

1 Peter 2

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Tape #8225
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Let's turn now in our Bibles to First Peter chapter two.

Now in chapter one being there in verse twenty-three, he says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever." Since we have been born again by the seed of God's word being planted in our hearts, bringing forth fruit in our lives; the word of God, the incorruptible seed of God's word which lives and abides forever. Though it is incorruptible it's amazing how some people try to corrupt it. "But the word of the Lord endures forever. The grass will fade, the flowers will fall away, but the word of God endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 23-25). So because we have been born again by the word of God, you come into chapter two,

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings (2:1),

Because we have been born again, these things have no longer a place or should have no longer a place in our lives! So the word "laying aside" in the Greek is a word that is used for taking off your clothes. And where you used to be clothed in malice and guile and hypocrisies, you need to strip yourself of these things. The malice is that evil thought. The guile is a deceitfulness. Hypocrisy is acting like you are something other than you really are. The envying and then all evil speaking, that evil speaking is a reference to gossiping. These things should be set aside because I have been born again.

As being born again, as a newborn babe, I'm to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby (2:2):

The word of God is the only thing whereby we can grow spiritually. As valuable and exciting as spiritual experiences are, you really don't grow with spiritual experiences. True growth only comes by the word of God and so we're exhorted to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that we might grow thereby."

If so be that you have tasted (2:3)

The word of God, you taste it. You partake of it and you discover,
that God is gracious (2:3).

To whom coming, as unto a living stone (2:4),

And that is, we're coming to the Lord. We've discovered that the Lord is gracious. And so we come to Him as a living stone,

disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious (2:4),

It's a reference, coming to Jesus, the living stone, though disallowed by men. In the Psalm 118, the prophecy concerning Jesus, "The stone that the builders rejected, the same is become the chief cornerstone. It is the work of the Lord; it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:22,23). Jesus then makes reference to that. The stone that was disallowed by the builders or the builders refused, it is become the head stone of the corner. Peter's going to make reference to this again in verse seven. "The stone disallowed indeed of men, but yet chosen of God, and precious."

It's interesting so many times men will set something aside that God will pick up and use for His glory. And so we come to Jesus, the living stone, disallowed, indeed by men, but chosen of God, and precious.

You also, as lively (2:5)

That's an old English word, better translation is living,

stones, you are built up into a spiritual house (2:5),

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, chapter two beginning with verse twenty said, “You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building is fitly framed together and grows unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:20-22). So the church, living stones.

You remember Jesus when in Caesarea Philippi when Peter acknowledged that You are the Messiah, You’re the Son of the living God, Jesus said, Blessed are thou, Simon, son of Jonah. And I say unto you, That you are Petros, that you’re a little pebble! You’re a bit of gravel! And upon this rock I will build my church! (Matthew 16:16-18). So the church is built of these living stones but we are on the foundation of Jesus Christ. “No other foundation have we than that which is already laid, even Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). The confession of Peter is the foundation upon which the church is built. The confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That’s the foundation for the church. He didn’t say that Peter was the foundation for the church. In just a few sentences, Jesus will be saying to Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan. You offend Me.

But Jesus is the foundation for the church. And so the church, is though, the place of God’s dwelling. We become the habitation of God. God dwells in the midst of His people. And so the Lord has built up the church, “fitly framed together in Christ Jesus that we might be the dwelling place of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit.” So “you also, as living stones, are built up into a spiritual house,”

a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (2:5).

Through Jesus Christ, we offer to God the spiritual sacrifices. We don’t offer animals, physical sacrifices. But we offer to God spiritual sacrifices and in the book of Hebrews, it speaks about offering to God the fruit of our lips, our praises unto Him. So this evening in the beginning, we were offering to God spiritual sacrifices as we sing to the Lord, praises, songs of thanksgiving and expressions of love. These are spiritual sacrifices that we offer unto God by Jesus Christ, “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, that is elect, it is precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded (2:6).

He is quoting here as it is written, as it is contained in the scripture, he is quoting from Isaiah 28:16. “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” There’s an interesting thing and as we move along here in the second chapter, we’re going to find Peter is quoting profusely from the Old Testament. Practically every verse has a relationship to an Old Testament scripture and it is fascinating to realize what a tremendous grasp Peter had of the scriptures.

