

Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God

Lesson 8: An All-Sufficient Shepherd

Key Verse: For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.~1 Peter 2.25

"When I grow up, I want to be a fireman!" We consider it precious when a child discloses their ambitions. Rather than encumber them with the burden of all that is required to become so, or to discourage them with the cost of such service, we encourage them to keep their servant's heart knowing that clarity about career choices comes as they mature into adulthood. Likewise, our **sanctification** into God's holiness is a maturing reality that our **Good Shepherd** oversees every day, week, month, and year. In fact, our Good Shepherd shepherds us all the way into our eternal presence with Him! *Overseer and Good Shepherd of our souls, we are eager to taste your goodness in your words from Peter. Make clear where we are not following in your footsteps, in accordance with the example You set. Build us into Your spiritual house. May we be living stones, servants of You, who grow up into salvation. Amen.*

1 Peter 2.1-25: So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. **2** Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— **3** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **5** you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (Isaiah 28.16) **7** So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," (Psalm 188.22) **8** and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." (Matthew 21.44) They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

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. **13** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, **14** or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. **16** Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. **17** Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

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. **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.

Diamonds:

Our necessity in accepting the more challenging instructions from Peter in this chapter rests on the foundation of Jesus' work. Within 1 Peter 2, two key passages are instrumental in dislodging our natural tendency to resist total obedience to God's expectations of His daughters' thoughts and actions. They also silence our justifications for compartmentalizing God's call to be holy as He is holy (also known as "situational holiness"!). The first key passage is V 21-25, and the second is V 5-10.

1. According to V 21, Christ's example of suffering calls us, His daughters, to what? (Hint: see the last phrase of this verse.)
2. List the examples Christ set for us from V 22-25:
3. Read V 1-3 with V 11-20, listing the traits, or characteristics, of Jesus' followers (freely use other translations):
4. List all the reasons you are called to live in accordance with these traits. In other words, why should you fully embody all these characteristics? (Again, use V 1-3 and V 11-20 for this answer)
5. Which of these traits challenge you? How does Christ's example cause you to "mutter", or meditate, on the requirement to embody this challenging trait? What are you saying to Him, and what is His response?

The second key passage in this chapter is in verses 5-10 where Peter refers to God's community, the Church, as "living stones" built on the foundational cornerstone of Jesus. As God readied His people to enter the Promised Land, he called them to be *set apart* from the nations they were conquering (Deuteronomy 6). This is a component of the old covenant. However, in the new covenant, God's indwelling Spirit sets us apart as we *live within* our sinful and sin-filled culture (John 15.19, 17.20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4.7-8; 1 John 3.24). This is the difference Jesus makes (Colossians 1.13-14, 2.11-14).

6. From V 5-10, what do you learn about being a "living stone"?

As "living stones", we are to offer up "spiritual sacrifices." The sacrifices required in the law symbolized atonement for sin, devotion to God, and allowed worship. Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross fulfilled this legal requirement (Colossians 2.11-14) and allows us, His daughters, to offer "spiritual sacrifices" of worship (V 9).

7. What more do you learn about "spiritual sacrifices" from Romans 12.1-2, Hebrews 13.15-16; 1 Peter 1.3-9?
8. Write out a "spiritual sacrifice" of praise today. Include any of your favorite verses or use one of the Psalms from the last lesson.

In Joshua, the 12-stone memorial set up in Gilgal was meant to inspire future generations to ask, "What do these stones mean?" (Joshua 4.20-24) Likewise, our lifestyle, characteristics, and traits should make us stand out among our culture like twelve stacked boulders in a field.

9. Read the characteristics of Jesus' followers from question #3. Imagine every "living stone" behaving in accordance with these traits. What kind of "spiritual house" would that look like? How will you live to build such a "spiritual house"?

10. Does the way you live in the smallest details through the biggest moments inspire others to wonder why you stand out like twelve stones stacked in a field? What needs to change? (See also Deuteronomy 6.20-25.)

Deity: Good Shepherd~...Jesus...proves Himself to be the true Shepherd with sheep that will hear His voice and follow without hesitation (John 10:1-5).

The fourth "I AM" saying that we find in the gospel of John is found in John 10.11 where Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd." ...sheep and shepherds were metaphors for Israel and her leaders in the Old Testament. Before the Incarnation, one of the most important shepherds Israel ever had was the shepherd-king David who became the paradigm for Israel's king par excellence: Jesus of Nazareth.

David's own writings in Psalm 23 reflect his background as a shepherd of sheep. He likens himself to a lamb walking through the valley of the shadow of death and yet having no fear because of the good shepherd who is with him. He speaks of being guided and comforted by the rod and staff of this Good Shepherd who was none other than the Lord Himself.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 and does much more than even David described in his writing. Not only is He constantly present with us, leading us and comforting us, He also gives His life for the sake of His sheep (Psalm 28.8-9; John 10:11)...The Good Shepherd...will defend His own, even unto death. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does this for us on the cross. This death is a sovereign, willing death, entered into only when the proper time had come.~ [The Good Shepherd | Reformed Bible Studies & Devotionals at Ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)

11. Jesus defines the actions and responsibilities of a good shepherd in John 10.1-18. Infused in His teaching is His role as the Good Shepherd. List the actions and responsibilities of our Good Shepherd:

12. What does Jesus do, or what action or responsibility does your Good Shepherd take on that will cause you to reject "situational holiness", or justifying disobedience to the instructions He gives through Peter?

Doctrine: Sanctification~ God calls every person to mirror and reflect His holy character (Romans 6.1-23; 1 Thessalonians 4.3-8; 1 Peter 1.15-16). Our problem is that in ourselves we are not holy; we are unholy. Yet the Bible refers to us as "saints" (Ephesians 1.1). The term *saint* means "one who is holy". Since holiness is not found in ourselves, we must be made holy. The One who works to make us holy, to conform us to the image of Christ, is the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3.17-18; Galatians 4.6; Philippians 2.12-13; Colossians 3.1-17).

Our sanctification is a cooperative venture. We must work with the Holy Spirit to grow in sanctification (1 Corinthians 10.31; Galatians 5.16-26; Ephesians 4.27-5.31; Philippians 2.12-13). The call to cooperation is one that involves work (Romans 12.1-2; 1 Peter 1.14-19). We are to work in earnest (Psalm 143.10; Ephesians 4.30).

We are consoled by the knowledge that we are not left to do this work alone or by our own efforts. God is working within us to accomplish our sanctification (Romans 8.1-17)

13. Read at least three verses included in this definition of sanctification. Write down your favorite one here:

14. How are you using this verse to cooperate and “work in earnest” as God sanctifies you?

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:

Lecture Outline:

Aim: God’s covenant people live separated from this fallen world.

- I. Sanctified (1 Peter 2.1-12) **T1:** The journey toward holiness involves an intentional pursuit of Christlikeness.
 - a. If God were to examine your life, what pursuits would He uncover?
 - b. How are you pursuing the lusts of this fallen world rather than the holiness God demands of His covenant people?
 - c. How might you instead cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work?
- II. Submissive (1 Peter 2.13-25) **T2:** The journey toward holiness involves a spirit that is submissive to God’s sovereign will.
 - a. What is keeping you from whole-hearted submission to live in God’s will as His servant?
 - b. What will it take for you to submit to the leading of your Good Shepherd?
 - c. How often do you ‘return to the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul’?

Clowney, Edmund P., *The Message of 1 Peter*, Bible Speaks Today (London, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2021) pgs.57-98
Dorani, Daniel M., *1 Peter*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2014) pgs.59-106