



LESSON EIGHT

A Life in an Excellent Manner toward All Men in All Concerns

Scripture Reading:

1 Peter 2:11-25

- 2:11** Beloved, I entreat you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,
- 2:12** Having your manner of life excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the matter concerning which they speak against you as evildoers they may, by your good works, as they see them with their own eyes, glorify God in the day of His visitation.
- 2:13** Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as being supreme,
- 2:14** Or to governors as being sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and praise of those who do good.
- 2:15** For so is the will of God, that by doing good you would muzzle the ignorance of foolish men;
- 2:16** As free, and yet not having freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God.
- 2:17** Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.
- 2:18** Household servants, be subject in all fear to your masters, not only to the good and forbearing but also to the crooked.
- 2:19** For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly.
- 2:20** For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God.
- 2:21** For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
- 2:22** Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;
- 2:23** Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously;
- 2:24** Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- 2:25** For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. Why is Peter 'begging' the believers to abstain from fleshly lusts?
2. What is the "day of His visitation."?
3. How do we experience God's visitation? Give an example from your own experience.

Section 2:

1. Why should the believers be subject to their masters / human institutions?
2. Why does Peter use the word "brotherhood" instead of "brothers" in 1 Peter 2:17?
3. What is "grace with God."? Give an example from your own experience.

Section 3:

1. In 1 Pet 2:21, what is 'this' that we are called for?
2. Use the example of making of Xerox copies to show what Peter means that Christ being a model for us.
3. Explain that to become a xerox copy of Christ is very different from trying to imitate Him.

Section 4:

1. How do we know that the Lord lived a human life on earth under God's government from verse 23?
2. Use verse 24 to show that Christ is our savior and in what way He saved us so that we may die to sin and live to righteousness.
3. How can the objective cross become subjective to us in our experience?

Section 5:

1. What is the function of our Lord as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul? How does He take care each part of our soul?
2. Explain how is the Lord a Shepherd to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. How is this applied to us?

SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS ABSTAINING FROM FLESHLY LUSTS

Let us come now to the third section of 1 Peter and begin to consider the Christian life and its sufferings. In 2:11 Peter says, “Beloved, I entreat you as sojourners and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” The fleshly lusts are in man’s fallen body (Rom. 7:18, 23-24), warring against man’s soul—man’s inner being, composed of mind, will, and emotion (Rom. 7:19-23).

Peter’s entreaty in 2:11 is based upon what he has said in the two previous sections. In particular, this entreaty is based on the new birth and on the growth in life. When Peter says, “I entreat you,” he is actually saying, “I beg you.”

In verse 11 Peter refers to the believers as sojourners and pilgrims. He begs these sojourners and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts. This entreaty is a very practical matter and not merely a doctrine. Here Peter seems to be saying, “I beg you all to abstain from fleshly lusts. Do you know who you are? You are not worldly people. You are sojourners and pilgrims, people who belong to another country and who are traveling through a foreign country. Actually, you are on this earth as aliens, for you are not citizens of the earth. You are heavenly sojourners and spiritual pilgrims. As such persons, you should live a life that is different from that of the worldly people. You need to abstain from the vain manner of life. The vain manner of life is a life that comes out of fleshly lusts. Therefore, in order to show others that you are heavenly aliens, you must abstain from fleshly lusts.”

In verse 11 Peter says that the fleshly lusts war against the soul. The fallen body is fleshly and full of lusts. The fleshly lusts in the fallen body war against the soul, against our inner being, that includes the mind, the will, and the emotion. Often we think good things, love good things, and decide to do good things. Thinking is in the mind, loving is in the emotion, and the deciding is in the will. Nevertheless, the fleshly lusts often war against what we think in our mind, what we love in our emotion, and what we decide with our will. The fleshly lusts are contrary to our good thoughts, intentions, and decisions. Therefore, we should abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

AN EXCELLENT MANNER OF LIFE AMONG THE NATIONS

In 2:12 Peter goes on to say, “Having your manner of life excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the matter concerning which they speak against you as evildoers they may, by your good works, as they see them with their own eyes, glorify God in the day of His visitation.” The manner of life here must be the holy manner of life (1:15) and the good manner of life in Christ (3:16), a life not only for God but filled and saturated with God. This manner of life is versus the vain manner of life of the unbelievers (1:18). The believers’ manner of life should be excellent; that is, it should be beautiful in its virtues. We need to have such a life among the nations, among the Gentiles.