When they were standing before the religious council in Jerusalem, it said that they marvelled at Peter’s answers to them because they perceived that they were ignorant and unlearned men. They wondered how he knew the scriptures so well when he had not gone to the Hebrew university. But what they didn’t realize is that he had been at a finer university! He had been personally tutored by Jesus for over three years! And thus had a firm grasp of the scripture. All of the apostles that have done any writing demonstrate their working knowledge of the scriptures. These men knew the word of God. That is why the word of God is so important in our lives today. If I want to be used of God, it is important that I fill my mind, my heart, my life with the word of God. And to have a working knowledge of God’s word is vital. That’s why we teach the word of God. That’s why we go through it from Genesis to Revelation in order to lay for you a solid foundation in God’s word.

The word of God doesn’t return void. It will accomplish the purposes for which it is set. And the beautiful thing is as we plant the word of God in your heart, in time of need the word will come back to you. Suddenly you’ll find yourself quoting some passage of scripture or speaking some truth and you don’t even know that you knew that scripture. But it’s been planted there and the Holy Spirit then can bring to your remembrance,

Jesus said, the things that I have taught you. As we study the word, it is planted in our hearts. It is spiritual food for the spiritual man. We grow by it. And so we are desiring the sincere milk of the word that we might grow thereby.

So Peter is going to demonstrate his great knowledge of the Scriptures as he will be quoting from the Psalms, he'll be quoting from Isaiah, he'll be quoting from Exodus and throughout the Old Testament scriptures. So here he says, "Wherefore it is also contained in the scriptures, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect and precious," quoting from Isaiah 28:16.

Unto you therefore which believe He is precious (2:7):

Precious isn't a word that is natural to a man's vocabulary. You more expect women to say, Oh isn't that precious? Men will usually say, That's okay. But precious is a more feminine type of word and there's probably none of the disciples as big and rugged and tough as Peter. It's interesting to me how God can take a big tough, rough man and make a marshmallow out of him. And so here is Peter, this big, rugged fisherman. He was ready to take on the whole Roman officers that came down to arrest Jesus. He pulled his sword, starts, he's taking them all on. And yet mellowed by the Spirit. It's interesting how many times he refers to things as precious. And so "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."

but unto those which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed (2:7)

Going back to verse four, "Coming unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, the stone which the builders disallowed,"

the same is made the head of the corner (2:7),

In Psalm 118, he's quoting there, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner, the Lord's doing, marvellous in our eyes." Jesus made a reference to this. He first of all gave a parable, Matthew 21 beginning with verse thirty-three. He said, "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, he put a hedge about it. He digged a winepress in it. He built a tower and he let it out or rented it out. He leased it out to husbandmen, or put husbandmen in charge of, farmers in charge of it, and he went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those husbandmen" (Matthew 21:33-40)?

Jesus is telling them a story--a story of great injustice. How a man planted a vineyard. Now in the Old Testament, in the prophecy of Isaiah, you have pretty much the same setting, the planting of a vineyard, the putting in it the finest vines, the building of the hedges around it and the desire to have the fruit of it. And the vineyard was the nation of Israel. And so Jesus is picking up from Isaiah's parable and giving a parable of His own and the vineyard is the nation of Israel that God established, God planted. And God was desiring fruit from the nation. He sent His prophets and they beat some of them, they killed others. He sent more prophets who they beat and who they killed. Finally, He said, I'll send My Son. Surely they will reverence Him. And they took His Son and said, Look, He is the heir, let's kill Him and then the vineyard will be ours.

Then Jesus asked them the question. He was setting out the bait and then He asked them the question, What will the husbandman do when he comes? "And they said, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and He will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which will render him the fruits in their seasons" (Matthew 21:41). They were correct. God set aside the Jewish nation because they refused to bear fruit. And He has let out His vineyard to others, that is, to the church.

So as we get into verse nine, we'll discover that the things that God once said of the nation of Israel, He now says concerning the church, that we are the chosen people. That we are His royal priesthood, that we are a holy nation, a people of God that we should show forth the praises of God unto the world around us.

"Jesus said unto them," having given this parable and they fell for it, "Did you never read in the scriptures where it declares, The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Matthew 21:42). Didn't you ever read that scripture? "The stone which the builders rejected."

