



# KING'S CHAPEL

## Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 3 - Day 3

### Approaching God

**Read Matthew 7:7-11** - *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”*

**Prayer:** Take a minute to slowly read through Matthew 7 and consider God’s promises towards you in prayer. Your Heavenly Father is inviting you to ask, to seek, and to knock. And to approach him as a child looking for nourishment and food, care and provision. What would you want to say to your Father this morning as you begin your time in prayer? Ask Him to help you believe this promise and to readily come before his presence with a seeking spirit. Trust that He will meet you there.

### Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - 1 Peter 2:18-21

**Passage Introduction:** Many of us have been brought up with, and have bought into, the notion that if we just live righteous lives—going to church, reading our Bibles and giving generously—we will not suffer. We think righteousness and suffering are incompatible. This means that we have no theological category for righteous suffering, and no idea how to endure it. We don’t understand that righteousness can and does lead to suffering—the more of the former we have, the more of the latter we will likely face. It is this corrective that Peter gives us here—and, as we’ll see, only when we embrace a theology of righteous suffering that is rooted in the gospel will we be able to prepare ourselves for such eventualities and endure suffering when it comes.

#### **Servant = oiketes**

Peter uses a word for a type of household servant that is nearly synonymous with *duolos*, the common NT word for servant or slave. But the degradation of slaves in 19th century America gives the word “slave” a far more harsh connotation than is accurate for Peter’s original audience. For more on *slavery*, read the notes at the end of today’s study.

**1 Peter 2:18-21** - **18** Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. **19** For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. **20** For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. **21** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. What words or ideas are repeated, related, compared, contrasted?

## Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

### Questions for Study

- To whom is Peter addressing his comments in this section? To whom might his comments apply today?
- What does Peter say is due to those in authority over us, regardless of whether they are just or unjust in their leadership?
- What is Peter’s train of thought in 2:19-20? What point is he making?
- Read Luke 6:27-36. Who is speaking? What similar ideas are spoken here?

### Questions for Meditation & Application

- How is the knowledge that suffering as a Christian is following in Jesus’ footsteps both liberating and challenging? Is there a way you need to stop avoiding his footsteps, and begin walking in them?
- If you never suffer as a Christian, what might that say about your Christianity? How does this passage help you to prefer Christ over comfort?

### Close in Prayer:

Gracious Father, thank you that when I refuse to react to suffering in sinful ways, it makes me more like Jesus and helps others see my confidence in you. Thank you that you do not ask of me anything your Son was not willing to undergo himself. By his redemptive suffering, I know that any injustice I might suffer in this world is merely temporary. Thank you that one day you will make right all that was wrong in this world. Thank you for these precious promises Lord. Amen.

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## Resources for Further Study

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1 Peter chapter 2 notes

### Commentary & Notes on 1 Peter 2:18-21

#### Does the Bible Condone Slavery?

To be sure, the passages in 1 Peter that we are reading over the next several days are tough and land differently on our cultural ears than they did for Peter's first century audience. Nevertheless, a major attack that critics of the faith make at times, against the bible, is that Christianity appears to condone or permit slavery. While much has been written on this subject, a few shorter, but helpful resources to consider this question more deeply are suggested here:

- Andy Nassali (associate professor of systematic theology and New Testament for Bethlehem College & Seminary) has a short blog outlining thoughts from Tim Keller & D.A. Carson: Click here to read: **Greco-Roman Slavery ≠ Race-Based Slavery**
- Tim Keller Message: **LITERALISM: ISN'T THE BIBLE HISTORICALLY UNRELIABLE AND REGRESSIVE?** (while this entire message is very good, you can skip ahead to listen to mins **20:30** - **25:30** for Keller's brief summary of slavery and servitude in the bible.)

#### Commentary on 1 Peter 2:18-21

In Peter's day, household codes explained the mutual responsibilities the various members of a household had toward each other. In this whole section, Peter has been giving us "code" to explain how to maintain ordered relationships in society when those in authority over us are unbelievers who might persecute us because of our faith in Christ (2:18 – 3:7). In 2:18-25, Peter addresses "servants." There is no getting around the fact that "servants" in verse 18 refers to "household slaves." But we need to realize that Peter is writing into a first-century context, not a 21st-century one. In both Britain and colonial America, slaves were kidnapped, and then bought and sold as personal property. Slaves were not only mistreated; many were abused and sometimes killed. In the Roman empire during the first century, slavery was different. Slaves were often well-educated. They might have served as physicians or tutors to children. Though it was difficult, slaves had the opportunity to buy their freedom.

