



Unit I: "Living with Hope in a Broken World"

June 21, 2020

### Lesson III: The Testimony of Our Hope (1 Peter 2:13-25)

**The Question:** *How can I point others to Jesus?* **The Point:** *Our hope in Christ points others to Him.*

**Memory Verse:** "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." (1 Peter 2:12, NIV)

**The Setting:** Peter began his letter by describing the priceless blessing his readers had received through their faith in Jesus (1 Pet. 1:1-12). He called them to respond to these blessings by living pure and holy lives (vv. 13-25), citing as motivations God's judgment and Jesus' sacrifice. Peter then expanded on both topics—the believers' new status and the importance of their conduct as they endured persecution for the sake of the gospel.

**Key Words:** *Priesthood* (v. 5)—God appointed Aaron and his descendants to serve as mediators between Himself and the Israelites (Ex. 28:1; Num. 18:1-7). Through Jesus' sacrifice, believers are priests who can approach God directly. *Put to shame* (v. 6)—The Greek word (*kataischuno* - pronounced kat-ah-ee-skoo'-no) has the meaning of to be put to shame, humiliated, or disappointed because of the inadequacy of one's hope or faith.

#### I. "When We Hope in Christ, We Are Never put to Shame" (1 Peter 2:4-6)

*4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.*

**Peter encouraged his readers, those who had been born again (1 Pet. 1:3,23), to continue to grow spiritually (2:1-3).**

*2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

- (Verse 4.). By the phrase **as you come to him** Peter did not mean that they needed to come to Christ again for salvation. They had already entered that state through their faith in Jesus (1:9; 2:2). Rather, he was exhorting them to continue to draw closer to Him, that is, "the Lord" (2:3).
- Peter described Jesus in two ways. Jesus is **a living stone**. Earlier Peter had described "a living hope" that had come to believers "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1:3). The source of their hope was Christ, who is no longer dead but alive; their hope was for "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (v. 4). Later Peter said that the believers had "been born again ... through the living and enduring word of God" (v. 23) which endures forever (v. 25). Everything about Jesus is living and enduring. As a stone signifies strength and endurance, so does the resurrected Lord.

- Jesus is also the one **rejected by people but chosen and honored by God**. The prophecy of the Christ being **rejected** by people comes from **Psalm 118:22**. God the Father **honored** Jesus. To God the Father, Jesus is His precious and beloved Son.
- *Verse 5*. Like Jesus, believers are **living stones, a spiritual house, being built to be a holy priesthood**. Peter wrote that all Christians, every one of them a priest, are **to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**. Because of their faith, they are eternally alive through the power of the Holy Spirit and had become God's temple, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt (**1 Cor. 3:16**).
- *Verse 6*. Peter resumed his focus on Jesus by quoting from **Isaiah 28:16**. In the original context the prophet was warning the people of Judah of their false sense of trust in foreign alliances. In the Isaiah passage, God referred to Himself as "a *tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*" for His people. The people should have looked to God for safety and security, not to foreign alliances. God assured His people that those who trusted in Him would be secure.

**Guiding Question:** *What does it mean to you that Jesus is the Cornerstone of your life and how is your life a testament to this amazing truth?*

### **Spiritual Truths:**

- Peter pointed to Jesus as this **cornerstone**, as Paul did in **Ephesians 2:20**. Jesus is not merely a stone, but **a chosen and honored cornerstone**. In a building the entire structure depends on the strength and position of the cornerstone; the other stones are placed beside and over it. Like Jesus, believers are **living stones, a spiritual house, being built to be a holy priesthood**.
- The foundation for God's spiritual house is the cornerstone of Jesus, God's chosen Messiah. Peter encouraged his readers to stay faithful to Christ, because they would never be **put to shame** for believing in and trusting in Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

## **II. "We Stand Confidently Because of Who We Are" (1 Peter 2:7-10)**

*7 So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving, The stone that the builders rejected—this one has become the cornerstone, 8 and A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

**Peter contrasted the Christians who believed with those people who reject the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Verse 7)**

- Just as God considers Jesus worthy of honor (vv. 4,6), He also places high honor on those **who believe** in Him. However, those who reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus will themselves be rejected.
- Peter alluded to **Psalm 118:22** in verse 4 when he stated that Jesus, a living stone, had been rejected. Now Peter referenced the entire verse to stress how the Jewish religious leaders had rejected Jesus and had Him crucified. However, God has given Jesus the highest honor, making Him **the cornerstone**, by raising Him from the dead and glorifying Him.

**Many of the Jews rejected Jesus and His claim to be the Son of God. (Verse 8)**

- Many of the people among whom Peter's readers were living had also rejected Jesus. For these people Jesus, **the word** of the gospel offered to them, was **a stone to stumble over and a rock to trip over** (from **Isa. 8:14**).

- They rejected the gospel, the word of salvation offered to them. Many people find the gospel to be scandalous, offensive to them. In Isaiah's day the faithless stumbled over God's promise of protection. In Peter's day they tripped over Jesus and His offer of eternal salvation.
- **Peter concluded his description of those who rejected Jesus, noting the reason such people stumble: *They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.*** God knew that those who reject Jesus will stumble and trip and thus suffer as did those who rejected God in Isaiah's day.

