

Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Series #9: 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter
Session #2: 1 Peter 2:1 – 3:12
Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Christian Conduct in a Pagan World

Overview of 1 Peter

- A. Salutation (1:1-2)
- B. Thanksgiving: A Living Hope (1:3-12)
- C. Body of the Letter (1:13 – 5:11)
 - a. A new identity of the people of God (1:13 – 2:10)
 - i. A call to holy living (1:13-22)
 - ii. Loving one another from the heart (1:22-25)
 - iii. The living stone and a chosen people (2:1-10)
 - b. Christian conduct in the given structures of society (2:11 – 3:12)
 - i. Live as servants of God (2:11-17)
 - ii. The example of Christ's suffering (2:18-25)
 - iii. Wives and husbands (3:1-12)
 - c. Responsible suffering in the face of society (3:13 – 5:11)
 - i. Suffering for doing right (3:13-22)
 - ii. Good stewards of God's grace (4:1-11)
 - iii. Suffering as a Christian (4:12-19)
 - iv. Tending the flock of God (5:1-11)
- D. Epistolary Conclusion (5:12-14)

Notes

- The opening of Chapter 2 is the third point that Peter wants to call attention to regarding the Christian identity. He uses a familiar image of everyday life—a child, and one from the OT—a stone.
 - Be like a newborn longing for milk—spiritual milk.
 - Taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm 34:8
 - Analogy to Christ as the stone selected by God but rejected by human beings
- 1 Peter 2:11 – 3:12 deals with Christian conduct within the context of society, or appropriate behavior for being good witnesses in the Pagan world. Christians can set an example for the rest of society. Peter confronts master/servant relationships as well as that of husbands and wives. The attention of this section is not on changing the social or domestic order (even if it is unjust), but rather on how to behave in a way that exemplifies patience and self-giving to Christ.
 - “of the flesh” refers to the misguided and unrestrained desires that reflect a life of the flesh as opposed to a life of the Spirit. (compare Romans 7:14 or 2 Corinthians)

- Sadly, this section has been used throughout history to justify and maintain unjust institutions, like slavery or tyrannical regimes, and unequal relationships, like the submission of wives to their husbands.
- The author's point in this section is to live a life that is different and above non-Christian society. He (or perhaps she!) also wants to encourage Christians to behave appropriately in the face of non-Christians, who might be inspired to change their behavior.

Question to consider

1. 1 Peter was written to encourage Christians on how to behave in the world as they knew it, how can we apply that advice to life today?
2. What challenges do we face in our society today that 1 Peter might inform us about?

Resources

Notes from HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV), 1989

“1 Peter” in *Sacra Pagina*, Daniel J. Harrington, ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2008)

The CEB Women's Bible, 2016