

Life Group Notes

Sunday 20th February 2022

Speaker: Scott Taylor

Title: 1 Peter: Really!?!

Passage: 1 Peter 2: 13-21

We continued our series this week looking at 1 Peter in a passage that is not easy for us to get our heads around in our setting. Being Christians now is relatively comfortable, although things are slowly starting to change in that. We live at a time when we are used to speaking up, speaking out, expressing our opinions fighting for our rights and as long as we are in line with the broad cultural narratives we will be accepted and applauded. We also live at a time when any sort of authority is considered dangerous due to the abuses of power we have witnessed over hundreds of years. So, we see that this passage doesn't sit well within our cultural context.

We're also going to see that part of this is written to slaves which again makes us question whether this is just an outdated, irrelevant piece of scripture that we get to gloss over. On that, we do need to remember that this letter is written to those who are suffering, not to the powers that be to keep their subjects or servants under control. So, with all that said, what do the verses say.

V13-17 give us an insight into how to live as good citizens against the backdrop of an oppressive regime. A regime that was arresting Christians and throwing them in prison because their refusal to acknowledge Roman gods was seen as destabilizing public order and peace. Against this backdrop Peter calls them to be subject to all human authorities for the sake of the Lord. He goes on to say that the will of God is for them to live such good lives that they the authorities will find it hard to find fault with them. To be clear, Christians do not submit to anything that takes us away from worshipping our God and only him. But this call to live a good life is so when we do face suffering at the hands of governments who are against us, the only thing they can accuse us of is of love and devotion to the triune God and our obedience to his word and nothing else. Put this in the context of Christians who stood during Idi Amin's reign in Uganda or many other regimes around the world even now. How do they think about this? Jesus called us to turn the other cheek, love our enemies, this teaching is just following on from that. So, we do that by honouring everyone, loving the brotherhood, fearing God and honouring the emperor.

V18-20. These verses speak to slaves. We find these types of passages difficult; we maybe think of the transatlantic slave trade that is rightly condemned and seen for the aberration that it was. Even the slave trade in the Roman empire was brutal and dehumanising. As is the sex slave trade that still exists today. This passage is written to all Christians at all times who have found themselves in slavery. To give them dignity and remind them that they are caught up in this great story of Christ. They are given the dignity of choice – choose to do good in the face of the suffering you encounter. Patiently endure, is the call upon their lives. We want them to be rescued, to know love and cherishing, to know freedom; but ironically this passage speaks to those who are rescued by Jesus, loved and cherished by him and know their freedom in him. He hasn't abandoned them; he hasn't left them. Being rescued into a middle-class life, where we find love and cherishing in marriage and children and know the freedom to choose tea or coffee, is not what the ultimate. Christ is ultimate and this passage is written to help those who are experiencing intolerable suffering and saying you get to take your place, as you patiently endure, you are not forgotten.

V21. And all this is in the light of Christ. Because he suffered and as he did so, he patiently endured, so we too patiently endure as we suffer. He came as a servant (Philippians 2), but more than that, the suffering servant (Isaiah 53). So, if you find yourself in a place of suffering right now, for whatever reason you have one who understands in every way.

Questions:

1. What about the preach have you remembered and have pondered over the week?
2. How have you gone about 'doing good' this week in your context?
3. Peter really calls servants to live with patient endurance, how does this encourage and bring dignity?
4. If you are able, can you tell of when you have suffered and have continued in patient endurance.
5. Pray for each other

Each month we will be sending out a set of questions to help encourage conversation and provoke one another to love the neighbours on our streets.

Meet your street questions:

1. How well do you already know your neighbours?
2. Are you excited or nervous about getting to know & love them better?
3. Can you identify one neighbour you'd like to get to know better?