

**Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God**  
**Lesson 10: An All-Sufficient Source of Strength**

**Key Verse:** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...~1 Peter 3.18

What would a beautiful, structurally sound, “spiritual house” look like? It would require “living stones” superior in quality, beauty, and strength. Each living stone would be well-placed to withstand all circumstances, all **suffering**, and threats of disaster. Rather than revealing sin’s destruction, the living stones used to build this spiritual house would showcase God’s **righteousness** no matter the season nor circumstance. *Righteous God, Savior, Messiah who suffered for me, I praise your Holy name. Thank you for your superior example of humility and submission. As I study your word, I beg that Your Spirit will make me aware of any heart attitude that does not honor You, properly fear You in my relationships, or revere Your absolute authority over all. Amen.*

**1 Peter 3.1-22** Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

**3** Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— **4** but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit<sup>1</sup>, which in God's sight is very precious. **5** For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

**7** Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel<sup>2</sup>, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

**8** Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. **9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

**10** For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11** let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”<sup>3</sup> **13** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

**14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. **17** For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

**18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, **19** in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, **20** because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

**21** Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

<sup>1</sup>This is not a distinctly feminine trait. In fact, Jesus described himself in a similar manner in Matthew 11.29. Additionally, this is one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5.23

<sup>2</sup>Related to the physical stature of most women, though not all women! May also refer to women's subjugated role in societies.

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 34.13-16

### **Diamonds:**

Peter continues to teach us how to respond to circumstances Christ-followers may find themselves navigating in light of their faith. Recall Peter's foundation for every response in our circumstances is established in God and secured by Christ (1 Peter 2.4-10). This means that God expects our responses to all our circumstances to be as following the example Christ set for His people (1 Peter 2.21-25). To get into the mind and heart of Peter, review one of the hallmarks of his experiences with Jesus. In remembering this experience alongside Peter, may we be humbled in remembrance of the example our Savior set.

1. Read John 13. What is happening in this experience? What is Peter's response to all that was happening?
  
2. What does Jesus do for His enemy, Judas?
  
3. Note that Jesus' actions in that moment were also for those who did not understand, for those unable to see beyond themselves, as well as for the impulsive and self-assured. As you enter this story, watch what Jesus does. How do His actions dislodge and change your unwillingness to follow His example in the situations Peter describes in 1 Peter 2-3? (We will get into the applicable context of 1 Peter 3 next, promise! For now, pray and think as broadly as the Holy Spirit enables you.)

Peter is providing real practical instruction to wives who have converted to Christianity while married to husbands continuing in the pagan practice in which they once both participated (V 1-6). Understanding that this would be very disruptive to the marriage, Peter's instructions are meant to encourage the Christ-following wife to live in such a way that not only pleases God but would also encourage her husband to follow Christ as well. Such a countercultural wife would be a blessing to him, not grounds for divorce nor misery.

Peter's focus on female external adorning reflects the use of these things to indicate marital status, social position, economic status, and more (much like today). His reference to the example Sarah, Abraham's wife, set is found in Genesis 18.1-15 where she reveals her submissive qualities to her husband. However, a fuller picture of her personality and hardships is found in Genesis 12; 16.1-6; 21.1-14.

4. Read the fuller story of Sarah in the Genesis scriptures. As you contemplate what we know about her through these vignettes of her life, why do you think Peter uses her as an illustration of what God expects of holy wives in submission to their own husbands? (It is helpful to read 1 Peter 3.1-6 in additional translations.)
  
5. What is the caution Peter tells husbands who do not likewise understand and honor their wives as God's heirs too? (V 7)
  
6. Choose which question is most applicable to you. Consider all the information and answers you have provided in questions #1-4:
  - a. What is God teaching you about your role as a holy wife?
  - b. If you are not or are no longer married, what have you discovered about holy wives who honor God in all circumstances within their marriage?

Peter's use of "finally" in verse 8 indicates that he is giving final exhortations that will ensure all "living stones" will build His "spiritual house" that will weather all this world's storms. Soon his focus will shift to suffering and perseverance.

7. What rhetorical question does Peter ask in verse 13?
8. Peter builds into the logic of his rhetorical question beginning in verse 8, ending in verse 12. What clear instructions does Peter provide that would ordinarily keep you from "harm" and reveal that you are "zealous for what is good"?
9. Verses 14-22 address suffering and the reality of what it means that Jesus, resurrected and ascended into heaven, is now at the "right hand of God" (V 21-22). From verses 14-17, how are we to respond to suffering?
10. How does this contrast with how you typically respond to suffering? What does God want you to change?
11. Has there been a time when you responded to suffering in line with these instructions? What did God teach you about Him?

The end of verses 18-22 are considered some of the most difficult passages of the New Testament to interpret. Rather than running amok, we will stay rooted in what God makes clear throughout scripture, as well as through the work of Christ. "Whatever uncertainties in 1 Peter 3.18-19, the main theme is manifest: When Jesus suffered unjustly, God vindicated him, and he will vindicate us, too." (Dorani, p.148) Likewise, the covenant promises given to Noah that provided salvation for him and his family remain the same for us today, now through Christ. Baptism by water does not save; Jesus does, as is evidenced and confirmed by His resurrection and ascension into heaven, seated at God's right hand. Baptism is a picture of the saving power of His resurrection.

12. Despite the difficulty at the end of this chapter, there are several incredible, precious truths and promises in these final verses. List all the truths and promises you find in verses 18-22:
13. Which of these is most precious to you, and why?