There's an interesting story of the building of Solomon's temple. You remember that the stones were all hewn and shaped away from the building site at the stone quarries. They were hewn out so perfectly that they didn't use mortar to hold them together. The stones were interlocked. But they were all hewn out perfectly so that they would just interlock together. And so there at the quarries they would have the dimensions and all for the stones. They would mark them and they would send them to the builders so that at the temple site itself, there was not the sound of a trowel because everything was already cut so perfectly that it just fit together. That was quite a project and quite a feat!

The story goes that towards the beginning of the building of the temple, there was a stone that came and it wasn't marked and the builders didn't see where it fit. So they cast the stone aside. They just pushed the stone aside and in the time, of course it was over a period of years that the temple was built, in time when the temple was finished they sent to the quarry and they say that we've completed the building; however, we're missing the chief cornerstone. Send it to us that we might complete the building. And they sent back and said, We have already sent to you the chief cornerstone. And so someone remembered that stone that had come early in the project. They didn't know where it fit and now it had been overgrown, it was in the brush that had overgrown the area and they pulled out the stone and sure enough, it was the chief cornerstone, rejected by the builders but it became the chief cornerstone. So it was incorporated in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the chief cornerstone. And it was a picture of Jesus who was rejected by Israel and yet God has made Him the chief cornerstone.

But to the Jews He is,

A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence (2:8),

Again Peter here is quoting from the Old Testament and from the prophet Isaiah, "The stone of stumbling, the rock of offence" (Isaiah 8:14),

even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (2:8).

In other words, this was all a part of God's appointed plan. It's prophetic, it was declared, God knew that it was going to happen and so they "stumbled at the word, being disobedient."

The crucifixion of Jesus, Paul said, "We preach Jesus crucified, which to the Jews is a stumbling block" (1 Corinthians 1:23), because they were expecting the Messiah to establish God's kingdom immediately. They were expecting a powerful military kingdom that would subdue the world. And when Jesus came and offered Himself as the Messiah, did not come as a threat to the Roman troops or the Roman government, they stumbled. They crucified Him but then the crucifixion of Jesus became the stumbling stone. How could the Messiah suffer and die?

But now he takes the things that God said concerning the nation of Israel and he declares,

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light (2:9):

Those special privileges were first announced by God to the nation of Israel in Exodus 19:5. "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people: for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. [God said,] These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:5,6).

And then in Deuteronomy 7:6, “For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all of the people that are on the face of the earth.” God’s chosen people. But because they rejected the Son, put Him to death, the Lord then let out His vineyard to others who would bring forth fruit; namely, the church.

And so all of those special benefits, all of those special privileges that the Jewish nation once knew as the chosen instrument of God to reveal Himself to the world, those blessings and those privileges have now come to the church. And you are God’s chosen people. You are to be a holy nation. You are to be the kingdom of priests. You are to be God’s special people that through you, the praises of God and the blessings of God might be revealed to the world. That you might declare the excellencies of God, one of the translations says which is a very good translation. So yours is the privilege but also yours is the responsibility.

The Jews once had the privilege but they didn’t live up to the responsibility. They didn’t bring forth the fruit that the Father desired. And we the church have a tremendous responsibility to bring forth the fruit that God is longing for in the world today. That we might declare or show the praises of Him who has called us out of the darkness into His light.

Which in times past you were not God’s people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now you’ve obtained mercy (2:10).

As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, we once were alienated from God. We were alienated to the covenants of God and to the promises of God. They weren’t for us. But now through Jesus Christ, we who were once aliens to these covenants and promises have become through Jesus Christ the heirs of the promises. So God has placed upon us the blessings, His church, His people. But with that again is the responsibility of being the light to the world, of being the salt of the earth. So ours is a solemn charge from God to be light, to be salt in the world in which we live.

