Ethics Part 2: - Honoring others to honor Jesus. 1 Peter 3:1-4:19

1 PETER
Life in a Different Kongless

(Expanded Sermon Notes)

We are in our third week as we journey through the letter of 1 Peter. This letter was written to a group of Christians who were living in modern-day Turkey and facing considerable social pressure. Why were they facing social pressure? They refused to worship the gods of their culture; they had an exclusive message of salvation; they had odd customs and practices; and they believed in a God who became a man and who, rather than triumph and establish his kingdom as expected, had been killed, only to rise again (they claimed) from the dead. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were exiles in the world they once called their own. And Peter affirms this exilic reality and identity for them. In other words, they are to live as exiles because, in Christ, they have a new identity that is to follow the values of the Kingdom of Heaven. In this larger section, Peter will pick up where he left off and apply the instructions from the opening to a new set of ethical situations. His instructions and themes won't differ; they are to honor everyone, consider the importance of the testimony of their lives (lived experience), and keep a Christ-centered perspective on suffering. The particulars of this second section deal with marriage and suffering. Peter will dive into what marriage is supposed to look like for Christians. And, it should come as no surprise that it means to mutually honor each other in the distinct and important roles God has given to men and women. Power looks to serve in the kingdom of God, not to dominate. Then, Peter moves on to suffering and how suffering is part of the normal Christian experience. Again, we will hear that even in our suffering, Christians have different priorities, and we are able to increase in righteousness while we suffer. Our suffering isn't meaningless because Jesus himself suffered. Staying focused on Jesus, Peter reminds us again that when I honor others, we honor Jesus.

1. Don't be surprised when life gets hard.

- a. Instead See it as confirmation of your new identity. (cf. 4:1,12-13)
 - i. This has been a message we have heard from Peter as we've walked along, and one that we will continue to hear.
 - ii. We have also heard that suffering is part of the normal Christian "exile" experience.
 - 1. As we suffer, we are imitating Jesus (cf. 4:13)
 - i. Remember, a key distinctive of this group: They refused to worship the gods of their culture; they had an exclusive message of salvation; they had odd customs and practices; and they believed in a God who became a man and who, rather than

¹ Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 15.

triumph and establish his kingdom as expected, had been killed, only to rise again (they claimed) from the dead. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were exiles in the world they once called their own.²

- iii. Review; This is how Peter closes the opening and opens the larger section on ethical living: (cf. 2:1-12)
 - 1. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
- b. Life in a different Kingdom means this kingdom won't understand.
 - i. Exiles live distinctly different lives Pagans of the first century viewed Christians as killjoys who lived gloomy lives devoid of pleasure (Colwell 1939; Frend 1967; Sherwin-White 1974). The pleasures from which Christians typically abstained were the popular forms of Roman entertainment: the theater with its risqué performances, the chariot races, and the gladiatorial fights with their blood and gore. The alcohol-fueled festivals of Roman culture were typically focused on devotion to a god or goddess, making them idolatrous to Jewish and Christian beliefs. Christian lifestyle also condemned the "pleasures" of an indulgent temper, sex outside marriage, drinking, slander, lying, covetousness, and theft (Colwell 1939: 61). These attitudes toward contemporary Roman customs and morals, combined with the Christians' refusal to burn incense to the emperor—a gesture of civic gratitude intended to ensure the well-being of the empire—earned Christians the reputation of being haters of humanity and traitors to the Roman way of life.³
 - 1. The neighbors and those in visual proximity to this group of Christians saw that they lived lives that were not marked by the same pursuits, habits, or perspectives as the prevailing Roman world, and it didn't make sense to them.
 - ii. The key question Is Jesus truly enough?
 - 1. Life is going to get hard even when you are not living as an exile. But, especially so when you are living as one.
 - 2. We could alleviate the suffering and hardship of this age in any number of ways, and they would have been tempted to do the same.
 - 3. Peter's message doesn't change to them or to us, if Jesus is enough to "keep you salvation" (cf. 1:4) then he should be enough for you to live faithfully to in the midst of hardships.
 - a. Remember, faith is a forward-looking trust based on God's past provision.
 - iii. How do we persist or live faithfully? \rightarrow Arm yourself... (cf. 4:1)
 - 1. Peter calls us to arm ourselves, to prepare ourselves for battle, with this Christ-like mindset. Let's remember that suffering accomplishes God's purposes. It exposes what or whom we are trusting (1 Peter 1:6–7). It provides a platform for

² Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 15.

³ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 258–259.

faithful Christian witness (2:11–3:17). And let's not forget that righteous suffering is not a sign of God's disfavor. It is an indication that we are following Christ, that we are faithfully living out the Christian life (2:21). We suffer as Christians because we have made a conscious decision against sin, Satan, and this world.⁴

c. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom with a call to the upside-down.

- i. If you feel or felt the tension in the text over the last two weeks, please know that is good.
- ii. Peter is reminding believers of their new identity and the tension that will result when living that identity out. → How does Peter close this section? ... "Trust God and do good."
 - 1. The world says, get your own while the getting is good.
 - 2. Peter tells us, while you are suffering, don't seek revenge, but do good and trust God.
- iii. Why? Because as we commit ourselves to the upside-down values of the Kingdom, it builds confidence in us for our inheritance.
 - 1. There is a limit to the suffering, both in its intensity and in its duration, a limit set and maintained by the God who is our creator, our savior, our sustainer, our Father. And therein also lies the knowledge that this suffering is only for our good: it is purifying us, drawing us closer to our Lord, and making us more like him in our lives. In all of it we are not alone, but we can depend on the care of a faithful Creator; we can rejoice in the fellowship of a Savior who has also suffered (v. 13); we can exult in the constant presence of a Spirit of glory who delights to rest upon us (v. 14).⁵
- iv. Yes, we are not to be surprised when life gets hard, but we are also not supposed to make life harder than it needs to be.

2. Don't make life harder than it needs to be.

a. Instead - Seek to honor everyone. (cf. 3:1, 7, 8)

- i. Again, this is a call that we have heard over and over again in this letter.
 - 1. In the second section (2:11-15), Peter tells us to honor everyone.
 - 2. Everyone included the emperor, their neighbors, their fellow Christians, and anyone else in between.
 - 3. Honoring others was a key distinctive in the life of the early church.
- ii. Humans bear God's image, so they are to be honored.
- iii. To honor someone is to treat them as valuable, as a person of worth.⁶
 - 1. We should be motivated to honor others because Jesus honored us first.
- b. Ethics part 2 Peter now moves on to the application of the call to honor others in the home.
 - i. Remember, in the previous passage, Peter gave a call to honor those in the social life.
 - ii. He moves on to honoring the family life here.
 - 1. Just as all Christians were to be subject to government authorities (2:13–17), and servants were to be subject to their masters (2:18–25), Peter now exhorts wives

⁴ Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 141.

⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 191–192.

⁶ Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 105.

to be subject to their husbands (3:1–6). Unlike the previous two sections, this one also contains instructions to those who have authority over the group addressed, namely, the husbands (v. 7).⁷

- iii. His third section will focus on honoring those in leadership and being honorable leaders.
 - 1. In each section he will remind them and us that because we have been changed, we are to live in a changed manner.
- c. Husbands and wives ... a tough passage, and a call to a better way.
 - i. First let's get some things out of the way:
 - 1. Is this a passage about staying in an abusive marriage or relationship? → Absolutely not.
 - 2. Why are there 6 verses on women and 1 verse for men?
 - a. This can feel unbalanced or unfair to us today, but the opposite would have been true for the original reader.
 - i. The instructions for women would have made practical sense. The call to husbands however, that is where the real lumber is laid.
 - b. The controversial call to the original reader was that both men and women deserved equal honor and that it was the husband's job to make sure the wife was honored.
 - c. The controversial call to us today is that submission to authority is a good and Godly thing.

