

Better For It #3 - Authentic Faith In Trying Times. 1 Peter 1:3-9,

Series: C.S. Lewis –

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Consider our list: 2020 –

- Covid-19. Pandemic. Foundations being shaken. Upheaval. God is working. What is He teaching each of us?
- Right Now- here in our country – FATOS? WORLD WATCHING
George Floyd – Apparently murdered by police officers publicly before the whole world
David Dorn, Retired police captain in St. Louis killed in rioting and looting
Riots, Looting, Vandalism
Calls for defunding/disbanding police; Abuse of those who are serving
Unrest. Anarchy. Division. Anger.
Foundations are being shaken. Pure unadulterated evil. Sin.
- Politics – no longer a healthy tension of differing ideas as to what is best for people – Nasty, bitter, angry- And in the midst of the malice- “Jesus Followers”, “Believers”
God help us.

Better For It?

- There are many who will come out bitter. Worse. Wrecks. Maybe country and even world – spiral towards apocalyptic conditions
- **Some will come out better.** People. Relationships. Influence. It is quite possible that the fate of the world will be affected by the choices of a few.

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS THE PURPOSE OF THE PAIN.

When the pain is over, threat gone... “I can’t wait to get back to normal.” –
Maybe – Prayerfully- this is our defining moment/hour.
Just maybe- we will look back on Covid-19 as a turning point in our lives....

As promised – not going to duck. Can’t afford to!

Head on – How Can We Be Better For It – With the hot button issues of

- **Racial prejudice**
- **Civil Authority**
- **Politics**

1 Peter 1:3-9

Better For It #3 - Authentic Faith In Trying Times

I. The Author

Apostle – Peter

Fisherman/Family business. Not well educated. Young – Andrew his brother brought him to Jesus

Leader. Zeal. Charisma. No fear.

Always opening his mouth! Got into trouble as long as His zeal wasn't yielded to His Savior!

At 1 Point-

He rebuked Jesus- told Him to quit talking about dying! That wasn't the kingdom image they needed... Not politically correct.

Then- Jesus REBUKED HIM- Said- "Get thee behind me SATAN."

When thou art converted... Lose yourself to find yourself - PETER- ROCK!

Garden-

Cut off ear

Denied, cussed and ran, maybe naked...

Acts – 10- Cornelius- the Italian

Acts 15 – God is doing something!

Others – **But now text. Soon to be crucified.**

Peter - has seen **THE WORST OF RELIGION- JEWISH LEADERS – HORRIBLE PERSECUTION. EVEN BEEN A PART OF THE PREJUDICE!!**

Peter- has seen and experienced **the worst of ROME and secular leaders.**

The PERFECT VOICE!

II. Authentication Of Our Faith – Understanding trials, tests – God's Purposes!

God speaks to us through Peter's letter to believers long ago who faced a hostile world, evil, struggles – **and reveals** –

That the **trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, **though it be tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 1:7

1 Peter 4:7- **"the end of all things is at hand"**

Beloved, **think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 1 Peter 4:12**

SUBJECT:

The trying of our faith through severe, fiery life situations.

The AUTHENTICITY OF OUR FAITH IN JESUS is on trial. For us. For the world.

Question- for believers particularly.

(* If not a believer – Who do you think has answers? Solutions? Who do you trust for truth? News? "Authorities"? Scary. Stick with us...)**

- **Do you think God has the answers?**
- **Do we trust Him? His gospel? His kingdom? His Word? His way? His Will?**

Most nod yes so far – NOW –

- **Are YOU willing to find out what God says which is a revelation of what God wants and trust that it is HIS ANSWER NOW as it always has been?**

IF NOT- YOU ARE WELCOME TO YOUR OPINIONS BUT LEAVE GOD OUT OF IT.

Before you jump to an answer, let me ask it differently –

Whatever your position – We each of course think it is correct and right before God so for the moment **let's just assume that everyone is correct** – (Which of course can't be... You do realize that, right?!)

Will we grab a sword and swing for the head (maybe just cutting off an ear!) of those who we feel are wrong (and may be), Evil (and very well might be), those who threaten what we love?

Our author today did just that!!! This is **not theory** or seminary hypothesis - THIS IS REAL.

An unprecedented standard was set that night in Gethsemane when Jesus told Peter to put His sword up and revealed that we don't fight as they fight, and win as they win. His kingdom is not of this world.

SO –

Will we surrender to what God, our Savior, directs and requires of us?

IS OUR FAITH IN HIM, HIS WORD AND HIS WILL REAL ENOUGH TO SURRENDER OUR WILL TO HIS?

WILL WE TRUST HIM WITH THE ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS HE DEMANDS OF US IN THIS – OUR MOMENT IN HISTORY?

