age," we will always be young spiritually by clinging to it. As a result, we can better accept the fact that earthly things decline and that there will be opportunities to serve our Lord at every stage of life.

Tuesday - 1 Peter 2:4-10

We are the living stones of Christ's church

Insight

Verses 4-6 *“Living stones”*—We are “living stones,” part of a “spiritual house.” This invisible house is the holy Christian church. It is also the New Testament temple of God, where God lives. It consists of all who believe in Jesus. For this reason Jesus is the “cornerstone,” who gives direction and strength to the church.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. Peter's readers were being rejected by the people in the world around them. How does he encourage them in verse 4?
2. How is Peter's description of Christians as living stones designed to help his readers face the challenges of Jewish detractors?
3. How can Jesus be the true Savior if so many reject him? That's what Peter's readers, and we, are tempted to think. How does Peter show from the Old Testament that we should not be surprised at this?
4. List all the blessings we have received as God's New Testament people, blessings the Old Testament believers had in a sense, but which were temporary for them.

Apply

5. What would your life be like without the blessings Peter lists for us?

Summary - In Christ we have received countless blessings. We are the people of God and are able to praise him for all his blessings.

Answers

- 1) Jesus was rejected by men too, but he was chosen by God and precious to him. So are those who are in Christ, namely Christians.
- 2) We mention the Jewish detractors because they were an immediate threat to the Christians in Asia Minor to whom Peter was writing. Although Peter's words were directed to their particular setting, they are very helpful to us also. We (no longer the Jewish temple in Jerusalem) are the true temple of God. We (no longer the priests in Jerusalem) are the true priests of God. Our sacrifices (not the sacrifices offered in Jerusalem) are what God accepts, for they are offered in Jesus' name. What a privilege we have.
- 3) Peter breaks in with three quick quotations from the Old Testament. The Old Testament predicted that there would be a great division between people. Some would believe and some would not. Those who believe in him will never be ashamed. Those who reject him will fall.
- 4) We are chosen. We are a people, a distinct and chosen group, and we belong to God. We are kings, ruling along with Jesus now. We are priests, able to offer sacrifices to the Lord. We are holy. We have been called out of darkness into light and can now praise the Lord. We have received mercy.
- 5) Answers will vary. The heart of everything, of course, is spiritual life, which we have in Christ. Without this we would have no hope of eternal life, no knowledge of God's presence with us now, and no hope that all things work out for our good.

Wednesday - 1 Peter 2:11-17

Strangers in this world submit to their authorities

Insight

Verse 13 “*Submit*”—The word *submit* means to acknowledge and live by the order God has established. It means to be respectful of those whom God has placed in positions of responsibility

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. What will our good lives finally mean for God? (verse 12)
2. How does the phrase “for the Lord’s sake” in verse 13 help us submit ourselves to our government? In this connection, see what Peter says in verse 16: “live as servants of God.”
3. How does Peter summarize the work of government officials in verse 14?
4. Verse 17 offers a good outline for service. Why does each way of showing proper respect (love, fear, honor) fit the one to whom it is applied?

Apply

5. List some things in your life that tie you too closely with this world. How can you better live as an alien and a stranger in this world?
6. How can a Christian example “silence the ignorant talk of foolish men” when it comes to our obedience to or our participation in the government? (verse 15)
7. Why is it often difficult to make the right response when our country goes to war with another country? Should we defend a nation because of a “bully” leader or because we need to protect our own citizens or legitimate national interests, or should we have nothing to do with seeking to change an established government?

Summary - We want to show our freedom in Christ by freely submitting to our governing authorities.

Answers

- 1) Everyone will give him glory for having done such a great thing for us and in us.
- 2) The Lord has established the powers that exist. (See Romans 13:1-5.) He governs the world through them. When we submit to these authorities, we are cooperating with our Lord.
- 3) They are sent by God to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right. How blessed are the citizens when governments do this and not the opposite!
- 4) We are to love our fellow believers. We don’t owe them obedience, nor are we to “fear” them. We fear God. He alone has the power to condemn us, and he alone has the power to give us salvation in Christ, which he has done. We are to honor the king (or whoever is in the highest office in the country) by paying taxes and obeying the laws. However, we don’t fear leaders like we fear God. They cannot harm or save us ultimately, nor can they tell us what to believe.
- 5) Answers will vary. This could refer to evil desires or even otherwise good things that are drawing us away from service to God.
- 6) Christian participation in government as an official or a citizen shows we are not antigovernment or living in a different world.
- 7) Sometimes we don’t know the true political situation. We should pray that our government leaders trust in the Lord and recognize the sovereignty of other nations before they do anything. We should oppose the war if we know it is unjust.