**Deity: Righteous~** The righteousness of God, one of the most prominent attributes of God in the Scriptures, is also one of the most elusive. It is difficult to distinguish His righteousness from His holiness or His goodness. The righteousness of God is also virtually synonymous with His justice (Psalm 19.9).

In the Old Testament, the most common word used for 'just' means 'straight'. In the New Testament, a word meaning 'equal' is used. In a moral sense, both mean 'right'. He always consistently does what is right (Psalm 116.5). He shows no partiality or prejudice. God's character or nature always leads Him to do that which is right. Righteousness is holiness in action (Ezra 9.15).

We can also refer to God's righteousness as God's justice. God's righteousness or justice is a natural expression of His holiness (Deuteronomy 32.4). Infinitely pure, He must be opposed to all sin, and that opposition to sin must be demonstrated in His treatment of His creatures (Daniel 9.7, 14). Because God is righteous or just, we are assured that His actions toward us are in perfect agreement with His holy nature (Isaiah 45.21). God always acts righteously; His every action is consistent with His character (Zephaniah 3.5; Revelation 16.5).

God is not defined by the term "righteous," as much as the term "righteous" is defined by God. God is not measured by the standard of righteousness; God sets the standard of righteousness. The good news of Jesus Christ reveals the righteousness of God (Romans 1.16-17).

14. How does Jesus' handling of, or response to, Judas in John 13.21-30 reveal Jesus as righteous? Use 1 Peter 3.14-17 to help you understand Jesus' righteous response to Judas, His betrayer by God's will (John 18.2-5; Matthew 27.1-10; Acts 1.15-16).

15. More than a platitude of "WWJD" (What Would Jesus Do), we are called to be holy as He is holy, understanding that our righteousness is secured in the precious blood of the Lamb of God. How does the fact that God is righteous enable you to depend on Him as your all-sufficient source of strength?

**Doctrine: Suffering~** Suffering is the experience of physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual pain and/or distress. Suffering entered the world as a consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve and will be eternally abolished in the new heaven and new earth (Genesis 3; Revelation 21). Until then, suffering is inevitable for all people.

Suffering may come directly from God, Satan, our own sinful choices, or as a natural consequence of living in a broken world with natural disasters, decaying physical bodies, or interactions with other fallen people (Amos 3.6; Job 1.9-12; Luke 9.38-42). Sin can result in suffering for an individual or nation either through God's direct judgment/punishment or as a natural consequence of sin (Joel 2.12-14; Romans 1.18-32). However, not all suffering is the direct result of sin (John 9.1-3).

Some possible reasons for suffering include loving discipline, purification, and/or an increased intimacy with Jesus Christ while other reasons for suffering remain mysteriously hidden (Proverbs 3.12; Romans 5.1-5; Philippians 3.7-10). Regardless of the type, purpose, or reason of the suffering, *no suffering is outside of God's sovereign rule* (Isaiah 45.7). Rather, God is able to use it for good (Genesis 50.15-21; Romans 8.28).

Although the Bible does not give a complete explanation for suffering, the fact God allows suffering cannot mean God does not love us. His love is clearly demonstrated by sending His Son for our salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ is the suffering Servant who bore our sorrows, sins, and God's wrath on the cross. By His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2.24).

God has promised the suffering of His people will eventually end (Revelation 21.4). Until then, believers should expect to share in the suffering of Jesus Christ as a result of taking up their cross and following Him in a hostile world (Mark 8.34-35; Romans 8.17-18; Colossians 1.24).

16. Suffering as a part of “God’s will” is confusing and complicated. To help us begin to grasp this we must again look to the example of Jesus. Read John 13 again. 1 Peter 3.18 and 21-22 help us understand why Jesus had to suffer as part of God’s will. As you understand, why did He have to suffer in accordance with His Father’s will?
17. The last statement of 1 Peter 3.22 is a powerful truth: Right now, Jesus has absolute authority over angels, authorities, and powers. What effect does this truth have on your suffering today? Or how will this shape how you pray for someone who is suffering?

**Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:** Using Psalm 34, write a prayer praising God as your all-sufficient source of strength.

### **Lecture Outline:**

**Aim:** Christlike submission gains God’s strength for holy living.

- I. Holy Spouses (1 Peter 3.1-7) **T1:** Christlike submission gains God’s strength for holy living in personal relationships.
  - a. How does the way you respond to inevitable disagreements and difficulties in your personal relationships reveal your pursuit of holiness?
  - b. Wives, in what ways might you refine your submission to your husband’s headship?
  - c. How might you apply the pattern of Christlike submission in marriage to all your personal relationships?
  - d. What would change if you wholeheartedly submitted to your holy Bridegroom, Jesus, as Lord of your life?
- II. Holy Suffering (1 Peter 3.8-17) **T2:** Christlike submission gains God’s strength to boldly declare the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.
  - a. Based on the way you live your day-to-day life, how boldly do you exalt Jesus as holy?
  - b. Which of your words and actions deny Him and His holiness?
  - c. Which specific sins do you need to confess before our loving Lord?
- III. Holy Savior (1 Peter 3.18-22) **T3:** Christlike submission gains God’s strength for believers to die to self and live a new life in Christ.
  - a. How often do you consciously die to self?
  - b. What are some specific ways you can put off your sins to put on Christlike character?