Don't get me wrong: slavery was never desirable. The New Testament nowhere affirms slavery; it merely regulates an existing societal structure. Peter's concern is not upholding slavery, but the importance of maintaining a faithful gospel witness within the structured orders of that society. The fact that "slaves" are included in this household code is radical in and of itself. First-century household codes addressed masters, not slaves. By including "slaves" in his household code, Peter elevated slaves to a place of dignity. Because of Christ, there is no longer any distinction between slave and free; they are both one in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

You may not be a slave, or servant, but notice that almost straight away Peter extends his commands to servants out to all Christians: "servants" in 1 Peter 2:18 becomes "one" in verse 19. Since all of us are "servants" to earthly "masters" in certain contexts, all of us can apply this passage to ourselves, and live out Peter's teaching.

Peter's call to servants is to submit to "unjust"—literally "crooked"—masters. This is the master, in the home then, or the workplace now, who is not necessarily harsh, but who is unscrupulous. They take advantage of every opportunity to get ahead and walk all over the people under them,

including you. Peter's point is that we are to submit to our masters, "not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust" (v 18).

And we are to submit "with all respect" (v 18). The word "respect" is literally "fear." It's the word from which we get our English word "phobia." Throughout 1 Peter, we are told to "fear" only God (1:17; 2:17; 3:6). When we fear God, we obey him and long to please him. And because we fear God, we are not to fear anything (3:6) or anyone (3:14) in place of him. But, being "mindful of God" (that is, with a conscious awareness of who he is and what are his ways), we will fear those he has placed in positions over us (2:19). We please him by respecting them.

The first reason we are to submit to crooked masters and endure unjust suffering is because that is what God rewards. It is of no credit (honor) to you "if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure" (v 20). If you're a Christian and your supervisor is constantly getting on you about the lack of quality in your work or being late or having an unprofessional attitude or appearance, that is not unjust "suffering." You are getting what you deserve! On the other hand, if your consciousness of God is reflected in your hard work and diligent efforts, your timely manner and professional appearance, but your supervisor continually uses you as the butt of their jokes, or discriminates against you, or credits others with your work, or passes you over for promotion simply because of your faith—that is unjust suffering. "This is a gracious thing in the sight of God" (v 20). You may not get your just "credit" or honor before man, but you will receive your just reward before God.

This is what Peter means when he says that suffering unjustly "is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God" (v 19-20). "Gracious" is actually "grace," and throughout his letter, Peter connects grace with salvation (1:10, 13; 3:7). In fact, the point of the entire letter is so that the Christians in Asia Minor will be able to stand firm in "the true grace of God" (5:12).

We can get a clearer picture of what Peter means by "grace" when we consider Jesus' teaching using similar language. In Luke 6:32-35, Jesus says that it is no benefit (literally "grace," in each case) to you if you love those who love you (v 32), do good to those who do good to you (v 33), or lend to those who lend to you (v 34). But in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus asks, "If you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" (5:46). Matthew uses "reward" where Luke uses "grace." And Luke himself finishes with Jesus saying that if you "love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return ... your reward [not benefit/grace] will be great" (Luke 6:35).

What is the point here? It is that God rewards faithfulness—not because the faithfulness merits it, as though God is forced to reward it, but because in his grace he delights to be generous to those who have lived mindful of him, to please him. He loves to give an undeserved reward to those who live this way.

So in 1 Peter, it seems that Peter is applying the teaching of Jesus in relation to loving your enemies, and saying in his own words that if you suffer unjustly in this world at the hands of wicked masters, you are blessed because "your reward is great in heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12). There may be no reward for living as a Christian in your workplace from anyone else in your workplace—but there will be a reward from the Lord for living in a way that is mindful of him.

*Sanchez, Juan. 1 Peter For You: Offering real joy on our journey through this world (God's Word For You)*