3. What does it mean women are the weaker vessel?

- a. In the context of 1 Peter, "weaker vessel" is primarily understood as indicating physical weakness relative to men's strength. Therefore, Peter's exhortation indirectly addresses the issue of physical abuse. However, the immediate context makes it clear that the female is also weaker in the sense of social entitlement and empowerment. Peter teaches that men whose authority runs roughshod over their women, even with society's full approval, will not be heard by God.8
- b. A good way to think about this is, who gets up when something goes "bump" in the middle of the night? → I don't know how it works at your house, but in mine, Danielle is staying in bed and sending me out!
- 4. Is Peter giving a command for all time? → Yes and no.
 - a. Peter reiterates the permanent principle of created order, and the inherit goodness of authority and submission.
 - b. Peter opens the door for social transformation by leaving it to husband and wife to work out the specific way her submission is to be expressed. The writings of the Greek moral philosophers do not usually address women (and slaves), but here Peter does so. Moreover, Peter affirms wives' (and slaves') choice to leave their former way of pagan life while at the same time instructing them to remain within their most basic relationship.⁹ → This means we have freedom to work it out just as they did.

⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 142.

⁸ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 210.

⁹ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 204.

- c. On the other hand, he also sees in this affirmation that his wife's or slave's submission is motivated no longer by the expectations of Roman society or the principles of Greek moral philosophy but instead by the authority and example of the crucified and resurrected Christ. In a masterful move, Peter both upholds and subverts the social order.¹⁰
- d. We really don't like the idea of authority or submission as modern readers.
 - i. We tend to think that authority is always an oppressive thing (or bent on harming others), and that to submit automatically means that you are inferior. → Peter challenges us on those notions here.
 - 1. We also must remember that this was written in a non-western/ancient context where the needs of the whole were typically prized over the needs of the individual.
 - 2. In the modern-west, we prize the needs of the individual over the whole.
 - a. Just think about taxes... we don't ask what the country needs, we ask what am I getting for my taxes?
 - 3. Peter reminds men that they are "joint heirs" with their wives.
 - a. It is significant that here Peter sees no difficulty in affirming that wives are 'joint heirs' in a sense that includes subjection to their husbands' authority.¹¹
 - b. This means submission does not imply or require inferiority.
 - c. It also helps us to get at understanding the difference in roles.
 - i. Important: We also have to be honest and recognize that for so many of us when we hear these ideas in the Scriptures the only reference we have are poor, ungodly, and domineering examples that leave us thinking this is not possible.
 - ii. Authority and submission were part of the created order, dominance and domineering were a result of the fall. (cf. Gen. 1:26; 3:16-19)
 - 1. Authority and submission are good, first of all, because they are rooted in the **Trinity**. There is only one God, and he exists in three Persons.
 - 2. Each Person is equally God, yet the Son submits to the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3), and the Spirit submits to the Father and the Son (John 15:26).
 - 3. Authority and submission are good, also, because they are rooted in creation (Genesis 2:18–25). The man and the woman are equally God's image (Genesis 1:26–27), but they have different roles in governing the creation and filling it with God's image-bearers (Genesis 1:28). God created the man to lead, protect, and provide for those under his leadership, and he created the woman to come alongside and help the man. In her role, she is to affirm and encourage his leadership. Like God, then, the man and the woman share equality in essence but have different roles of authority and submission. Authority and submission are good because they reflect God's character; rebellion against authority is evil because it reflects Satan's character.¹²

Ethics Part 2: - Honoring others to honor Jesus. 1 Peter 3:1-4:19 (Jan 15th, 2023) Speaker: Kyle Bartholic

¹⁰ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 204–205.

¹¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 153.

¹² Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 117–118.

- iii. I believe that while we have had some bad examples of domineering authority, we also have an intuition of how this reality that Peter speaks about can be and is true.
 - 1. Example... Learning to dance. → When you dance with a partner, one leads, the other follows, and both have equal importance with different roles. If you don't follow the roles, the dance will not flourish, be beautiful, or bring joy to those who are dancing.
 - 2. Danielle and I learned to dance over the years.
 - a. Growing up my mom taught me how to polka.
 - b. My parents taught Danielle and I how to swing dance in our high school years.
 - c. In college, Danielle and I took salsa dancing lessons.
 - 3. While they are all different forms of dance, the basic principle of leader and follower are the same. Different roles with equal importance.
- iv. We make life harder than it needs to be when we t
- e. God doesn't overlook when Christians do evil.

