**BY HIS WOUNDS YOU HAVE BEEN HEALED**

1 Peter 2:11-25

Key Verse 2:24

“‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’”

As we came to Jesus by faith - the living stone, he redeemed us from the empty way of life with His precious blood and made us living stones, being built into a spiritual house. As we came to Jesus by faith, we have been born again through the living and enduring word of God, becoming a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession. God has given us these spiritual identities through new birth into the living hope. Then, how should we live a life worthy of this identity?

 In today’s passage, Peter teaches believers how to live as God’s chosen people in a world filled with injustice, violence, hatred, and immorality. We are engaged in a spiritual battle - both externally, against the brokenness of the world, and internally, against our own sinful desires. None of us are superheroes capable of conquering all the evil around us and within us. Peter does not overlook our weaknesses. Instead, he reveals the spiritual secret to living victoriously as God’s chosen people. We can come to Jesus, who bore our sins in his body on the cross. As we come to Him, Jesus sets us free from sin and we are healed by his wounds - our brokenness restored and our hearts made whole. As a result, we can die to sin and live for righteousness.

**First, Live for the Glory of God. (11-20)**

 Look at verse 11. “Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” Peter reminded believers of their status in the world. Though they are God’s precious possessions, they were “foreigners and exiles.” which would better be translated as “strangers and pilgrims.” (KJV) When I applied for a Work-Permit, the IRS gave me a number called “Alien Number.” I was an Alien like E.T in the U.S. for long years. Now I speak English; I have US Citizenship; I have ID cards. But still I am a stranger in this world because of my faith. We Believers are strangers to the people in this world not because of our colors or ethics, because of our faith in Jesus. We are different from others in many ways. We worship God only, not money or power or authority. We value the word of God, not position nor achievement. We crave for spiritual milk, not for pleasure of the world. We first seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness, not what to eat, what to wear, or where to live. Especially our hope is the living hope in the kingdom of God. Then, as strangers and pilgrims, how should we live?

Peter says in verse 11: “abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” “Sinful desires” refer to more than sexual immorality and debauchery. It also includes self-seeking, selfish ambition, self-glorification, and all manner of ego indulgence. Beside this, we also have spiritual desires to serve God in our souls. Our souls are like a war zone, battle field, where our sinful desires wage war against our Holy desires. Even Paul cried out in the same spiritual conflict in mind, “What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate to do… What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (Ro7:15,24) So, in Christian life, it is normal to experience such conflicts in our souls. “Abstain from sinful desires.” Such sinful desires weaken our spirituality, blind our discernment, mislead us to fleeting pleasures or easy-going, and lead us to rebel against God’s command for his children “Be holy, because I am holy.” It may be painful to abstain from them. But this is an absolutely necessary step to living a good life. without doing so, we cannot even begin to live a life of faith.

Look at verse 12. “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” Here “Live good lives” does not mean “live luxurious and comfortable lives.” Rather, it means “living godly lives” in obedience to His words - lives that reflect God’s characters and bring him glory, even among the pagans. Remember, people are watching us closely, often looking for something to accuse us of. They will judge our words, our actions and even our attitude. Then, how should we respond to this hostility from the world?

“Live such good lives.” Why? We need to see the big picture of God’s will. It is not just to solve imminent problems we face. Living such good lives, we might face greater hardships, more sufferings, or increased criticisms. Yet through it all, God’s goodness, love, and mercy will be clearly revealed like shining light. The good lives of believers will shine like bright light into darkness, and lead sinners to repentance, turn them to God and find salvation in God. In this way, God will be glorified!

Joseph in the Old Testament was sold by his own brothers to Egypt and became a slave. He did not complain about it. Even he was falsely accused of sexual harassment by his master’s wife and then he was imprisoned. In the prison, he served and helped Pharaoh's officials. But he was forgotten for years. Still, he trusted in God and walked before God blamelessly. When he lived such a good life before God, Pharaoh saw that God was with him and made him ruler over Egypt. Then, all Joseph’s enemies praised the God of Joseph. All his brothers repented of their sins and grew to be 12 tribes of Israel.

The centurion saw how Jesus crucified and died on a cross. Jesus did not open his mouth to save himself. He did not retaliate against his enemies, but prayed for their forgiveness. Then, he confessed, “Surely this was a righteous man.” Jesus lived for the glory of God through his obedience on the cross. His good life indeed had testified to God’s amazing love for sinners and led sinners to repentance and to salvation. “Live such good lives” for the glory of God.