THE DAY OF VISITATION

According to verse 12, if we have an excellent manner of life among the nations, they, by observing our good works, will glorify God in the day of visitation. The Greek word translated “visitation” is *episkopes*. The basic meaning of this word is to observe, inspect, oversee, look upon. The day of visitation is the day when God will look upon His pilgrim people, as a shepherd over his wandering sheep. He will look upon them and will become the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls (2:25). Hence, the day of visitation is the time of God’s overseeing care.

Concerning the understanding of the day of visitation mentioned in verse 12, there are different schools of interpretation. One school says that the day of visitation is the day of judgment. However, if we look into the meaning of the Greek word, we shall find that it does not convey the thought of judgment. As we have pointed out, the basic meaning is to observe, inspect, oversee, look upon. (In the New Testament elders are called overseers, those who oversee.) The root of the Greek word for visitation is the same as that of the Greek word for overseers. Peter’s thought here is that the day of visitation is the time when God will look upon His pilgrim people as a shepherd looking upon his sheep. Then God will become to them the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls. With this understanding of the word visitation as our basis, we may go on to say that the day of visitation is the time of God’s overseeing care. To make the matter simple, we may say that the day of God’s visitation is the day God comes to visit us. When God pays us a visit, that is the day of visitation.

EXPERIENCING GOD'S VISITATION

Have you not experienced God's visitation in the meetings of the church or of the ministry? I can testify that as I am ministering the Word to the saints, deep within I often have the feeling that God is visiting us in His overseeing care. In meeting after meeting, God comes to pay us a visit. Many of us can testify that we have experienced Him as the divine Visitor in recent days.

What does God intend to do when He comes to visit us? Does He come to judge us? No, instead of coming to judge us, God visits us for the purpose of looking upon us and observing how we are doing and what we are doing. It may seem that He says to us, "How is everything with you? What are you doing? Is everything all right?" God's visitation is like that of a shepherd. It is also the visit of an overseer. This is the reason Peter speaks of the Lord as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (2:25). Our Savior is the Shepherd and Overseer. He shepherds us and oversees us in order to take good care of us. This is the proper understanding of the word visitation in verse 12.

THE OPPOSERS GLORIFY GOD IN THE DAY OF VISITATION

In verse 12 Peter is saying that if we have an excellent manner of life among the nations, they will eventually glorify God concerning us in the day of visitation. In this verse Peter seems to be telling the saints, "The opposers now speak evil against you. But if you live a life that is excellent among them, a life that is beautiful in quality and excellent in manner, they will observe your good works and glorify God in the day of visitation. As they look upon you, they will realize that you are under the visitation of God. Eventually, the outcome will be a glory to God, for the opposers will glorify God in the day of visitation."

I can testify that throughout the years I have seen Peter's word fulfilled many times. Because they saw God's visitation of the saints, a good number of opposers regretted what they had done and repented. The saints were under God's loving care in the day of His visitation. Even though these saints were evil spoken of, they lived a marvelous, excellent life under God's gracious care. Therefore, God visited them again and again. Their excellent manner of life and God's visitation eventually caused the opposers to repent and give glory to God.

Several years ago, the parents of a particular young person may have opposed him strongly. They wondered why he spent so much time attending the meetings of the church and of the ministry. However, gradually they began to see a change, a transformation, in his manner of life. Although they did not have the word to describe it, they were witnessing the Lord's transforming work in their son. Eventually, they came to realize that he was a person under God's care, a person under God's visitation.

Not long ago, a number of saints testified to this effect in a meeting. They said that in the past they were opposed by their parents and, in some cases, even persecuted by them. But gradually, over a period of time, the attitude of their parents began to change. When the young people went home to visit the family, their parents continued to oppose them. But they also were carefully observing their children. Little by little, there was less opposition and more observation. Eventually, the parents had a complete change in attitude, and in some cases, they also came into the church life. They observed the excellent manner of life of their children, and they glorified God in the day of visitation.

-----[SECTION 2]-----

SUBJECT TO EVERY HUMAN INSTITUTION

In verses 13 and 14 Peter says, "Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as supreme, or to governors as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and praise of those who do good." What does the word "institution" mean? Literally, the Greek word means creation, as in Colossians 1:15. It refers to anything made, as a creature, building, regulation, ordinance.