3. Don't miss the forest for the trees.

- a. Instead Trust that God will have justice, and his justice is complete. (cf. 3:22; 4:5)
 - i. We have heard the calls in this letter... don't mock when you are mocked.
 - ii. Peter said it this way, "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." (2:21-23)
 - 1. Catch that in there? → Jesus entrusted himself in his suffering to the one who judges justly.
 - 2. Who is that judge? → God the Father.
 - iii. But 1 Peter teaches here that the gospel of God's forgiveness and judgment in Christ is true not only for believing Christians but for all other people as well. This universal claim to truth was as offensive to first-century Greco-Roman thought as it is in today's pluralistic culture. The apostle teaches here that no one escapes God's judgment, which will either acquit or condemn based on a response to Christ either as the Living Stone or as the stumbling stone (2:7–8).¹³
- b. If Jesus will hold everyone accountable how does that impact your perspective on your suffering?
 - i. Peter reminds us that those who commit evil will not go unaccounted for.
 - 1. We yearn to see justice now. → Again, we have a guilt innocence cultural worldview in the west.
 - 2. This desire is not bad or wrong, but it is unrealistic at least in the terms of our power and ability.
 - 3. Instead, Peter reminds us to stay focused on the larger truth and reality of the hope that is in us, it is secure because God is secure and just.
 - ii. In a previous section of the letter (1 Pet. 2:18–25), the apostle points to Christ's unjust suffering in the flesh as the example for Christian living. This passage explains that it is

¹³ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 266–267.

better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil (3:17) because Christ, by the power of his resurrection and ascension, has defeated all the powers of evil and will destroy them along with all who practice evil (just as in the days of Noah). Therefore, suffering unjustly for doing good is evidence that one is on the right side of the eschatological divide. Unjust suffering for doing good, as God defines good, means that one is living out that pledge to God taken at baptism for a lifetime devoted to serving him. Just as Christ's unjust suffering led to his vindication, Peter encourages his readers that the unjust suffering they experience will not be the final word, for they have already been vindicated when Christ rose from death.¹⁴

- iii. This passage presents the sweeping scope of the efficacy of Christ's victory in his resurrection and ascension. Christianity is not a parochial religion that is (or was) valid for only a limited time of history in a certain region of the world. If Peter's claim is true that Christ's resurrection and ascension have dealt with even the primordial evil of fallen angels in uncountable prior centuries of human history, then Christ is victorious over all evil—even the most depraved—for all time. This positions Peter's readers within the eschatological drama, allowing them to see their situation from a new perspective and providing a deeper motivation for them to remain true to the faith in Christ they professed at baptism (Webb 2007).¹⁵
- c. If I can endure in my suffering because I know that ultimately, God will have victory over every injustice, then, I am able adopt Peter's view on suffering.
 - i. It is not to be avoided at all costs.

4. Don't regard suffering as something to be avoided at all costs.

- a. Instead See it as an opportunity to give a defense of your hope. (cf. 3:15)
 - i. Again, this runs in opposition the rhetoric of our cultural moment.
 - 1. Suffering is bad. Pleasure is good. → Therefore, avoid suffering at all costs and maximize pleasure however you can.
- b. What if God could do something significant through my suffering?
 - i. My suffering is an opportunity to give a defense of my hope. → I.e., The way I approach and walk through suffering is a prime opportunity to show that something is different about me and that there is a better way.
 - ii. Remember, the suffering this group is experiencing is that of social pressure and opposition.
 - 1. Important: This is not a call to equate suffering with holiness.
- c. Yet the stance of Christians toward unbelievers must never be merely passive or neutral, and Peter does not stop with an admonition not to fear. He goes on to encourage preparation for active witness which will win the unbeliever to Christ. Peter envisages the need to respond to allegations of wrongdoing which Christians face from their opponents, so he says: Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you. The word defense (apologia) almost always has a sense of 'reply to an accusation' (cf. Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; Phil. 1:7, 16). Although some maintain that formal legal charges are in view here (so Beare, p. 164), Kelly's point that always and anyone are extremely general (p. 143) is

¹⁴ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 235.