Thursday - 1 Peter 2:18-25

Suffering slaves look to the example of the suffering Christ

Insight

Verse 18 “*Slaves*”—Bible writers did not work to abolish slavery. This does not mean that they condoned slavery or considered it a normal part of human society, and they certainly did not condone sinful practices associated with it. We are happy that slavery as an institution is not practiced any longer, at least not as a legal activity. Yet how many people in this world are completely free to come and go as they wish? Many, like slaves, must work in sometimes oppressive work situations in which they are forced to remain in order to live. Peter’s words apply to people in such situations. Actually, everyone who works for an employer can put Peter’s words into practice.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. What situation(s) would make the words of verse 18 particularly difficult to swallow for a Christian slave/employee?
2. Why is it “commendable” before God to endure suffering for doing good? (verse 19)
3. What does the word *this* refer to in verse 21?
4. Peter lists several examples of how Jesus endured unjust suffering. What examples did Jesus set? What was Jesus’ attitude when he endured suffering? (verse 23)
5. In a sense, Jesus suffered unjustly because of us. Explain.

Apply

6. What is the connection between the example of Christ and the saving work of Christ? How will understanding this connection help us be more faithful as employers or employees?

Summary - Jesus did not retaliate when he suffered unjustly for our sins. The comfort of sins forgiven leads us to follow his example when we are called on to unjustly suffer in our jobs.

Answers

- 1) When employers are harsh or guilty of harassment.
- 2) When a person is “conscious of God,” he is factoring God into everything he does. It is commendable for a slave who is mistreated to remember that he is free in Christ, that his real master is the loving and faithful Creator of the world, and that soon he will experience an eternity of freedom. If for these reasons we endure suffering at the hands of a master or an employer, we give glory to God.
- 3) Suffering and bearing up under harsh treatment as a witness to our faith, thus giving glory to God.
- 4) He did not retaliate, nor did he make threats. He did exactly what Peter wants his readers to do. Jesus entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
- 5) He was suffering in our place. He bore our sins in his body. If we had not sinned, he would not have had to go through any of his suffering. He suffered an injustice so God could show us his grace.
- 6) The saving work of Christ assures us of heaven. He died to sin so that we might live as people who are righteous in his blood. His wounds healed us. Through him, we have returned to our Lord. He suffered injustice so we might have these blessings. How can we not follow his example if he calls us to put up with injustice in our workplace and honor him?

Friday - 1 Peter 3:1-7

Christian spouses display godly respect to each other

Insight

- Verse 3 *“Outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes”*—In Peter’s day, all of these items were signs of extravagance, very costly. In our culture, it is not wrong for a woman to fix her hair, wear modest gold jewelry, and dress nicely. But it would be wrong to go to high-priced hair stylists, wear extravagant jewelry, and covet designer dresses to display her beauty and inflame physical desire.
- Verse 7 *“Weaker partner”*— In general, men have more physical strength and could seek to impose their will through force or intimidation. This has led to countless abuses and sorrows. This is improper for one who sees his wife as a true partner in the faith, someone without whom he is neither full nor complete and someone with whom he is going to spend eternity.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. What does Peter mean with the words “in the same way” in verse 1?
2. By God’s grace, what will be the outcome of the wife’s witness to her hope in Christ?
3. Why must a wife’s true beauty come from her inner self? (verse 4)
4. What stands out as the chief concern of the apostle Peter in encouraging godly submission and respectful leadership? (verses 1,7)

Apply

5. What types of fears might wives be tempted to “give way to”? (verse 6)
6. Why is it difficult for wives and husbands to follow the Lord’s will in their relationships with each other?
7. Discuss: Submitting is a cross to bear, not a privilege to carry out.

Summary - God wants wives to submit to their husbands and husbands to treat their wives with respect.

Answers

- 1) Note that Peter is speaking to women whose husbands are not Christians. Christian wives will want to handle that situation just like Christian slaves handle theirs. Not that both situations are the same. But some women may have to bear up under oppressive husbands. When they do, they should handle their situation just like those who are under unjust masters.
- 2) The husband will come to faith.
- 3) Outer beauty, while a gift of God, will fade. Inner beauty, created in Christ, is unfading and gives glory to God.
- 4) Spiritual concerns—he wants wives to win their husbands over by putting their spiritual beauty on display and husbands to be considerate of their wives so their prayers won’t be hindered.
- 5) Loss of identity, mockery by others, husbands who take advantage of their submission.
- 6) The wife’s old self wants to usurp her husband’s authority. The husband’s old self wants to act in a way undeserving of respect.
- 7) It is a cross because of our sinful pride. It is a privilege to follow Jesus in his sufferings.