In verse 13 "institution" means the making of regulations or ordinances much like the enacting of laws by the legislature. According to the context, "every human institution" includes "a king as supreme" and also "governors as sent by him." Here Peter is telling the believers that for the Lord's sake, that is, for the expression and glorification of the Lord (v. 12), we should be subject to all human institutions.

In verse 15 Peter goes on to say, "For so is the will of God, that by doing good you would muzzle the ignorance of foolish men;" The foolish men in verse 15 are the evil speakers mentioned in verse 12.

USING OUR FREEDOM AS SLAVES OF GOD

In verse 16 Peter says, “As free, and yet not having freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God.” We should never use freedom as an excuse to do evil. We should not say, “Are we not free? We are not under the bondage of the law; we are under grace. This means that we are free.” Yes, we are free, but we should not use our freedom as an excuse to behave in a careless manner. On the contrary, we should use our freedom as slaves of God. Peter’s word here is similar to that of Paul in his Epistles. Although we are freed from the law of Moses, we are still under the law of Christ. As those under the law of Christ, we should be slaves of God. On the one hand, we are free; on the other hand, we are slaves of God under His control.

LOVING THE BROTHERHOOD

Verse 17 says, “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” Why does Peter say “love the brotherhood” instead of “love the brothers”? What does the term “brotherhood” mean here? The brotherhood is the aggregate of the brothers, the family of the brothers, the brothers in the feeling of brotherliness. An aggregate is a totality. By using the word brotherhood Peter indicates that we should not merely love the brothers separately, one by one, or individualistically. Rather, we should love the totality of the brothers. This means that we should love the universal family of the brothers.

As believers in Christ, we are not only a community; we are also a family. A family is much more intimate than a community is. Because we are in a family, we refer to one another as brothers. If we were not of the same family, how could we be brothers to one another? No matter what our skin color may be—black, white, yellow, brown, or red—we all are brothers in God’s family. Hallelujah for this worldwide, universal family! This family has been in existence for nearly two thousand years. The word brotherhood in verse 17 refers to this family.

We should love the brothers in God’s family in the feeling of brotherliness. This is to love the brotherhood. However, few Christians today have the sense that in loving the brothers they are loving the brotherhood. This indicates that today’s Christians do not have the sense of the corporate life. Nevertheless, the church is

altogether a corporate matter. In verse 9 we see that the church is a race, a priesthood, a nation, and a people for God’s possession. Now in verse 17 we see that the church is a brotherhood. The priesthood is for the service of God, and the brotherhood is for loving the brothers. We need to love the brothers in their totality; that is, we need to love the brothers in a corporate sense.

Suppose twelve people come together from twelve different families. Although they may love one another, this is not the love in the category of a “-hood,” as love in a brotherhood. But if twelve people are in the same family, born of the same parents, their love for one another will be a love in a -hood. They will love one another, but this love for each member of the family will be in a -hood. Their love is different from those from separate families who love others but not with a love in a -hood. In such a case, they may love certain ones more than others. But those born of the same parents love everyone in the family and care for everyone. This is an illustration of loving the brotherhood, of loving the totality of the brothers. In the church we love not merely the individual brothers; we love the totality, the -hood, of the brothers.

A WORD TO HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS

In verse 18 Peter goes on to say, “Household servants, be subject in all fear to your masters, not only to the good and forbearing but also to the crooked.” Even though certain masters may be crooked, the believers who are household servants should be subject to them. This also is an aspect of the Christian life.

In verse 18 Peter charges the household servants to be subject to their masters in fear. This is a holy fear, as in Philippians 2:12. It is a healthy, serious caution for us to behave in a holy way. Such a fear is mentioned a number of times in this book because its teaching concerns the government of God.

GRACE AS THE MOTIVATION AND EXPRESSION OF THE DIVINE LIFE

In verses 19 and 20 Peter says, “For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly. For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God.” Here Peter is saying that if, due to our conscience toward God, we are willing to bear sorrows and suffer unjustly, that is, suffer unjust treatment, this is grace. The Greek word rendered “grace”

in verse 19 is *charis*, referring here to the motivation of the divine life within us and its expression in our life, becoming in our behavior gracious and acceptable in the eyes of both man and God (v. 20). The same Greek word is used in Luke 6:33-34 and Romans 7:25 for thanks.

As we have pointed out a number of times, grace is actually the Triune God becoming our life for our experience and enjoyment. With this understanding of grace as our basis, we can say that here grace is the motivation of the divine life within us and its expression in our living. Therefore, this becomes in our behavior something gracious and acceptable in the sight of both God and man.

