

# LEAD SHEET

**1 & 2 Peter**

## **Worth Dying For**

May 7, 2017

### **FAITH SKILL:**

#### **SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY**

If you want to know God better, tell other people about Him!

### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **General Discussion:**

- What do you trust most? (*Family, own strengths & talent, money, God.*)
- Do you trust in God enough to be persecuted for Him, to lay down your life if need be?
- How many of you know that you believe all the right things and nothing false? How do you know that?
- How can believing a lie affect your life? Have you ever had that happen?

Today we're going to continue our study in 1 & 2 Peter. The topic of the day is believing in something that is worth dying for; a line we won't cross.

As we talk today, keep in mind where your line is: what is worth dying for?

### **DIGGING IN**

First, let's look at overcoming persecution.

**Read 1 Peter 3:13-22**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. According to the verse, why should people not fear? *(Because they can't be harmed if they are truly doing good.)*
2. Instead of being afraid, what does Peter tell Christians to do in verses 15-16? *(Set apart Christ as Lord and be prepared to answer anyone with the reason for your faith, keeping a clear conscience, etc.)*
3. Why do you think Peter spends time next talking about Jesus' suffering? *(To show that doing good does not mean there will be no suffering.)*

It is pretty incredible to notice that the suffering of Jesus is what saves us from our own suffering. While persecution may hurt us, it cannot harm us if we are in Christ. Peter talks more in-depth about this later in this letter.

### **Read 1 Peter 4:12-19**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does Peter say the Christians should not be in verse 12? *(surprised.)*
2. Instead of reacting this way, how should they react? *(They should rejoice)*
3. What do insults from others result in according to verse 14? *(A blessing, because God's Spirit rests on us.)*
4. The reaction to suffering in the life of a Christian is what in verse 19? *(To continue to do good.)*

It sounds like when the Christians suffered, they should have realized that in the grand scheme, they couldn't be harmed. Better put, the movement couldn't be stopped. Instead, we are responsible, as believers, to simply continue doing good.

The persecution that is described here is likely the type that broke out under the Roman emperor Nero. From 64-68 AD, Nero oversaw an empire-wide persecution of

Christians in which thousands (at the very least) of Christians were martyred, including Peter himself. Depending upon when 1 Peter was written, it could be that this persecution was not the empire-wide effort but localized, grassroots persecutions preceding the larger campaign. Nonetheless, these persecutions featured some grotesque practices.

Many Christians were fed to lions. They were taken from their homes and killed. Their holy books and places of worship were burned. One report records that Nero would kill Christians by impaling them on a stick and setting them on fire to provide lighting for dinner parties. They were used for sport in the coliseum, and otherwise abused in publicly graphic ways.

**Discussion Questions:**

- How does this change the sound of the verses we read before?
- What must it be like to live through such persecution?

Now, let's look at a second struggle first-century churches faced and had to overcome—that of false teachers.

**Read 2 Peter 2:1-22**

This is a longer passage of Scripture than the first two we read, and it's all about false teaching.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. According to the passage, what fate awaits these false teachers? (*Destruction, judgment, and condemnation.*)
2. Verse 17 likens false teachers to what? (*Springs without water, mist driven by a storm.*)
3. Verse 22 has strong language for false teachers. What are they like here? (*A dog returning to its vomit, a pig that is washed and then goes back to the mud.*)
4. Why do you think such harsh language is reserved for people who are false teachers?

False teaching was a prominent thing in the early church. Things that were untrue about Jesus, the resurrection, church leaders, God, the Holy Spirit, church practices, and a whole host of other issues. Peter steps up and says plainly here that these false doctrines and their teachers were doomed for judgment. There was no place in the Kingdom for them.

Now that we have the Bible, and we can commune with the Holy Spirit as Christians, it is a little easier to spot false teachers. And yet, so often, their teachings spread within Christianity just the same.

## **MAKING IT REAL**

It's one thing to recognize the presence of persecution and false teaching in the early church. It's another thing to recognize it and draw a line in the sand today. What I want to do now is sort of explore how these issues are still effecting Christ's Church in our time.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Did you know this kind of stuff was still going on? How is it like the persecution early Christians faced?
- What do you think you would do if you faced that type of opposition in your faith? How do you think you can prepare for it?

Pray that you stand for Christ no matter the cost. It's no different for us than it was for the first-century Christian. They can hurt us, but they can't really do us harm. We have the power of the resurrection and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Even if someone kills us, they can't kill the movement of Jesus.

- Why do you think it is so hard to know when someone is a false teacher or not? I want to point you toward the Bible at this confusing juncture in our study.

## **Read 1 John 2:22-23 and 1 John 4:1-3**

Obviously, there are other ways to have wrong theology, but we should be particularly suspicious of doctrines which minimize or completely ignore Jesus. If a teacher does not claim Jesus to be God, it is a false teaching in it's most serious form. Therefore, Mormon theology, Jehovah's Witness theology, Muslim theology, Hindu theology, Buddhist theology, Eastern Mysticism belief and New Age practices all fall under this category. While we can theologically disagree on lots of issues, the deity of Jesus is not one of them.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

We have covered a lot of ground today. Maybe even more than you can process. I want to spend a couple of minutes in prayer, allowing you to ask God to help your understand what we've covered in greater depth. I encourage you to re-read these passages this week. I'll close us in prayer.