Dearly beloved, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims (2:11),

That is, as far as the world is concerned. Our citizenship is in heaven and we are strangers and pilgrims here, and thus don’t live as the world. Paul says, “Don’t be conformed to the world: be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). How does the world live? They live after the desires of their flesh and of their mind. All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the mind, the pride of life. Paul said, “And you He has made alive, who were once dead in your trespasses and sins. Who in times past you were walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that even now is working in the children of disobedience. Among whom you all once lived as you lived after the lusts of your flesh, and the lusts of your minds; and you were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:1-3). But God who is rich in His mercy has brought to us the grace through Jesus Christ and we have been born again by the Spirit of God unto a new life where we are no longer to be dominated by our flesh and by our fleshly desires. But our minds are to be dominated by the Spirit. And we are to live after the Spirit and not after the flesh. So he said, “I beg you, because you are strangers and pilgrims,”

abstain from the fleshly lusts, which war against your mind (2:11);

“Deny yourself,” Jesus said. “Take up your cross and follow Me, if you want to come after Me” (Matthew 16:24). These are the things that you have to do. The denial of self, of the flesh, of the desires of the flesh. And to follow after Jesus Christ. So “abstain from the fleshly lusts, which war against your mind.” We all are familiar with that warfare. None of us are immune from fleshly desires. As long as we are living in these bodies we are going to be subjected to fleshly desires, the body appetites. But we’re not to yield to them in an ungodly way. Those appetites are there for a purpose. God has created them for a purpose. When they are subject to God, there’s no problem. It’s only when we use those for the fulfilling of, or look to them for fulfillment for the emptiness within, is where they take control over you and you no longer are free but are in bondage to your flesh.

Paul writing to the Galatians said, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary: so we do not always do the things that we would” (Galatians 5:17). Man is a three-fold being of body, mind and spirit. The body has certain physical needs--the need for air, the need for moisture, drink, the need for food, and the basic body needs. These are not wrong in and of themselves. Only when they’re perverted do they become wrong. The soul of man or the consciousness of man. And then the third part is the spirit. But when a person’s life is dominated by sin, the spirit is dead. And so man lives in two dimensions, body and mind; but the mind is completely occupied by the body’s needs.

When your spirit is born again, when your spirit comes alive, you, Paul said, He has made alive once you were dead in your trespasses and sins. But when your spirit comes alive, then there’s comes a warfare. The warfare is over the control of the mind. If you’re going to have the mind of the flesh or the mind of the Spirit. Paul says, The mind of the flesh is death but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace and joy. So there are people whose mind is dominated by their fleshly desires. There are those whose mind is dominated by the things of the Spirit. Being born again, there is now the Spirit of God dwelling in me, seeking control over my life. But my body is unwilling to yield the control. It’s been in control for a long time and it’s reluctant and unwilling to give up control. And thus I find this inner warfare going on within me. My mind being torn by my fleshly body desires and my desires for God and the things of the Spirit. And Paul describes this warfare that he went through in Romans chapter seven, the last few verses. But then he comes into Romans chapter eight, the discovery of the new law, the law of life in the Spirit by Christ Jesus. And so the victory of the Spirit in my life as I yield to the Spirit.

Paul said, Don’t be deceived. Whatsoever a man sows, that he’s going to reap. And “if you’re sowing to your flesh, then of your flesh you’re going to reap corruption” (Galatians 6:8). So if you’re constantly sowing into your mind the things of the flesh, if you’re watching R, X-rated videos, if you are looking at the pornographic magazines, you are sowing to the flesh and it doesn’t have to be pornographic. It can be actually magazines that appeal to oh my, House Beautiful or whatever, where you begin to lust after these things. You’re sowing to the flesh and the result is, of the flesh you’re going to reap corruption.

But if we sow to the Spirit, and that’s why we’re here tonight, the word of God feeds the Spirit. Desire the sincere milk of the word that you might grow thereby. And it feeds our Spirit. And when we sow to the Spirit, then we begin to reap of the Spirit. Our minds are on the things of God, upon the things of the Spirit. And so there is the warfare though. We need to recognize this warfare that is going on.

So he says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from the fleshly lusts,” don’t give place to them “which war against your mind.”

Having your manner of living honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they may speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (2:12).

Live an honest life. Upright, a life of integrity before the world among the heathen and though they may speak disparagingly of you as a Christian, which they often do, yet in that day when the chips are down, they’ll be looking for you.

My father was an outspoken witness for Jesus Christ. He was always witnessing to people about their need for the Lord. He was a tremendous personal witness. And because of his witness for Christ, he was often ridiculed. He was the butt of jokes and they would often make fun of my dad because of his outspoken witness for Jesus Christ. But it was interesting that when they got into real problems, into real trouble, they’d always call my dad for prayer. We saw it over and over again, people who had made fun of his witness, when they really got into serious trouble, they would call my dad for prayer and for help.