Saturday - 1 Peter 3:8-17

Christians, live in harmony with one another

Insight

Verses 10-12 The Bible often attaches God's blessing to our works. This is not work-righteousness. Rather, it is God's way to encourage his people not to give up their faith and stop producing the fruits of faith. We are saved by faith. We receive God's blessings by faith. But we are also new creations by faith. As such we want to serve our Lord, and we can be sure he will graciously give us eternal, and even earthly, blessings.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. In this section, Peter moves from specific groups of people to Christians in general. Define each of the qualities Peter urges us to put on. What does each quality contribute to our lives together as God's people?
2. How does Peter weave the gospel into his instructions in verse 9?
3. What is the blessing we will inherit?
4. How do verses 13 and 14 put the matter of happiness and blessedness in a Christian perspective, as opposed to the perspective of the world?
5. How should we deal with fear in the face of persecution?

Apply

6. Christians who suffer for their faith are often asked why they suffer so calmly. Times of suffering, be it persecution, illness, financial problems, give us a chance to put our faith on display. Think of a time when someone has asked you about your faith when he or she saw your calmness and trust in the face of suffering.
7. Peter reminds us that one great blessing that can result from persecution is the opportunity to share the reason for the hope that we have (verse 15). Why are we to do so "with gentleness and respect"?

Summary - We are to live with others in peace. Even if we suffer according to God's will, we do not have to be afraid. Our attitude of trust bears witness to our faith.

Answers

- 1) Note each of the following: Harmoniousness, sympathy, love, compassion, humility.
- 2) God will give us a blessing. We are unworthy of his blessing. He gives it to us purely out of his grace. How can we not graciously bless those who are unworthy of our kindness?
- 3) Peter speaks about our blessing as an inheritance. That would push our minds into the future, to the time when we will receive eternal life. Yet he also has in mind earthly blessings. To illustrate his point, Peter quotes from Psalm 34:12-16.
- 4) If we do good, people are not going to harm us. We will be blessed with peace. But even if we do good, we may suffer harm.
- 5) We should not be afraid, for the Lord is with us.
- 6) Answers will vary.
- 7) This is consistent with our lifestyle. Also, it may have taken much courage and humility for the other person to ask us about our hope.

Sunday - 1 Peter 3:18-22

Christians, suffer as Christ suffered for you

Insight

- Verse 18 *“Made alive by the Spirit”*—This could also be translated “made alive in his spiritual (that is, glorified) existence.” The contrast would then be this: Jesus was put to death in the humble, physical existence he had when he walked this earth and bore our sins. He was raised in a new and glorified existence after he paid for our sins, an existence he still has in heaven.
- Verse 19 *“Through whom”*—We might also translate this “in which,” meaning that after he died, his spirit went to heaven. Early on Sunday morning, his body and soul were reunited. In his new, glorified body, he went into hell to proclaim his victory to the spirits there. This is the only passage in the Bible that speaks of Jesus’ descent into hell. He preached to these spirits to make them know what Noah had said to them (which they rejected) had been fulfilled.
- Verse 20 *“Who disobeyed”*—Peter probably chooses to mention these spirits because he wants to draw a beautiful parallel between the flood and the water of Baptism.

Points to Ponder/Discussion

1. How did Christ suffer for doing good? (verse 17)
2. Compare the waters of the flood with the water of Baptism. Use the picture of the water of the flood to help you remember your baptism.
3. What does it mean that Baptism is a “pledge of a good conscience toward God”? (verse 21)
4. Peter makes a rather unusual connection in verse 21. He connects our baptisms and Jesus’ resurrection. See Romans 6:3,4. What is the connection?

Apply

5. Picture where Jesus is right now (verse 22). How does this inspire you to trust in him despite the suffering you must go through on earth?

Summary - Jesus died and rose. Through our baptisms, we have been joined to his resurrection.

Answers

- 1) He, the righteous one, died for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He died not because he was a sinner but because he was carrying our sins on himself.
- 2) The waters of the flood destroyed everything on earth. At the same time, it raised the ark up above this destruction. The water of Baptism has raised us above God’s condemnation of the world, and it will also raise us up above the destruction coming on the world on the Last Day. When you think of your baptism, think of yourself being in an ark, rising up to the Lord while fire destroys the world below you.
- 3) Baptism is not merely physical water, such as we would use to wash dirt off our bodies. We are washed clean of our sin and are able to stand before God with clear consciences.
- 4) Through Baptism we are linked with Jesus’ death, and so we are linked with his resurrection. Because Jesus rose, free from our sins, we live to serve our Lord in purity right now.
- 5) Jesus is now sitting at God’s right hand with everything in submission to him. His opponents are doing exactly what he wants them to do, even if that means we will suffer. The Lord is chastening us, and he is proving to all that the faith he created in our hearts is genuine.