Look at verses 13-15. We are God’s special possession, so we worship God only. Does that mean we can resist and rebel against human authorities? In these passages, Peter urges believers - whether free or enslaved - to submit to every human authority, especially the emperor, governors and even unjust slave masters. Do you like President Trump? Do you like police officers who pull you over for speeding while so many other cars are speeding too? I do not - especially the parking authority that gave me tickets for being just 3 minutes over. But, I will pay $45 to Princeton and $65 to NY because they are authorities who are sent by God to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

What about authorities in Peter’s time? At that time, the emperor whom Peter urged believers to honor and submit to was Nero. He set fire to Rome, reportedly to inspire himself to write poetry. Then, he blamed the Christians for the fire, and ordered their persecution, and used them as living torches to light his garden parties. Just a few months after Peter wrote his letter, he himself was executed by Nero. He was one of the victims of the Roman exploit. Still, Peter asked believers to submit themselves to every human authority, even to evil emperors. Why? Was it to gain favor through flattery? Was it to escape persecution? Not at all. It was not for one’s own sake, but for the Lord’s sake. In other words, for the glory of God we must obey every authority. Peter also reminds them that it was God’s will. Look at verse 15. “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.” Here “doing good” is expressed by submission to authority. In fact, at that time all kinds of nasty things were being said about Christians such as “Christians are loyal to another Emperor” “They are a rebellion sect.” “They are cannibals and criminals.” Living in submission to human authority, believers actually silenced those who were making foolish accusations against them (15).

Look at verses 16-17. Are you a slave or freeman? God had set us free from the bondage of sins by the precious blood of Jesus. As God’s chosen people, we have forgiveness; we have been renewed and rebuilt our lives as God’s children. Nothing in this world can change this reality. We are free because Jesus, the son of God, sets us free. So, No circumstance of life, no government, no human authority can ever change this. so, let us live as Free men!

What is Peter really trying to say? Is he telling us to submit to authority, or to live as free man? Isn’t it a bit confusing? Peter reminds Believers again that our submission is for the sake of the Lord. We are free, but we use our freedom to obey God’s will because we are God’s people; we are God’s servants. We freely choose to serve God and his will. We choose to live as God’s slaves, obeying His words. So, for the Lord’s sake, we choose to submit to authority. In this way, we offer ourselves to God as an instrument of righteousness. As we obey God, sin cannot be our master any longer because we are under God’s grace.

 In verses 18-20 Peter instructed slave believers why and how they must live such good lives. In Peter’s day there was a slave system and many Christians were slaves. Its slave system was very different from the hideous racist system of slavery. It was more of a social or economic or political institution rather than based on race and ethnicity. The slave population of the empire was around 40% of the population because there were many war-slaves, and also many people sold themselves into slavery to out of poverty.

In America today, from a legal standpoint, there are no slaves. However, this can be applied today to employer-employee relationships; or to the people socially and economically underprivileged. As an employee, don’t you feel like you are a slave in your workplace? Don’t you feel like you are a slave under your bosses or supervisor, or professors?

What is Peter’s instruction for them? Look at verse 18 “Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your master, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.” (18) Peter also said, “it is commendable…” two times in 19-20. If we were mistreated or abused, shouldn’t we demand justice or sue them right away? Why should they still submit themselves to unjust masters, boss? It is because in such a way they can reveal the glory of God, testify their faith and also please God. “Such submission” “suffering for doing good and enduring it” is what pleases God; what God rewards; what gives glory to God. it is commendable to God.

Historically at Peter’s time, the suffering Christians did not resist against Nero or the Roman government, though he lied, misused, and severely persecuted them. Do you know about the Roman Catacombs? Between the 2 nd and 5th centuries, hundreds of thousands of Christians lived and were buried there. It might seem like meaningless or worthless death. But believers chose to submit to their masters, enduring the persecutions and mistreatments. Yet, they continued to live good lives by obeying God’s words, even in secret or underground. Many people living in the city of Rome admired the Christians for their pure and upright lives. As a result, many Roman aristocrats came to believe in the gospel of Jesus. Later, the mother of Emperor Constantinue became a Christian and played a crucial role in the conversion of Constantine and in the spread of the gospel throughout Rome. Likewise, when we endure all false accusations and persecution from the evil people, being aware that God is with us and that God rewards us, God will give us final victory.

