



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 143:1-12 – New Testament Reading – Hebrews 11:1-40

How Should We Then Live “To This You Were Called” 1 Peter 2:18-24

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The Apostle Peter's two epistles were written to Jewish Christians who had fled from Rome to escape severe persecution.

- However, having lived out their transformed lives before the Gentiles in the Roman provinces Peter identified in verse 1, and having shared the gospel with them, they found themselves suffering the same harassment as they had suffered in Rome.
- Rather than coddle them, Peter urged them to get their minds off of those who were persecuting them, and on to the One who had purchased them with His blood.
- In 1 Peter 2:21, Peter told them, *“For it was to such suffering they were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in His steps.”*

- In effect, Peter told these new Christians, God had not delivered them from Rome to escape persecution, but rather to sow them as seeds of the gospel among the Gentiles in the provinces of Asia, and the effectiveness of their witness would be measured by the level of their persecution.

**“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life,
purpose, faith,
longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions,
which happened
to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I
endured. And
out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to
live godly in
Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”
2 Timothy 3:10-12**

Christians in America have not faced the severe persecution that millions of Christians in other countries have. According to Open Doors International, on average, each day:

- Thirteen Christians are martyred for their faith in Christ.
- Twelve Christians are imprisoned or sent to labor camps.
- Five Christian children, or children of Christians are abducted and sold as sex slaves.

However, with the most radical, Marxist-Socialists administration in charge of our federal government, and with their stated agenda to cancel every historical reference to the Judea-Christian influence in the foundation, formation, and operation of our nation, the days of our religious freedom may be over, and all Americans who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer some level of persecution.

- The many attempts by foreign nations to destroy America were rebuffed, because men and women were willing to die to protect America’s freedoms for the next generation.
- Over the last 20-years, America gradually embraced the concepts of Communism, and with the outcome of the November 4, 2020 election, America is now a democratic-socialist nation.
- Therefore, rejecting the poly-anna attitude that God will protect us from this oppressive totalitarianism, or the “Kingdom Now” theology that Christians must rise up and “save America,” the question is: “How Should We, as Christians, Then Live?”
 - Accept the election results as being allowed by God for His purposes, and allow Him to reconcile the inequities of the election in His way, and in His time.
 - Develop a deep, personal relationship with God, through the study of His Word, to be able to withstand the persecution.
 - Shift our focus from saving the “nation” to the salvation of the lost, and recommit ourselves to the assignment God has given to His Church, for the only hope for our future is for America’s pulpits to become aflame with God’s Word, and for God’s people to fall before Him in genuine repentance.

The Christian's Call to Submission:

- 1 Peter 1:7 – Our confession of faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior will be tested, to prove its genuineness to the unbelievers. When we stand before the Lord, it will not be important that we are found successful in our life's calling, but that we are found faithful to the Lord's calling.
- 1 Peter 1:14-15 – The first evidence of the genuineness of our faith will be a drastic change in the words from our mouth and the attitudes of our lives. We will cease pursuing the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, but we will earnestly "pursue holiness, without which no one will see God."
- 1 Peter 2:1 – Peter defines what the Apostle Paul referred to as "the exchanged life." If we have truly tasted of the goodness of the Lord, we will lay aside the wicked words and works of the world and we will be satisfied with nothing less than the pure, unadulterated truth of the Word of God.
- 1 Peter 2:9 – God has not called us and set us apart from the world to gather in holy huddles in fear of the evil world, but rather to go into the world, and to proclaim to those outside our huddles, the glorious praises of the One who called us out of darkness, and into His marvelous light.
- 1 Peter 2:11-12 – Even though we will appear as "aliens and strangers" to the rest of the world, we are to keep our behavior excellent among the unbelievers, so that our good works might stifle their desire to slander us for our faith in Jesus Christ. Just think – our testimony may be the final evidence someone needs to see their own sin, their own need for a Savior, and Jesus Christ as the Savior they need. That is the weight of a transformed life!
- 1 Peter 2:15 – Peter said, by living such godly lives, we would silence the criticism of those who do not know God. Such calls to holiness are not heard at all from the contemporary pulpits
- 1 Peter 3:1 – a wife's badgering of her unbelieving husband will not change his heart toward God. In fact, it may drive him away. However, the combination of inward beauty, as manifested in her submission, and a chaste and respectful behavior, along with such outward beauty as possible, might get his attention.
- 1 Peter 3:13 – Peter said the way we silence our critics is not by defending ourselves, but in our defense of the gospel by the way we live, including our submission to those in authority over us.
- 1 Peter 4:2 – Once we are born again, we no longer live according to our will, but according to the revealed will of God.
- 1 Peter 4:12 – Therefore, not only should we expect persecution, we should welcome it, for it proves that someone saw enough of Christ within us to persecute us. If someone persecutes us because of our faith in Christ, they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us, but when we absorb their persecution, the Holy Spirit within us is glorified.
- 1 Peter 4:15 – However, we must be very careful about how we express our opinions on divisive issues, for this is where Satan can fan the fires of any deep-seated anger we have not confessed, and destroy our testimony.
- 1 Peter 5:8 – By provoking a weak believer to destroy their testimony with the words of their mouth, they not only forfeit their witness to the lost, but they also plant doubts in the minds of unbelievers, that receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior can really change their lives.
- 1 Peter 5:9 – We are to "*resist*" the devil by keeping our mouths shut, and accepting whatever persecution God allows; knowing, when this life is over, He will "*perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us,*" in heaven, forever.

Based upon that common call to all Christians to endure suffering:

- 1 Peter 2:13 – 17 – Christians are to submit to every ordinance of man, whether we agree with them or not.
 - Our battle is not with the evil government officials.
 - Our battle is with the satanic spirits who inhabited them, and we cannot fight that battle with the weapons of the flesh.
 - If we have any hope of having any level of influence upon society ever again, we had better fall to our knees in true repentance, and cry out unto God for His mercy.
- 1 Peter 2:18-21 – Christians are to submit to those in authority over them, whether they are worthy of respect or not.
 - This command runs “cross-grain” to a culture based upon equal rights and equal justice, but when a person is truly born again, they forfeited their personal rights unto Him.
 - Our submission to those in authority over us is the outward evidence of our submission unto the Lord, and that we are under the control of the Holy Spirit.
 - The only way we can silence our critics, stand against our enemies, and avoid Satan’s evil schemes, is to live a life of holiness; a life that is consistent with what we say we believe.