We begin at the only place where change can be affected: **We must demand it of ourselves before we demand it of others!**

1 Peter 4:17 - For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God;

III. Assurance

****Before we are comfortable to let go, trust – especially things that are near to our heart, we need to KNOW we can.**

***When we do – we are free to let go and live!
Like Peter- Lose our lives to Jesus and find it.***

A. What God Has Done- 1:3

B. What God will do- 1:4

C. What God is doing right now-

- ***Kept***
- ***Trying of faith- Authentication – WHY?***

vs. 7 - When we meet Jesus!

Vs. 8-9- Until we meet Jesus: Salvation of soul, life – US.

Not going to heaven- Heaven to us

The ultimate life faith in Jesus can make reality!

IV. ANSWERS.

- **Love the Lord our God with all...**
- **Love others as He has loved us.**

A. Racial (And all) Prejudice

1. Peter –

Remember his background

1:22- - Seeing ye have purified your souls in **obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren**, *see that ye* **love one another** with **a pure heart fervently:**

Do we? Will we?

2:17- Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Do we? Will we?

3:8-11 (NIV) –

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

4:7,8 – The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. (NIV)

2. Jesus –

- Jesus – *“For God so loved the world...”* He loved for and died for the world. We are supposed to also.
- **Jesus- angered everyone-** the sick. Children. Women. Gentiles. Samaritans.
- Jesus’ Prayer – John 17 –
And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; 17:13-14a
As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 17:17
“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 17:20-21
- Jesus- Commission - Go. Preach the gospel to **every living creature – every tongue, tribe, race, nation - to the furthest regions of the earth until the end of the age!**
- Sent to *proclaim His gospel, God’s answer for every human being, for all wrongs, all evils.*

3. Pentecost – Acts 1:8 – *“How her we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”*

4. Paul –

Galatians 3:28 -

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. -

Ephesians 2 –

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 2:13-14

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 2:18-19

5. John -

1 John 2:

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 2:8-9

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. 2:11

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. 4:20-21

Who is my brother? Neighbor? EVERY SINGLE PERSON FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED! THE WORLD!

Revelation 4-5 – A scene in heaven - those from ever race, tongue, tribe, nation – Rejoicing together!

Acknowledge:

- **Not everyone is like us. There are differences! Celebrate them. Not everyone is like us. That is OK. That is human. That is even acknowledged in heaven – Every tongue, race, nation...**
- **We aren't expected to "like" everyone, everything.... In fact, when we don't our love/faith is being tested. We are commanded to love.**

The Absolute:

Racial, or for that matter, any prejudice that leads us to treat others in a way different than Jesus is ungodly and wrong.

As God's people we categorically condemn systemic prejudice – in government, in church, period. Whenever we excuse it, overlook it, tolerate it or encourage it, we sin.

Areas -

Institutions. Government. Business. Sports.
Church.

Us. **We should never demand of others what we are unwilling to do ourselves.**

Is my faith authentic? Will I trust God enough to treat others as He has told me?

B. Civil (Governmental) Responsibility.

Dual Citizenship.
Expect conflict.

The “trying of your faith” – authentication of my faith in Jesus:

The Question: ***As a believer, a child of God and citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, What is to be my relationship and response to civil/governmental authorities over me?***

1. Jesus- render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. They detested Him for it!

Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Matthew 22:21

2. Paul-

To Those In Rome – Capital of the Empire

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Romans 13:1-6

To Timothy -

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. -1 Timothy 2:1-4

Peter- 1 Peter 1 – Trial of your faith-

Be subject for the Lord's sake to **every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.**

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 1 Peter 2:13-15

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 1 Peter 4:12

But **let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 4:15**

***Beware – trying to right wrong with wrong, fight evil with evil,
fight prejudice with prejudice will fail***

Peter-

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9 (NKJV)

We pray for and support our leaders and civil servants. We denounce lawlessness!

C. POLITICS.

Citizens of heaven first. Put your faith before your politics!
Put Jesus first. That means treating others as He has treated us.
Then... engage as appropriate...

Response.

1. Know Jesus.

Dark can't put out dark. It takes life!

2. Pray. Cop out? No. Most fail here and nothing else is possible...

Pray for leaders. Enemies. Leaders. Each other.

3. Find out specifically what God has said He expects of us.

Personally, a genuine concern - From every angle I have seen - using God, Jesus, Justice, Righteousness – is just part of the means accomplish what those in those positions want (sometimes very sincerely, sometimes totally self-serving)

4. Refuse To Be A Part Of The Problem.

Hippocratic oath- Do no harm.

"Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 1 Peter 4:15

4:17- For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God"

5. Do what we can.

Edmund Burke- “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” — Edmund Burke (in a letter addressed to Thomas Mercer).

Engage. Hurt with those who hurt, weep with those who weep, laugh with those who laugh!

Demonstrate grace and mercy.

Do good. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see you good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Speak - Speak to. Speak up. Speak out. ***The love of God. The light of the world.***

Personally - When necessary –

Speak out against evil.

Civil protest.

Right attitude and manner.

Humbly willing to suffer for what you believe is right.