

Day 186, 1 Peter 2

by David Servant

Believers are called to live a life of holiness, feeding on God's Word, and offering up spiritual sacrifices, while enduring unjust suffering with patience and trust in God's ultimate justice.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 2:23-25

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

David Servant emphasizes Peter's call to holiness, urging believers to put aside sins like malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander, as they are detrimental to the Christian walk. He highlights the importance of regularly feeding on God's Word, drawing parallels to newborn babies craving nourishment. Servant encourages viewing oneself as 'living stones' in God's temple, offering spiritual sacrifices through obedience, and as a chosen race and royal priesthood, motivating believers to abstain from fleshly lusts. He also addresses unjust suffering, pointing to Christ's example of enduring persecution with patience and trust in God's righteous judgment.

Transcript

Today's chapter continues Peter's emphasis on holiness. Obviously, believers are capable of committing the sins of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander, otherwise Peter would not have felt a need to admonish his readers to put them all aside (2:1). Of course, lying, hypocrisy, jealousy and envy are all mentioned elsewhere as being damning sins (Rev. 21:8; Matt. 24:51; Gal. 5:20-21). Peter's admonitions are more than just "helpful hints for self improvement."

Peter paints a few metaphorical pictures to help us to progress in Christ. We are to be "like newborn babes" who "long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it we may grow in respect to salvation" (2:2). We all know how much babies desire their mother's milk. Without that nourishment, they'll die. Likewise, we need to feed regularly on God's Word. A little snack once a week on Sundays is not enough. Babies need their mother's milk every few hours. We literally can't get too much of God's Word. He told the Israelites:

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deut. 6:5-9).

Peter not only wants us to see ourselves as hungry babies, but also as "living stones" that are being used to construct a holy temple, of which Jesus is the cornerstone. Together, we "offer up spiritual sacrifices," that is, worship through our acts of obedience (2:5).

Peter also describes us as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (2:9). These are not metaphorical descriptions, but actual realities. If we see ourselves as God does, we are more motivated to "abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul" (2:11). All of us face those inward battles. Seeing ourselves as royal priests and a holy nation helps us to win that battle. When faced with temptation, we should remind ourselves, "Because of who I am, I don't stoop to that sort of behavior."

Unjust suffering is certainly not something from which Christians are exempt. In fact, Peter seems to imply that it is our destiny (2:21). Remembering Christ's example can help us to endure. Truly, there has never been a greater example of unjust suffering than when Jesus, sinless and pure, was persecuted and crucified. Yet He patiently and quietly endured, and "kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (2:23). He knew that one day, everyone who reviled Him would have to stand before His Father and give an account. So we can also rest in God's ultimate justice. Our calm and non-retaliatory confidence is liable to make them wonder, just as Jesus' silence astonished Pilate (Matt 27:14). Perhaps it will lead to their repentance.

Peter sums up the gospel beautifully in today's final two verses. Jesus "bore our sins in His body on the cross" (2:24). His reason? That "we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (2:24). So the fifth verse of the American abolitionist song, The Battle Hymn of the Republic, rings true:

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me: As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free, While God is marching on.

Both the repentance required and the transformation offered in the gospel are rooted in the Old Testament, indicated by Peter as he alludes to Isaiah 53. "All of us like sheep have gone astray," wrote both Isaiah and Peter (2:25), but "now we have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls" (2:25). That is repentance. And "by Jesus' wounds," both Isaiah and Peter wrote, "we were healed" (2:24). That is transformation.

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