I remember when my father first went into real estate. He was working for a broker in Santa Ana. And of course, witnessing, Christ was his life. He was always witnessing of what the Lord had done and was doing for him. They used to make fun of him. But then the broker’s wife had a very serious operation, she was dying, she was in need of blood and so he called my dad and asked for prayer. My dad had said, Come on, Chuck, let’s go down to the hospital and pray for her. We got down there and she was needing blood

desperately. They typed me out and it worked and so I gave her a quart of blood next to her there on the table. And the Lord touched her and she recovered. But it's interesting, they may make fun of you and laugh at you but boy, in the time of visitation they come around. But if you keep your testimony pure and you keep your life before them in honesty and integrity, they may make fun but down deep they respect you and when they are in trouble, they'll be looking for you. "Your manner of living honest among the Gentiles: though they may speak against you, by your good works, they'll ultimately glorify God" when they're in trouble.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether as unto the king, as supreme; Or unto the governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (2:13-15):

We are not above the law. We are to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Paul writing to the church in Rome said, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: and the powers that be are ordained by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinances of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and you will have praise of the same: For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay taxes also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: taxes to taxes are due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Romans 13:1-7).

As Christians we're to be model citizens so that the name of Christ is not spoken against because we are some rebel. In the time of the church, there were commands made to the apostles not to speak any more in the name of Jesus or not to mention Jesus anymore. There you have a different situation where the law is in direct opposition to my conscience before God. And in keeping the law, it would violate my conscience before God. And so when Peter was commanded strictly not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus, Peter said, "Whether we obey God or man, judge ye. But we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19,20). And so basically though, the laws are intended for the good of all. And we are to keep the laws. Peter's saying the same thing. "Submit yourselves to the ordinances of man for the Lord's sake. For this is the will of God, that you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

As free, and yet not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God (2:16).

Yes, I am free but yet you can exercise freedom in such a way that you come into bondage. Paul writing to the Corinthians in chapter six, verse twelve said, "All things are lawful for me." I don't know of any broader ethic than that. "All things are lawful for me." But then he goes on to say, "all things are not expedient" (1 Corinthians 6:12). As a Christian, I have certain set goals. As Paul said, "I'm pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). He said, "They that run in a race run all, only one receives the prize. So run, that you might obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24). So I'm in this race and I'm in it to win. Now there are things that can impede my progress toward my goal. They're not wrong. I can do them. But they would slow me down. And because I have set my goals and my desire is to win the prize, I will not engage in those things, though they are lawful for me. It wouldn't be sinful, it wouldn't be some heavy judgment of God, but yet it would slow me down and impede my obtaining the goal! And so though it is lawful for me, I won't do it because I don't want anything to impede my progress towards the goal. "All things are lawful for me," he said, "but I will not be brought under the power of any."

I can take certain things. But if they bring me under their power, then I'm no longer free. You see, I'm free. All things are lawful for me. You say, Can you drink? Yes, I can drink. I can drink all I want but I don't want to, because I won't be brought under the power. You hear the term, Under the influence. If I'm under the influence of alcohol, then I'm no longer free. I'm under the power, the influence of the alcohol that is

messing up with my brain cells and wiping some of them out. And I can't afford to lose any. So though it is lawful, I don't do it because I don't want to be brought under the power. You can exercise your freedom in such a way as to bring yourself into bondage. And you think of the persons who have exercised their freedom to drink and are now alcoholics. They're no longer free. They're in bondage. So "all things are lawful but I'll not be brought under the power of anything." And if it has the potential of bringing me under its influence and power, I don't do it.

Then in 10:23 he said, "All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Corinthians 10:23). Not everything builds me up in Christ. There are some things that I could do, it's lawful to do. It isn't sinful. It isn't some gross horrible sin. But it would draw me away from Him. It would tear me down in my relationship with Him. And though it is lawful, I won't do it because it doesn't build me up. And I only want those things that will build up my relationship with Jesus Christ. I don't want to give in to those things that would tear down my relationship with Him. So you are "as free, but don't use your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God." You're free to serve the Lord.

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood (2:17).

Love the body of Christ, the brotherhood in Christ.

Fear God. Honour the king (2:17).