The words "conscience toward God" also mean consciousness of God. This is the consciousness of our relation to God. It indicates that a believer is living in an intimate fellowship with God, that he has and keeps a conscience toward God that is both good and pure (3:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3).

According to the context, the unjust suffering spoken of in verse 19 must be the mistreatment inflicted by the unbelieving masters. These masters opposed and persecuted their believing servants because of their Christian testimony (1 Pet. 3:14-18; 4:12-16).

These verses speak about our behavior in our daily life as Christians. The Christian life is a matter of behavior.

The point here is that if we are those without the divine life, we shall face problems in our married life, no matter how much we may love one another. We shall have at least five major problems: temper, disposition, habit, background, and our way of understanding things. No matter how much alike a husband and a wife may be, there will be differences between them regarding temper, disposition, habit, background, and understanding. The husband will have his way of viewing things, and the wife will have hers. Likewise, the wife will have her habits and disposition, and the husband will have his. Therefore, they will have difficulties with the five troubling factors of temper, disposition, habit, background, and way of understanding. This will be the situation, even if the husband and wife love each other very much and are refined, educated people. Sometimes at least they will find the situation intolerable and will quarrel with one another. If a mother-in-law is visiting at such a time, she will find the situation altogether

unpleasant and unacceptable. She would not even want to observe such an ungracious situation.

But suppose a husband and wife both have the divine life and live according to this life. In spite of the differences in temper, disposition, habit, background, and understanding, grace inwardly motivates both the husband and the wife. Furthermore, this grace is expressed in their living.

Here Peter seems to be saying, "You Jewish brothers are suffering persecution. Some of you have crooked masters who treat you unjustly. Nevertheless, you are willing to suffer this unjust treatment. In the sight of both man and God this is gracious, pleasant, and acceptable." This is what Peter means when he says, "This is grace." Anyone observing a believer living this way in a situation of suffering and persecution would have to recognize that this is grace. It is also something worthy of our thanksgiving to God.

As we have seen, in verse 20 Peter says, "For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God." It is not a credit to us if we endure buffeting because we have sinned. But if we do good and yet suffer and endure, this is grace with God. Such a situation indicates that our living expresses the working of God's grace within us and through us. Therefore, concerning this manner of life, Peter says, "This is grace with God."

-----[SECTION 3]-----

CALLED TO SUFFER UNJUSTLY

Verse 21 opens with the words, "For to this you were called." Have you ever thought that you were called to suffer unjustly? The word "this" in verse 21 refers to the unjust sufferings, the suffering for doing good, mentioned in verses 19 and 20. We would be happy to hear that we have been called to the kingdom and to God's glory. These are marvelous things. But probably very few of us, whether young or old, have realized from verse 21 that we have been called to suffer unjust treatment.

As the context indicates, some of the believers to whom this Epistle was written were called to suffer unjustly under crooked masters. In verse 18 Peter says, "The household servants, subject yourselves in all fear to your masters, not only to the good and forbearing, but also to the crooked." Then in verse 19 Peter continues, "For this is

grace, if anyone because of conscience toward God bears sorrows, suffering unjustly.” As we have pointed out, conscience toward God means consciousness of God—the consciousness of our relation to God. This consciousness indicates that we are living in intimate fellowship with God and that we are keeping a conscience toward God that is good and also pure (3:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3). Deep within us, there is a consciousness before God, and this consciousness regulates and guides us. If anyone bears sorrows, suffering unjustly, because of this inward consciousness, this is grace. Verse 20 is very similar in content to verse 19: “For what credit is it if sinning and being buffeted you shall endure it? But if doing good and suffering you shall endure, this is grace with God.”

Now we see that verse 21 indicates that we have been called to this. We have been called to enjoy grace and to express God, as described in verses 19 and 20. This means that we have been called to suffering so that in it we may have the enjoyment of God as grace and express Him. Whatever the circumstances may be, God is our grace, our inner enjoyment. This God is our grace. This enjoyment motivates us and then becomes our outward expression, an expression visible to others. Those who observe this grace expressed from within us will be able to see something attractive on our face, in our attitude, or in the atmosphere around us. They will feel that what they see expressed is pleasant and acceptable. As we have pointed out again and again, this is grace.