**Peter resumed his focus on the faithful believers. (Verse 9)**

- He applied four descriptive titles to Christians. Believers are **a chosen race**. Just as God called Abraham to trust and obey Him and promised to make his family into a great nation (**Gen. 12:1-2**), Peter announced that God had chosen Jesus' followers, both Jews and Gentiles, to be His children and heirs (**Rom. 8:16-17**).
- Jesus' followers are also **a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession**. All three of these concepts are found in **Exodus 19:5-6**. Through Peter God said that Jesus' followers **are** fulfilling all these roles. As God called the Israelites to be His "kingdom of priests" (**Ex. 19:6**), every believer is a priest and is adopted into the family of God through faith in His Son, Jesus. Every believer is able to come before God (**Heb. 10:19**).
- While Jesus is the mediator between God and people through His sacrifice on the cross, believers in one sense serve in a similar role. Christians are ambassadors of God to the people of the world, bringing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations and making disciples (**Matt. 28:18-20 (Matt. 5:14-16; John 1:4; 3:19-21; 8:12) (2 Cor. 4:4-6; Eph. 5:8-14)**).
- Peter pointed out the vast difference between these believers in their present state and their lives before they put their faith in Jesus. *What is your before conversion (BC) and after conversion (AC) comparison?*

**Guiding Questions:** *Why are you confident that Christ can be trusted? How does it make you feel that God chose you to be a part of His family?*

**Spiritual Truth:**

- *Jesus' disciples are a **chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for His possession**. Believers have been called out of the darkness of the world system controlled by Satan and brought into the light of God through Jesus Christ. The natural response of the Christian for all God has done for him or her should be to praise Him. One of the best ways we can praise God is to bring others to the light that we have experienced by our faith in His Son, Jesus.*
- *Those who rejected Jesus, they stumble because they disobey the Word—Jesus became a stumbling stone. Those who reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus will themselves be rejected.*

**III. "Our Lives Can Lead Others to Glorify God" (1 Peter 2:11-15)**

*11 Dear friends, I urge you as good strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your works and will glorify God on the day he visits. 13 Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority. 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. 15 For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.*

**It has been said, “No one has to work to be a witness.” The only issue is what kind of a witness we will be. (Verse 11)** Peter urged his readers to live in such a way that they would always bring glory to God in word and deed.

- Addressing his audience as **dear friends**, Peter admonished them to live as **strangers and exiles**. Peter used similar language in 1:1 and 1:17. Christians are not permanent residents on this earth. While all human beings experience suffering due to living in a fallen world, Christians face persecution for their allegiance to Jesus Christ (John 6:40,47; 16:33).
- Peter urged his readers to **abstain from sinful desires**. The apostle John wrote that believers were not to love the world (in the sense of the world system that is opposed to God and is controlled by Satan and his allies) or the things in the world (**1 John 2:15**).
- John identified three such sinful desires: “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions*” (v. 16).
- The apostle Paul added another when he warned Timothy, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). These and all sinful desires **wage war against** the believer’s **soul**. This is part of the reason why Paul challenged the believers in Ephesus to get dressed for the spiritual battle in the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

**Peter urged his readers to live honorably among non-believers. Verse 12.**

- ❖ In Christ, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, believers must deal with their sinful thoughts, desires, and appetites (Gal. 5:16-26). Part of the reason why Christians need to live holy lives is the persecution they will suffer at the hands of non-Christians (here described as **Gentiles**). While non-believers might seek to slander Christians as evil-doers, believers are to live in such a manner that these accusations will have no legitimate basis in fact (**3:16-17**).
- ❖ The Greek translated **glorify God on the day he visits** is difficult to interpret. It refers to God is coming. The question is will He come with judgment or mercy? Some biblical scholars believe the day God visits refers to Jesus’ coming in final judgment when every knee will bow (**Phil. 2:10**). Others interpret this phrase as the response of former nonbelievers who glorify God on the day they embrace His salvation through Christ.

**One of the primary ways Christians can demonstrate good works to nonbelievers around them is by being good citizens (see Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1). Verse 13-14.**

- ❖ Peter allowed no exceptions (**every human authority ... whether to the emperor ... or to governors**) in terms of picking or choosing which leaders to obey.
- ❖ However, both Jesus and Peter set limits on the believer’s obedience to human authorities. When the choice is between obeying God’s commands and a human authority’s commands, the believer is to obey God (**Matt. 10:28; John 19:8-11; Acts 4:18-20**). But aside from this exception, believers are to obey human authorities. Believers are to do so **because of the Lord**. Peter and Paul both stressed that governments and their rulers are established by God to deal with those who do evil (see Rom. 13:1-4). Rulers do this by punishing the unlawful and affirming the law-abiding citizens.

**Verse 15. While some believers may have thought the best way to silence their opponents was through successful debate, Peter said that God’s will was that Christians do so through their good works.** The word for **ignorance** suggests more a lack of spiritual understanding/non-belief than a mere lack of knowledge.

**Guiding Questions:** *If you could you rank yourself as a credible witness in this dark and dying world? How can you positively impact the current calamity (Covid-19, Racism, Corrupt Leaders...) in our world?*

**Spiritual Truth:** Christians can lead others to glorify God by aligning your spiritual walk and talk, live honorable among unbelievers, and be a good citizen and obey God above all else.