Short little kind of injunctions here. Honor all men. Love the brothers in Christ. Fear God. Honor the king. Getting more specific,

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward (2:18).

There were millions of slaves in those days. Most of the Christians were slaves. Rather than rebelling against your master, running away, be in subjection. But not only to the good and gentle. There were masters who were kind, they were good to their servants. And there were others who were mean. They would beat them and all. So he is just saying, Look, be subject to them, not only to the good and the gentle ones, but also to those that are froward.

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully (2:19).

Therein is a real commendation. If you are suffering wrongfully, if you're innocent, and yet you've been accused and suffering for it, if you take it and take it well, then that's a real commendation!

But what glory is it, if, when you've been buffeted for your faults [if you're guilty], you shall take it patiently? but when you do well, and you suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable to God (2:20).

If you're guilty as a servant and they beat you and you take it, you've got it coming. But if you're innocent and they beat you and you take it well, then that really is a commendation and acceptable with God. Now he's going to give you a tremendous example,

For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously (2:21-23):

So Jesus is our example. Talk about suffering wrongfully, Jesus did. When they were nailing Him to the cross, He didn't say, I'll get even with you guys. You'll fry in hell. He didn't threaten them. But what did He do? He was praying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So rather than threatening them, He was praying for them. Jesus said, "Bless those that curse you. Pray for those who spitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44). Jesus left us the example that we should follow His steps.

Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree (2:24),

He's quoting now from Isaiah 53.

that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed (2:24).

So "in His own self He bore our sins in His body." Isaiah said, "All of us like sheep have gone astray; we turned every one of us to our own ways; God laid on Him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

I want to point out something here and I think it's very important. Peter is alluding to Isaiah 53. He's not giving you a word for word quotation but he's alluding to the 53rd chapter. And what he is doing is drawing out the truths that are there. They are not in the same order as are written in the 53rd chapter. He's twisting a little bit the order of the things that he is saying but he is bringing the truth from Isaiah 53 and applying it.

I think it's important that we have the truth of God's word hidden in our heart. I don't think it is so important that we have a word by word exact quotation. One thing I like about all of the new modern versions is that if you don't quote word for word from King James, people don't know but what maybe you're quoting from NIV or something else. But it isn't the chapter and verse that's so important as it is the truth. He's not the Spirit of chapter and verse. He's the Spirit of truth. And what's important is that you grasp the truth that is there. And so Peter here gives to us a good example of not quoting word for word verbatim. But bringing you and drawing out the truth of Isaiah 53.

So, "Who in His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed."

For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (2:25).

As you read the first part of Isaiah 53 there, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes ye are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we turned every one of us to our own ways; God laid on Him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:5,6). He doesn't quote it like that. But he is using the portions and then giving commentary on them as he is bringing the truth. And so it is vital and important for us, grasp the truth and be able to even put the truth in your own words. When the truth is hidden in your heart and you grasp the truth, then share it. Relate it. And put it and couch it in your own words. No problem with that.

A lot of times when I'm talking with people, I'll say, Do you know that that's scriptural? And they've put it in their own words, but the truth is there and then I'll give them the scripture that verifies that what they're saying is true. It is scriptural truth though they didn't know that they were quoting from some passage the basic truth of that passage. The thought that was coming forth, the idea was Biblical. It was truth. And I often say to the young pastors that as you're listening to my tapes and as I am teaching the word of God, when the Spirit of God takes the truth and brings it to your heart. And the Spirit confirms it—in other words as I am bringing forth the teaching and I say something and you say, Wow, yeah, I see it, oooh, good—I say when it really speaks to you, it is now yours. Use it! You don't have to say, Chuck Smith said. It's yours. The truth has come to your heart. Now use it and share it. Grasping the basic truths and being able then to relate those truths is vitally important. Peter is doing that here in the last few verses. He's relating to you the truths out of Isaiah 53. Not in order as they are written there and not the whole thing but just the basic nuggets of truth and giving a little exposition on them.

Father, we thank You for the word of God, alive, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. And Lord we thank You for the blessings that You've bestowed upon us as Your chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people of God. Lord, help us that we might declare the excellencies of God. That we might live, Lord, in such a way that people will be drawn to You. Lord, help our lives to be lived in accordance with Your will. Help us, Lord, to have a strong witness before the world. And may we follow the model and the example that has been set for us by our Lord. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.