SPIRITUAL XEROXING

Verse 21 clearly says that we have been called to suffer unjustly because Christ suffered on our behalf and left us a model so that we should follow in His steps. Actually, I do not like the word “model,” because it has been spoiled by common usage. Literally, the Greek word means a writing-copy, an under-writing for students to use in tracing letters as they learn to draw them. In ancient times teachers would write letters on writing material, and those letters became a master copy. Another piece of writing material was put upon the master copy. Then the children would practice writing by tracing the letters from the master copy onto their copy. The Greek word for “model” is the word that denotes such a master copy used in the teaching of writing. The Lord Jesus has set His suffering life before us as an under-writing for us to copy by tracing and following His steps.

The making of xerox copies may be used to illustrate what Peter means by Christ being a model for us....Christ’s living revealed in the four Gospels is the master copy used in this spiritual xeroxing. For xeroxing, we must first have a copy. The xeroxed copy made from this original is a reproduction, not an imitation. We know from experience that trying to imitate Christ does not work. We are not able to imitate Him. What we need is not imitation but reproduction. There is a great difference between imitation and reproduction.

I have heard an explanation of how the xeroxing process operates. First there is the need of a proper light to expose the original copy. Then there is the need of a special kind of ink, called toner. Besides this, there is the need of a heat roller and the paper upon which to make the copy. This paper, of course, must be clean. Then this clean paper is exposed under the light to the copy. Through the light, the heat, and the proper ink, whatever the copy is will be reproduced onto the paper. The result is reproduction, not imitation.

In the process of spiritual xeroxing, the Spirit of Christ is the light, and the riches of the divine life are the inking substance. We are the paper on which the reproduction of the original is to be made. This paper must be put under the light of the Holy Spirit, and it must pass through the inking substance in order to have the original copy—Christ Himself—reproduced on it. Through this process we eventually become a reproduction of the original, a reproduction of Christ.

We have pointed out that the paper used in xeroxing must be clean. It should not have anything on it. For instance, we could never get anything xeroxed on a piece of newspaper. If you try to make a reproduction onto a piece of newspaper, nothing will come out clear. It is very important, therefore, for the paper to be clean. Peter refers to this clean “paper” in 1:22, where he speaks about the purifying of our souls. Much of what Peter writes in chapters one and two is related to producing clean paper for spiritual xeroxing.

Christ is not merely a model for us to follow outwardly. He is a writing-copy, an original for spiritual xeroxing, and we need to become His reproduction. This means that we should become xerox copies of Christ by experiencing a process that involves spiritual light and the riches of the

divine life. The result of this process is that we eventually become a reproduction of Christ.

THE GRACE AND THE MODEL

Peter may not have been learned in the Greek language, but he was rich in his expression. First he says, "This is grace." Then he tells us that Christ has left us a model. The grace and the model are closely related. When anyone observes the expression of the Triune God as grace from within a believer and recognizes that this is grace, there is an indication that this one has become a xerox copy of Christ, the model. To express the Triune God as grace in the midst of unjust suffering is to become a reproduction of Christ. Therefore, instead of saying, "This is grace," it is possible to say, "This is a reproduction of Christ." The manner of life that expresses the processed Triune God as grace is not only grace—it is a reproduction of Christ.

In 2:21-25 there are five important words: grace, model, Savior, Shepherd, and Overseer. Christ is this grace, and Christ is also the model. Furthermore, as we shall see, Christ is our Savior, our Shepherd, and our Overseer. Christ is the grace expressed in our daily life. Christ is the writing-copy, the original used for spiritual xeroxing. It is rather easy for us to understand that Christ is our Savior, Shepherd, and Overseer. But is not as easy to understand how Christ can be the grace expressed in our daily life, and how He can be the writing-copy. To understand Christ as grace and the writing-copy, we need experience. From experience we know that as we are living out Christ day by day, we are under the process of spiritual xeroxing. As a result, others will be able to read Christ on us, for we shall become a letter of Christ.

REPRODUCTION, NOT IMITATION

To become a xerox copy of Christ is very different from trying to imitate Him. To illustrate, a man may set up an example for a monkey to stand upright, and the monkey stands up, imitating the man. Then the man walks, and the monkey imitates him by walking on two feet. The man swings his arms, and so does the monkey. But after the imitation is finished, the man leaves, and the monkey goes back to walking on all fours. Once I saw a monkey who had been trained to sit at a table and eat with a knife and fork. However, after the act was over, the monkey threw away the knife and fork and reverted to his usual behavior.

