

Good morning. I want to thank Jeff and Ben for bringing the word to us these last couple weeks, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to slip away as a family.

I am compelled this morning to present this message in a little different format than I normally do, and that because of what we are experiencing and facing in our culture right now. But considering all that needs to be said and the both the time constraints and constraints of culture right now, we have included a link on our web page to a sermon by Voddie Bauchman that I think will not only be helpful, but encouraging and convicting. Please avail yourself of that.

How are we to respond in times of chaos? Though our little city has not seen the kind of tension that has been prevalent throughout the world, any thinking and engaged person will feel the weight of what is happening in our country. In the last three weeks we have experienced the murder of two black men and the mockery of proper outward grief and protest of violence. How was it mocked? It was mocked by other violent people. Millions of dollars have been lost to looting and the destruction of property and more people undeserving of death have been killed. Those who are innocent seem to be caught in the middle of two angry and drunk people who are not thinking beyond the immediate.

Surely the Bible, as archaic as it is, could not offer any encouragement or direction, could it? Surely, we cannot find the kind of hope we need when the experiences of these who lived in other times could not even compare with the speed and global impact with which we now live, can we?

Here is where we can find not only our hope, but direction in how to live during these times of hardship. Peter is writing during the time of Nero, a very capable but brutal Caesar. Yet Peter calls us to live in a way that honors these governing institutions and reminds us that God will judge the unjust and bless those who have suffered unjustly. Jesus on only two occasions engaged in political statements, once when He called Herod a fox for his calculating and sinful governance, and another time in regard to Pilate. He essentially asked a group of people if they thought they were any less sinful than the people Pilate had killed and mixed their blood with their sacrifice. "Unless you repent, you will likewise perish," that's Jesus' application of that statement. Paul tells us that prayers and supplications should be made for all people, and He includes a list that recognizes those in governing authority. The point of this is that those who best served us in times of hardship kept their focus upon reflecting the character and calling of God in the midst of turbulent times. The Church cannot lose its focus. Our hope is Jesus Christ and life with Christ. Our mandate is making disciples of Christ. If we lose everything in the process we are simply reflecting the life of Christ more and more, and Jesus promises to bless us and give us more than we lost, in this life and the next.

In our text there are specific ways that Peter tells us we are to live in the midst of times that are full of trouble. It is really a carry-over from the first chapter in which Peter reminds us that we are to live holy lives because of how costly our salvation is. A holy life will display certain characteristics which we have seen. Here in verse 1-3 of chapter two, Peter gives us some actions that display that redeemed character that God demands of us.

The first thing we see is that we are called to reject 5 dispositions. Peter says that we are to lay these dispositions aside, we are to put away these things. The idea is that we are to be done with them. The word translated "put away," is a word that would often describe the removal of a garment. Have you ever gotten something disgusting on your clothes and you can't wait to get them off? Get rid of these things like you would if you had something vile on your clothes. This is going to demand a certain amount of what I am going to call, introspective inspection. As we consider these things ask yourself how they are reflected in your life.

The first disposition we are to reject is malice. We are to take off all malice. (Kakia/Kakos) This is baseness, or depravity. What is in our lives that celebrates baseness? It can be anything really, but just think of our speech. Our speech can be represented in many forms that we can recognize as base. Think about how much music is out there

that celebrates evil. In our culture we sing of one night stands and other sexual escapades, or of drugs and murders. How can we expect healthy actions if we do not have healthy thinking? Think about how much malice, baseless is celebrated on social media. Do you have posts, reposts, retweets, or whatever other platform of distribution for which you must repent? Remember, we are people who have tasted the mercy of God. If the church is not healthy my friends, how can the culture have any hope? None of these things that Peter mentions in chapter one are dispositions that remains neutral, they will destroy others. Revenge porn has become a crime, and at its base is sheer malice. It's intent is to hurt. What would our news be like if journalism functioned without this intent? What would our politics be like if politicians were not malicious? The fact that Peter is saying we are to put these things away tells us that they were and are present in society, and therefore the church. Are you being malicious towards someone in your circle of influence and social circle? As Christians, we are obligated out of our love for God in Christ Jesus to surrender our life and emotions to that which would please the Lord.

Put away all dispositions of malice and put away all dispositions of deceit. (dolos) The word deals with treachery and cunning. Some translations use the word "guile" to translate this Greek word. In 2:22 Peter says that there was no deceit, or guile, in Christ. He spoke the truth, always. Now those around Him were cunning. How often was Jesus asked questions in order to entrap Him? Do you try to entrap people with your questions and actions? We are so given to the gotcha attitudes. The gotcha attitude is the attitude of the news across the board. Telling the truth has fallen to, how do we make people look bad, and in the sense of guile, it is premeditated. Peter tells us to get rid of it.