 Therefore, for the glory of God, let us 1) live such good lives, 2) submit ourselves to every human authority, and 3) suffer for doing good and endure it.

**Second, we are healed by his wounds (21-25).**

 “Live godly lives!” “Submit ourselves to authority!” “Suffer for doing good and endure it! These are not easy to do at all. Then, how could we do so? Here Peter points believers to Jesus who is their example to follow and source of strength.

 First of all, follow Jesus’ example. Look at verse 21. it says, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” It is truly wonderful that we are called to be God’s holy people to inherit the living hope in the kingdom of God. Believers are called to be built into a spiritual house together with Jesus, the living stone. However, in saying “To this you were called,” Peter affirms that suffering for doing good is also part of His calling for believers. Paul also said, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” (Rom 8:17) Jesus also prepared his disciples to suffer, saying, “You will be hated by everyone because of me.” (Mt10:22) In this matter, we believers are not alone because Jesus himself set a good example for us to follow in suffering for doing good when he suffered for us.

Jesus was totally sinless and innocent. He was the only person to live a perfect life without sin. Yet, he endured terrible sufferings that he did not deserve. He suffered unjustly on our behalf - for the forgiveness of our sins and for our healing. When he was falsely accused, arrested and tried, he did not retaliate. When he suffered across, he made no threats. He is the Son of God. He could have called down legions of angels to take out his accusers. He could have asked God for a few lightning bolts. But Jesus endured unjust treatment.

Why? Look at verse 23b. “Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.” He entrusted his life to God. Jesus endured all that suffering, by focusing on God who made all things right with his mighty power. He believed that even though he suffered and died without sin at the hands of his own people, God would raise him up from the dead; the righteous God will judge all sin and evil and will ultimately bring final victory over all the evil of the world.

To follow Jesus’ example, we must learn to trust God to deal with injustice; we must learn to run the race of faith with perseverance, trusting God’s righteous judgment. We may remember Hebrews 12:1-3 “ Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart…”

Look at verse 24-25. Jesus is more than just our good example. Jesus is our savior who heals us, restores us, and makes us a new creation in Christ. So, we die to sins and live for righteousness. Let’s read verse 24: “He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.” When Jesus suffered, he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross. He paid the full penalty that our sins deserve to offer forgiveness to us freely. In this way, Jesus breaks the chains of sin. We are set free from sin. By the power of Jesus’ blood, we are healed from all sin-illnesses such as pride, addictions, sinful desires, selfishness, greed, and so on. In Christ Jesus, we become a new creation. As a result, we can die to our sins and live for righteousness. We are healed completely by Jesus’ wounds. Peter was sick with pride, self-righteousness, ambition, jealousy, and stubbornness. He was also deeply wounded by failures. Out of fear of death, He disowned Jesus three times the very night Jesus was arrested. Though he was the top disciples, he failed to follow Jesus; he failed to love Jesus to the end. This failure made him utterly powerless and hopeless. However, the Risen Jesus visited him, healed his wounds completely with his unfailing love, and restored him fully. By Jesus’ wounds, Peter became a shepherd like Jesus! This verse is his personal confession of faith - “By his wounds, I have been healed.” So, I died to sin and lived for righteousness.”

There are so many wounded people. Some are wounded by parents, brothers, sisters, family, classmates, friends. Most of the time at the root of someone’s cynicism, sorrow, fatalism, or despair, there may be a wound. The wounds disfigure our inner persons. We need healing from our wounds. Let us come to Jesus. Jesus’ wound heals all our sickness. His wounds make us Whole New Creation. So, we can die to sin and live for righteousness. One 2nd gen studied Psychology as under-graduate and Counseling in graduate school. After graduating, she worked hard as a counselor, wanting to help others. After 2 years, she became deeply discouraged when she realized that her patients kept returning with the exact same problem, showing little lasting change. Then, she began to help one student with Bible Study. As they studied the bible together, God’s word began to heal the student’s wounded heart due to her broken family. The bible student began to change - filled with joy, praising Jesus and his grace. She gladly invited many other students who were wounded like her to join the Bible Study. She became a source of blessing. She died to sin and now lives for righteousness. All who are wounded may come to Jesus, because Only Jesus can heal the wounded and make them whole again, as a New Creation.

We were like sheep going astray, but now we have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (25). As we follow Jesus, he watches over us and cares for us. Let’s come to Jesus for healing by faith. We may be healed, be strong, and be new creations. We may die to sin and live for righteousness as the kingdom of priests and Holy nation.