At least to a certain extent, those Christian teachers who instruct believers to imitate Christ are like a man training a monkey to imitate a human being. I have learned that trying to imitate Christ simply does not work. In these messages I am not encouraging you to imitate the Lord. On the contrary, I am pointing you to the riches of Christ and the beauty of the Lord. Furthermore, both the heavenly light and the spiritual ink are available to us, and we are all undergoing the process of spiritual xeroxing.

Peter's thought in verse 21 is deep. In order to appreciate the worth of a verse such as this, we need experience. If we do not have adequate Christian experience, we shall not understand what Peter says concerning grace and concerning Christ as our model.

-----[SECTION 4]-----

A LIFE UNDER GOD'S GOVERNMENT

In verse 23 Peter goes on to say concerning the Lord, "Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten, but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously." According to the usage of the verb "kept committing" in Greek, "all" needs to be inserted here as its object. This word refers to all the sufferings of the Lord. He kept committing all the insults He suffered and all His injuries to Him who judges righteously in His government, to the righteous God, to whom He submitted Himself. This indicates that the Lord recognized God's government while He was living a human life on earth.

I am somewhat concerned that in your reading of this verse you may not pay attention to the word "judges." We are accustomed to saying that we commit things to the Lord who is faithful or merciful or kind. Have you ever said, "I commit everything to God who judges righteously"? I do not think that many of us have had this practice. The reason we do not pray like this is that our prayer, expression, and utterance are still too traditional. This keeps us from applying many of the thoughts and utterances in the pure Word. Therefore, in reading a verse such as 2:23, we may take it for granted and fail to get into the real meaning.

While the Lord Jesus was on earth suffering, He kept committing all to the One who judges righteously. This brief word indicates not only that the Lord lived a life that was a model for us, but also that He lived a life absolutely under God's government. He Himself was always

under the government of God, and He committed everything related to Him to God's judgment.

CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR

In 2:23 Peter says that God the Father is the One who always judges righteously. This means that He governs in a righteous way. Christ put His trust in this righteous One. For this reason, Peter says that when Christ was on earth, He kept committing all to God the Father, who judges righteously.

Verse 24 says, "Who Himself carried up our sins in His body onto the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed." This verse speaks of Christ as our Savior, our Redeemer. As our Savior, Christ "carried up our sins in His body onto the tree." The "tree" is the cross made of wood, a Roman instrument of capital punishment for the execution of malefactors, as prophesied in the Old Testament (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).

Literally, "having died to sins" means being away from sins; hence, having died to them. In the death of Christ, we have died to sins (Rom. 6:8, 10-11, 18). We have died to sin so that we might live to righteousness. This living to righteousness is in the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 2:6; John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:11).

The "bruise" in verse 24 is a suffering that resulted in death. According to Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's seed. The bruising in Genesis 3:15 is related to the bruise in 2:24.

According to verse 24, we have been healed by Christ's bruise. This is the healing of death. We were dead (Eph. 2:1), but Christ's suffering of death healed our death so that we may live in His resurrection.

KEPT AWAY FROM SINS AND LIVING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

We have pointed out that the phrase "having died to sins" literally means being away from sins. When Christ carried up our sins onto the cross and died, that death accomplished many things. The death of Christ terminated us, and this termination can keep us away from sin. The best way for people to be kept from sins or from sin is for them to be put to death. No matter how many sins a person may commit, once he has died, death separates him from sins. Peter speaks of being away from sins; Paul speaks of the one who

has died being free from sin. Through Christ's death we can be kept away from sins so that we may live to righteousness. Apparently, being kept away from sin terminates us; actually, it enliven us so that we may live to righteousness.

As we have pointed out, by Christ's bruise we have been healed. This means that His death heals our death.

Verse 24 indicates that, as fallen human beings, we were dead and full of sins. But Christ put our sins upon Himself and carried them up onto the tree, the cross, where He suffered God's righteous judgment for all our sins. Christ's death on the cross was a bruise, and that bruise, that death, has healed our death. Now we have become alive. On the one hand, Christ's bruise that heals us keeps us away from sins through His death; on the other hand, this healing enliven us so that we may live to righteousness.

According to our dead, fallen nature, our intention is toward sins. But now that Christ has died to heal our death and to make us alive, we have a different intention. Because of the life of Christ within us, we live always with the intention toward righteousness, the inclination toward righteousness. This is our Savior, the One who died on the cross to terminate us and to heal our death wound.

