



April 2nd, 2023 • 1 Peter 2:18-25  
Standing Firm in the Grace of God • The Book of 1 Peter  
Message #7 • by Pastor Marcus Johnson



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## Following in Christ's Footsteps – as Righteous-Suffering Servants

### 1. Embracing 1 Peter Christianity: in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century context

- What might sound oppressive today was often counter-culturally liberating in the ancient world
- Remember who Peter is writing to

### 2. Embracing Christ-centered identity & submission: as suffering servants

- Servants, be subject to your masters
- Suffering unjustly for doing good is a gracious thing in the sight of God
- God has called us to follow in Christ's footsteps

### 3. Embracing 1 Peter Christology: to live righteously thru suffering

- Christ did not commit sin or deceit
- Christ did not retaliate

- Christ bore our sins on the tree & healed us by His wounds
- Christ is the Shepherd & Overseer of our souls

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### Some Highlights of 1 Peter 2:18-25

Sources: *1 Peter* by Karen H. Jobes (ECNT); and "1 PETER", by Sicily Mbura Muriithi, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor)

#### Peter's Christology & Christian Suffering (Karen Jobes, pp.187-196)

Peter here makes the point that God sent his Son as one who would seemingly have so little sociopolitical power that he would end up dying a slave's death by crucifixion. In this passage, Peter identifies Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, providing us the only NT passage that does so this explicitly and extensively. Peter bases his instructions for *all* Christian members of society on the example of Christ's lowly position in human society, but he first addresses the lowliest – the slave, who by definition is being treated unjustly. The role of the slave in Roman society images the role of Jesus Christ, who was a suffering slave obedient to God but treated unjustly in the world. Therefore, Peter addresses slaves first for the purpose of motivating ethical behavior by Christology ... he is primarily interested in instructing the least powerful adults of society on how they conduct themselves as Christians ... The apostle Peter elevates the dignity and self-understanding of the least empowered people of that time, the slave first and then the wife. The Son of God has dignified even the lowliest in society by becoming like them in his incarnation. Wives, being next to slaves in the hierarchy of social power and status, are addressed next. Christian husbands, whose social status and power have probably also been compromised in some way because of the gospel, are addressed not only last but also with the fewest words. Peter points to Jesus Christ as the true model for how to live a significant, dignified life of freedom even in the midst of the most oppressive situation ... As Matera (1999: 184) describes it:

The Christology of 1 Peter is a Christology of suffering ... By focusing on the sufferings of Christ, 1 Peter shows the intimate relationship between Christology and the Christian life: the *past* suffering of Christ is the *present* condition of believers, while the *present* glory of Christ is the *future* glory of those who follow in the steps of the suffering Christ.

#### Understanding 1 Peter 2:18-25 in Context (Sicily Mbura Muriithi, p.1521)

While passages such as this one can be used to encourage Christians on their journey of faith, they should not be used to encourage Christians to passively endure suffering in a situation they could work to resolve. Jesus' suffering and death were not passive and purposeless, but a deliberate sacrifice of himself for the benefit of others. Christians must ask themselves whether their suffering is benefiting others or whether it is merely a stubborn perseverance that allows others to exploit them with no good end in view. It is important to interpret the ethical requirements for living a Christian life contextually.