Put away all dispositions of malice, all dispositions of deceit, and all dispositions of hypocrisy. (upocrisis) Jesus often addressed hypocrisy with His audience. In one instance He told a story of two people praying. (Luke 18:8-14) One person was a religious person and another was a tax collector. Tax collectors were some of the most hated people during Jesus' time. Luke prefaces the story with this tag line, "He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt." The tax collector beat his chest and hung his head before God and begged for mercy and forgiveness. The religious person just said that he was glad he wasn't like other men, and then lists a whole list of sins. Jesus declares that the tax collector went home justified before the religious person. Now you might say, the word hypocrisy was not used in this context. It is true, but it is exemplified. **Hypocrisy allows me to do what I condemn in others.** The difference is that I have found some justification for that thing that lets me say that it is ok for me, but not for them. The religious leader in Jesus' story was just as sin-filled as the tax collector. If we think that we are better people than the people who make up Antifa, or those in the Black Lives Matter movement that justify violence and anarchy, then we have completely missed the teaching of Jesus and are acting like hypocrites. Jesus has tax collectors as first disciples, Matthew, and people who once were involved in politically active and at times violent groups, Simon the Zealot. They both needed to be changed by Jesus. Antifa and the Black Lives Matters groups are in need of Jesus as much as we are. Jesus did not deny that the tax collector had sin or needed repentance, but He did repudiate the person who felt like they were better. We are not better. If it were not for the grace of God, who knows what kinds of lives we would now be living. Take that thinking away, says Peter. Do you think you are better than the looters and the violent?

Put away all dispositions of malice, all dispositions of deceit, all dispositions hypocrisy, and all dispositions of envy. (pthonos) This is jealousy in the negative sense. Envy, or jealousy is destructive to my own soul, and then it makes me act out in sin. There are different ways that this can display. It could be over material goods, like, how come I am driving a moped when that person is driving a Tesla? It can display in envy over what people have innately. How about body envy? Plastic surgery.org reported in April of 2019 that Americans spent 16.5 billion dollars on elective plastic surgery in 2018. We do a lot of missions in Honduras with the medical team. In Honduras a 1lbs bag of rice is under a dollar. We could have given the entire population of the world 1 lbs of rice — twice, and still had left over. We have body envy in our country. How many in the world envy the fact that we can eat? We not only have to repent of our sin, but of inciting a disposition to sin when we betray our love for our fellow man for our love for ourselves.

Put away all malice, all deceit, all hypocrisy, all envy, and all slander. (katalalia) The word could be translated as evil speech, which I think is helpful for us because it broadens the lexical use for us beyond just saying things about

someone that are not true. **It is language that injures.** Wow, don't we need that in our society now. We are commanded in the word of God to have our speech seasoned with grace that it might be edifying and for others. We are commanded to be slow to speak. We are told that in the multitude of words there is no lack of sin. We are told that the tongue can bless and curse and break down. In her book Thoughts Of An Unlikely Convert, Rosaria Butterfield says that she had received a bunch of responses from some documents that she had published about some evangelical associations. She said that she received so much mail that she had to organize it. She made one pile from people who thanked her for her work, and another for people who derided her for her work. But she received a letter from a pastor that didn't fit into either category. He did not agree with her conclusion and told her why, but neither was he spiteful. It bothered her so much that she actually reached out this pastor and his wife and it ultimately led to her conversion. We are in a time in history that desperately needs to reflect this. This was Jesus in His time. He would say things that seemed so incredibly harsh, but the response He received because of the way in which He said it and showed affection to those around Him was such that they couldn't get enough of Christ; they flocked to hear Him.

Peter moves from telling us to take off evil things, to telling us to crave something else. In verse 2 he uses the analogy of a baby desiring its mother's milk because it will nourish the baby and cause the baby to grow. In verse 3, since we have tasted the goodness of God, it should cause more craving. The idea is something like, you know this is delicious, eat more. We know that God's word are satisfying like nothing else in the world, as Psalm 33 says, we have tasted that the Lord is good. The implication is, so let's taste more. There is a question here, though, and that is to ask what the milk is? In the Greek Peter gives us a play on words. Throughout the chapter he has talked about the word, logos, of God. Here he tells us to long for the spiritual, logikos, milk, and then actually phrases his text in such away that it is a direct translation of Psalm 33 in the LXX (Psalm 34 LXX). Without a doubt we have to underscore the place of scripture to help us grow. But the scriptures are what teach us about God. Our longing as believers is not to just know scripture. Our longing of scripture is that we might know God. Jesus says in John 17 that to know God is eternal life. If we long for God we not only consume anything that helps us understand Him more, be it natural or special revelation, but we also reject things that restrain us from enjoying Him more. That's why Peter underscores these things we are to reject. They keep us from enjoying God. They are the porn that makes us dissatisfied with the love that God wants us to have for Him.

So how does this all play into where we are? Well, as we have seen, there are some immediate applications. But there is a deeper one that Peter gets to, and that is this, that we are actually a separate society here on earth. We are sojourning, and we are a Holy nation being built up as priests. In other words, we are a separate culture from the culture of the world. We are to strive to be a culture that reflects what God intended in humanity. I don't know how many of you have ever been in an embassy. If you go to an embassy there are some things that will be immediately clear, the culture is different. There will be things from that country all over that place because that is an extension of that culture, that country. It means that we can participate in things in this world, but only to an extent. It is not wrong to march and protest. It is wrong to belittle, steal, destroy, and murder. It is not wrong to disagree. It is wrong to ignore that even in a disagreement we are speaking to someone who bears the image of God. It is wrong to change the goal of the church to be a political machine when we are to be about 1 thing, making disciples. It is wrong to walk away from the church and feel no responsibility to the people who claim the same salvation. Oh dear friends, let us make this place a place where the lost and the broken in this world can just sit in awe and healing because we have truly made this to be an outpost of the heavenly realm. What are you making the church to be?