The subjective aspect of the cross continues in our experience today by the Spirit. The life-giving Spirit is working within us continually to carry out the subjective aspect of Christ's cross in our being. Daily we are undergoing the inward working of the cross of Christ, and daily we are being made alive so that we may live to righteousness. Therefore, it is not difficult to overcome sins, because through Christ's death we are being kept away from sins. His death has drawn a separating line between us and sins. Being kept away from sins, now we are alive. There is no need for us to strive or to try to energize ourselves. We simply live, and this living always has an inclination toward righteousness. This is the experience of our Savior saving us daily. This understanding of Peter's word is according to our experience.

We should not have only the objective cross, but the subjective cross as well. The objective cross needs to become subjective to us in our experience. This depends upon the working of the life-giving Spirit within us. When we call on the name of the Lord and have fellowship with Him, the life-giving Spirit operates within us.

Spontaneously we experience the subjective working of the cross to make a separation between us and sins so that we automatically live to righteousness.

FULFILLING GOD'S GOVERNMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Now we need to ask why Peter uses the expression "live to righteousness." This is related to the fulfilling of God's governmental requirements. Actually, God's government requires just one thing—righteousness. This is the reason 2 Peter 3:13 says, "But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." In 1 Peter 2:23 we see that the Lord Jesus continually committed all to the One who judges righteously. Then in verse 24 Peter indicates that we should live to righteousness. Peter's concept here is governmental; righteousness is a matter of God's government. We have been saved by our Savior to live a life that matches the righteous requirements of God's government.

God is righteous and His government is established upon righteousness. Psalm 89:14 says that righteousness is the foundation of God's throne. Therefore, as God's people living under His government, we must have a righteous life. We must live to righteousness. But because in ourselves we are not able to live this kind of life, the Savior saves us to live a life of righteousness, a life that fulfills the righteous requirements of God's government.

It is important for us to realize that Christ our Savior has carried up all our sins onto the tree and died there for us. Now His death separates us from sins and enlivens us so that we may live to righteousness. Spontaneously, we are under God's government and have no problem with His government because we live to righteousness.

-----[SECTION 5]-----

CHRIST, OUR SHEPHERD

In verse 25 Peter goes on to say, "For you were like sheep being led astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." Christ was our Redeemer in His death on the tree. Now He is our soul's Shepherd and Overseer in the resurrection life within us. Therefore, He is able to guide us and supply us with life that we may follow His model in His steps of suffering (v. 21). According to verse 25, Christ is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. Our soul is our inner being, our real person. Our

Lord, as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul, shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person.

Our problem was that we were like sheep being led astray. But now we have returned, turned back, to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. We should not think that in verse 25 Peter uses soul as a synonym of spirit. This is definitely not the case. A shepherd takes care of the physical needs of his flock, and Christ our Shepherd takes care of the needs of our soul. He is not the Shepherd of our body; He is the Shepherd of our soul, our inner being. We all have a spirit, and the spirit is our inward organ. But our being is a soul. Therefore, Christ mainly shepherds us by taking care of our soul. He takes care of our mind, emotion, and will.

We may think that our problems are with the body. No doubt, the body does give us many problems. Nevertheless, our real problem is in our soul. Our mind, emotion, and will all have problems. Unbelievers are wanderers in the soul, and they do not have a shepherd to take care of them. But our situation is different in that we have a Shepherd who takes care of our soul. Not only do we have the Lord's life within us, but we also have Him as our Shepherd. He is now shepherding us in our soul.

I would ask you to consider this matter of the Lord's shepherding according to your experience. Do you experience the Lord's comfort and sense His comfort in your spirit or in your soul? In other words, where is the Lord's comfort, in our spirit or in our soul? If you say that His comfort is in the spirit, your answer is not according to the Bible.... Many times we speak of turning to the spirit, perhaps expecting that when we turn to the spirit everything will be all right. Actually, even after we turn to the spirit, many things may not be all right. From experience Peter knew to say that Christ is the Shepherd of our souls. Therefore, Peter does not tell us in verse 25 that Christ is the Shepherd of our spirit or of our body; He clearly says that He is the Shepherd of our souls.

