



KING'S CHAPEL

Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 3 - Day 4

Approaching God

Read Psalm 139:1-6 - "God, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand. I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking. You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight. You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence. I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too - your reassuring presence, coming and going. This is too much, too wonderful - I can't take it all in!"

The Message - Eugene Peterson

Open in Prayer: Over the past few days, we've begun looking at the theme of "submission." Take some time to start today by looking at the heart of David in Psalm 139 and his spirit of surrender. Submission starts with inviting God to search your heart. But David (a king!) is willing to surrender and submit to God with joy because he knows ultimately God's discernment, wisdom, plans, and presence are all for his benefit and established in love. Spend a few minutes considering the type of loving wisdom and authority God invites you to submit to today.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - 1 Peter 2:22-25

Passage Introduction: *Yesterday we looked at the first reason Peter calls Christians to submit to potentially crooked leadership and to endure unjust suffering: Because of the way God rewards those who suffer. It is of no credit (honor) to you "if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure" (v 20). Today's verses gives a second reason why Christians are to endure unjust suffering. We have been called to unjust suffering in order to follow in Jesus' footsteps.*

The word "example" in v21 is a word that refers to the letters children would trace in order to learn how to write. As Christians, we are called to "trace" Jesus' footsteps. Where Jesus stepped, we step, and his steps take us through the path of unjust suffering. In vs. 22-25, Peter retraces Jesus' steps through the words of Isaiah. He is the suffering servant; when we suffer as servants, we are following his footsteps.

1 Peter 2:18-25 - 18 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. **22** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. **23** When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. **24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. **25** For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

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

- How does Jesus respond to unjust treatment? Compare vs. 23 in the ESV (above) with the NIV translation which reads, “*When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats...*” How do the two translations expand your understanding of how Jesus responded? What did he refrain from doing? Instead what did he do?
- What do you observe and learn about the character God the Father, and God the Son and their relationship in this passage?
- What reason is given in vs 2:24 for Jesus’ death on the tree? How does this reason instruct us in our response to unjust suffering?
- In vs.24-25 Peter paraphrases Isaiah 53:1-6. Look up those verses (read the entire chapter if you have time) and note any key phrases or ideas that are echoed by Peter in 2:18-25.

Question for Meditation & Application

- Have you ever had an unjust master? Someone whose decision-making was unfair or dishonest? Someone who caused you hurt though you had done nothing to deserve it? How do you think Jesus would have responded in that situation? How would His view of Himself in relation to the Father and others affect His response?

Close in Prayer:

Take some time to praise Jesus for his willingness to suffer on your behalf. Pray for persecuted Christians, both in far-off places and closer to home. Pray that they will see value in their sufferings. Bring your own sufferings to God. Entrust yourself and those you love to “the one who judges justly” (v. 23)

Resources for Further Study

1 Peter chapter 2 notes

Commentary & Notes on 1 Peter 2:21-25

Unjust suffering is not a sign that we've done something wrong, or that God has somehow lost control of things or failed us. The New Testament is clear that those who desire to follow Christ and pursue holiness will suffer unjustly. Jesus knew what he was saying when he promised a cross to every one of his followers (Mark 8:34).

The Example of Jesus

This will be of great hope to you if you are suffering for doing what is right. But it will be challenging to you if you profess faith in Christ but never suffer for your faith. Tracing Jesus' steps—being a true follower of Jesus—will take Christians on the road marked with unjust suffering. If we're never even inconvenienced because of our faith, then we need to evaluate whether or not our faith is worth persecuting. Comfort and Christianity are usually incompatible; if we follow Jesus' steps we will suffer, and as we follow Jesus' steps we will need to learn to suffer in the way that he suffered. As Peter shows us how Jesus suffered, he is doing so first and foremost to show the "example" Jesus left for us (1 Peter 2:21):

- He did not sin (v 22). Jesus suffered and died, though he committed no sin; there was not even deceit found in his mouth. If we trace Jesus' steps, there is no reason to think we will escape unjust suffering. And when we suffer, that is no excuse to sin.
- He did not verbally lash out or threaten those who caused his unjust suffering (v 23). Instead, Jesus went to his death like a silent lamb being led to slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). We all know the temptation to lash out verbally when wrongly accused or mistreated for no reason. Maybe at work your team leader, knowing that you're a Christian, constantly makes derogatory comments about Christianity. The natural thing to do, you think, is to lash out, to fight fire with fire... but then you stop. You retrace Jesus' steps and remember that he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten. How can we actually do this, again and again and day after day? Peter tells us...
- He trusted God (1 Peter 2:23). Jesus trusted himself to his Father, knowing that there would be a reckoning. He cared more about the approval of his Father on that day than vindication from people in the present. The only way to fight the temptation to retaliate against our oppressors or to exact revenge is by being "mindful of God," "who judges impartially according to each one's deeds" (2:19, 1:17). If we can trust God to right all wrongs, then we can face unjust suffering without retaliation because we have no need to take justice into our own hands. We can leave it in God's.
- He has dealt with our sin in his suffering (2:24-25). In his suffering, Jesus is always our example; but he is also far more than our example. The purpose of Jesus' death was to put an end to sin and free his people to live in righteousness. By his death on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of his people and now offers forgiveness to those who turn away from their sin and entrust themselves to him—"by his wounds [we] have been healed" (v 24). We were "straying like sheep" in this world as we followed the passions of our ignorance, but Jesus has made a way for us to return "to the Shepherd and Overseer of [our] souls" (v 25)—that is, the one who promised to regather his scattered people by placing a faithful shepherd from the line of David over them who himself would feed and shepherd them.

Christ or Comfort? The sad reality is that in the West, materialistic prosperity, daily comfort and cultural acceptance have diluted our view of suffering as Christians. We tend to think that if we simply

live good lives, then God is sure to bless us. Our prayers are dominated by pleas for God to put a “hedge of protection” around us and our loved ones, whatever that may mean. We’re very pleased that Jesus bore his cross for us, but hope that we can avoid bearing a cross as we follow him. We need to realize that suffering is part of living faithfully for all of us, not merely an add-on for super-keen believers. We need to seek to live such a vibrant faith that it cannot and does not go unchallenged in this world. And when suffering comes, we need to let Peter point us to Jesus and suffer well, neither compromising in our conduct nor aggressively attacking those who persecute us. At moments of unjust suffering, we discover who we worship—comfort, or Christ. Let it be the one who suffered for us and will return to bring us home.