¹⁵ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 256.

well taken: whether to formal charges or informal accusations, Christians should be prepared to give an answer (Kelly notes the non-technical uses of *apologia* in 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; Plato, *Politicus* 285e).

- i. However, since the questioning is concerning the hope that is in you, Peter must be assuming that the inward hope of Christians results in lives so noticeably different that unbelievers are prompted to ask why they are so distinctive (cf. 4:4). Christians therefore should always be ready (prepared) to give an answer. Paul provides a good example of seizing the offensive and bearing testimony to Christ even when on trial himself (Acts 22:1–21; 24:10–24; 26:1–23, 25b–29). In hostile situations the opportunity for witness to Christ often comes unexpectedly; the Christian who is not always ready to answer will miss it.¹⁶
- d. The challenge to this question is, what if I never see justice or if I never see the redemptive work of God on this side of heaven?
 - i. If the opening to chapter four is true, then I can stand confident that God can use my temporary suffering now in the future for his glory, and that is just.
 - ii. This again is the purview of faithfulness... I can trust God for what is ahead, even what is beyond my lifetime, because of who he has demonstrated himself to be in the past.
 - iii. We are found faithful and bearing a faithful witness when we respond to the trials of this age not with the wisdom of this age.

¹⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 160–161.

Additional notes on 3:1-7:

- Paul's household code in Eph. 5:21–6:9 provides a model of mutual submission and love in marriage that is theologically, rather than apologetically, grounded. In contrast to Peter's one-verse instruction to husbands, Paul develops the theological basis for the husband's relationship to his wife that defines the character of the wife's submission (5:25–33). Christian marriage is understood as a lifelong commitment in an exclusive one-flesh union that mirrors the profound mystery of Christ and the church (5:32). On this model of Christ's love for his church and the church's submission to Christ, marital love is understood as the resolve to live one's entire life totally committed to the well-being of one's spouse in every decision. When "submission" of the wife becomes the central issue, the image of Christian marriage has already been distorted. A well-known evangelical leader is quoted as saying, "I believe in a wife submitting to her husband, but I don't believe the husband ever has the right to demand it.... In fact, I know when I am unworthy of it, she does not. My responsibility as a husband is to be worthy" (quoted in McKnight 1996: 192). Peter, unlike Paul, is addressing the situation where the husband is not a Christian and does not love his wife as Christ loved the church. His demands are not necessarily worthy of submission. Yet Peter instructs the Christian wife to submit to her unbelieving husband and to respect him, yet without renouncing her faith, even though she may suffer for her Christian principles. Peter's instruction is almost certainly based on the same theological understanding of marriage as Paul's, but it also happens to formally correspond with what would be expected of the wife by her society, which has no such theological grounding for its expectation. Peter's point is that Christians must be ready to suffer unjustly because of their relationship to God in Christ.17
 - Peter and Paul both make the case that it is possible to have different roles and in that it does not diminish value or equality of either person. It is why both Peter and Paul remind of our call to submission is linked to Christ and his example.
 - The apostle laid down the principles and then left the details to be worked out between the spouses. The church today is right to uphold a biblical order within marriage that mirrors the relationship of Christ and his church, but it should also follow Peter's wisdom and refrain from trying to specify what that must look like in every case.¹⁸
- Authority and submission are good, first of all, because they are rooted in the Trinity. There is only one God, and he exists in three Persons. Each Person is equally God, yet the Son submits to the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3), and the Spirit submits to the Father and the Son (John 15:26). Authority and submission are good, also, because they are rooted in creation (Genesis 2:18–25). The man and the woman are equally God's image (Genesis 1:26–27), but they have different roles in governing the creation and filling it with God's image-bearers (Genesis 1:28). God created the man to lead, protect, and provide for those under his leadership, and he created the woman to come alongside and help the man. In her role, she is to affirm and encourage his leadership. Like God, then, the man and the woman share equality in essence but have different roles of authority and submission. Authority and submission are good because they reflect God's character; rebellion against authority is evil because it reflects Satan's character.¹⁹

¹⁷ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 211–212.

¹⁸ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 213.

¹⁹ Juan R. Sanchez, 1 Peter for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2016), 117–118.