This Epistle was written to Jewish Christians who were suffering much persecution. Apparently persecution is related to our body outwardly. Actually, persecution is aimed at the soul. Because it is our soul that suffers, it is our soul that needs the Lord's shepherding. It is not our body that needs this kind of care, nor is it mainly our spirit. It is our soul—our mind, our

emotion, and our will—that needs the Lord as the Shepherd.

In our experience sometimes we just do not know what to think about. We do not know where to direct our thoughts. This is an indication that our mind needs the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd. I can testify that many times in this kind of situation the Lord Jesus has been a Shepherd to me. As a result of His shepherding our mind is directed and set in the right way.

Our emotion, being complicated, is easily upset. This is especially true of the sisters' emotion. Therefore, we need the Lord Jesus to shepherd us in our emotion. His shepherding comforts our emotion.

Our will also needs the Lord's shepherding. As human beings, we often find it difficult to make the right decision. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to make a decision. Unbelievers have no one to lead them and guide them in making decisions. But we have a Shepherd to lead us and guide us. The Lord's leading and guiding is primarily related to our will. As the living Shepherd, the Lord continually directs our will. I cannot tell you how many times I have experienced this. The Lord is truly the Shepherd of our soul. He directs our mind, comforts our emotion, and leads and guides our will.

According to my experience, there is a difference between leading and guiding. Leading is related to a destination. Suppose you are driving from your home to a certain city. A road map may lead you to your destination. But once you arrive at that city, you will need a guide, someone to direct you to the exact place where you want to go. In the Bible some verses speak of the Lord's leading, and others, of His guiding. On the one hand, the Lord will lead His people to the holy land. But once He has led them there, He will guide them to Mount Zion.

As our Shepherd, the Lord leads us first and then guides us. He leads us to the right place, and He guides us to the exact spot. This is Christ, our Shepherd.

In order to be our living Shepherd, it is necessary for Christ to dwell within us. If Christ today were not the life-giving Spirit in us, if He were only the exalted Lord in an objective way in the third heaven, how could He be our Shepherd? For Christ to be our Shepherd, He must be with us, even in us. Many times He goes along with us in order to turn us back. Consider how the Lord was the Shepherd to the two disciples on the way to

Emmaus. These disciples were going in one direction, but the Lord went with them in order to turn them to go in another direction. Luke 24:15 says, "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." Then He asked them what they were talking about. In a sense, these disciples rebuked the Lord when they said, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" (v. 18). Then the Lord asked, "What things?" (v. 19). After walking a while together, they constrained the Lord to stay with them (v. 29). Then, as He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him" (vv. 30-31). This is an example of the Lord's shepherding.

Sometimes the Lord shepherds us in the same way that He shepherded the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We also may speak to Him in a nonsensical way or ask Him nonsensical questions. We may even rebuke Him, and He may pretend not to know what we are talking about. Many of us can testify of having the Lord Jesus shepherd us in this way. As the life-giving Spirit dwelling within us, He is the Shepherd to us in our experience.

CHRIST, OUR OVERSEER

According to Peter's word in 2:25, Christ is also the Overseer of our souls. I wonder how many Christians have experienced Christ as an Overseer, as an Elder.

The New Testament reveals that an overseer is an elder and that an elder is an overseer. In 5:1-3 Peter gives a word to the elders concerning the shepherding of the flock of God. What is the function of an overseer? The Greek word for overseer means one who oversees a particular condition or situation. This word seems to indicate someone above us who takes oversight concerning us and watches what we are doing. However, according to our experience, the Lord as the Overseer is One who cares for us. For Him to oversee us means that He takes care of us. As the Overseer, the Lord does not govern us or rule over us. Rather, He cares for us as a mother cares for her child. A mother oversees her child with the purpose of caring for the child. She wants to take care of every need. The same is true of Christ as our Overseer.

As we read 2:18-25, we see that Peter was very rich in experience. In this portion he speaks of

grace, the writing- copy, the Savior, the Shepherd, and the Overseer. Christ is the life within us, and He is also the model for us to follow. If we live by Christ as our inward life, that is, by the indwelling Christ Himself, we shall undergo the process of spiritual xeroxing to become a reproduction of Christ. At the same time, we shall experience Him as the Savior saving us, as the Shepherd leading and guiding us, and as the Overseer caring for us. Oh, Peter's experience was rich, and his writing is marvelous! May we all practice to enjoy Christ according to what is revealed in these verses. May we all enjoy Him as grace, as the model, and as the wonderful Savior, Shepherd, and Overseer.