***All Things New***

New-Life Lessons from the Apostle Peter’s First Letter

**New Behavior: Submission, Suffering, Service**

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

1 Peter 2:13-25

 We’ve seen how Peter links our faith with our behavior: and the life we have in Jesus. Without these links, following Jesus is only another morality, “Be good, and especially nice to poor people.” That is not the Gospel. Here Peter connects Jesus’ example with the willingness to submit to authority and suffer for His name.

***Following Jesus means fearlessly submitting to God’s authority expressed in human institutions.*** *vv. 13-17*

 In Greek culture, humility was not seen as a virtue. Similarly, we emphasize the individual and pursuing personal goals and pleasures rather than submitting to governing authorities and the brotherhood of believers. But here the motive to love and serve is not fear of punishment, but a victorious consciousness of being in God’s will as He makes all things new. As Luther puts it, “A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone.” This voluntary submission cuts off critics, and enables us to fulfill God’s will through suffering. John 8:31-38; Rom. 13:1-7

***Following Jesus means doing good even to those who do not do good to us.***  *vv. 18-20*

 The situation is sanctified by grace when we suffer for doing good, but not for our own foolishness. The Bible is NOT teaching that given choices, we must let people indiscriminately abuse us. We can and should pursue the peace of those who have no rights and who are weak, and not enable others to do evil. Acts 16:35-40; James 1:26, 27; Romans 15:1-7

***Following Jesus means LIVING by following His examples.*** *vv. 21-25*

We must face the reality that living righteously is not within our grasp, but it is possible as we die to sin and live to God. Because our sins are forgiven and we live in Christ, infinite resources and wisdom now can guide our lives as we follow Him who sought us and died for us. It is not willpower, but His power.

***Applying Truth to Life: Jesus’ life transforms our life.***

Jesus is both our Shepherd and our Lamb, and His example shapes all that we do. But all our actions are based upon His death and resurrection for us, not a mere moral code that is just another set of laws. We do obey Him, but that obedience is a freedom, not a burden, and does not humiliate or embitter us.

1 John 5:1-5

We come to Jesus first to receive life, and only then to follow Him. If we try to do what He tells us without truly being God’s child, our experiment will end badly. Peter, like Paul in Romans 6-8, is calling us to do supernatural things because of God’s supernatural life within us. It is not about turning over a new leaf, or living by our wits and willpower. It is drawing upon Jesus, who loves us, gave Himself for us, prays for us, and empowers us. John 10:7-11