

May 24, 2020

*Simon Says: Don't Be A Jerk*

1 Peter 3:8-22

We are continuing our series "Simon Says", looking at some important things Simon Peter had to say to followers of Jesus in a letter we call 1 Peter.

And if you remember he is writing to Christians scattered throughout what is now modern-day Turkey, facing some difficult circumstances including suffering and persecution.

He writes to not only encourage and remind believers of the hope, the living hope, they have in the resurrected Jesus Christ, but to also give some practical and important instruction on how Christians are to behave and live out our calling as faithful followers of Christ even in the midst of difficult circumstances and troubling times.

Let's continue to look at what Simon Says.

**Read [1 Peter 3:8-22](#)**

Wow, that is a lot of Simon says. Between last week and this week this whole chapter is full of "says", right? Just in verse 8 alone I counted 5.

Simon says: "Be like minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate, be humble.

And as I have been reading and studying this passage, I've been thinking some more about the game "Simon Says", and what it is that I find to be the hardest part about it?

What do you think? What is it that you find to be the hardest part of Simon Says?

My daughter Ainsley alluded to the answer during the children's sermon last week when I asked "what makes 'Simon says' so fun?" She said, "When everyone can at least agree who gets to be Simon."

Which is so true, because everyone wants to be Simon so they can tell others what to do and not have to be told what to do or follow Simon's instructions.

And that right there is what I find that to be the hardest part about Simon Says. Following instructions. I admit, I struggle at times to follow instructions. And I am not just talking about the game, but in life.

And if I were to take a survey, I think I would find that I am not alone in this. Right? It's kind of our human nature and our history that goes back to the garden with Adam and Eve.

God gave instructions to Adam and Eve. Be fruitful, multiply and don't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Simple straightforward instructions. But we all know what happened there. They failed to follow God's instructions.

We fail and struggle to follow instructions. Why? Why is that?

Well, I think sometimes it is just because we don't understand the instructions given. Other times it is because we don't listen, or we don't listen well. There are many reasons why we struggle and fail at following instructions.

But the main reason I think we struggle is because when it comes down to it, we don't like being told what to do. We don't like being told what to do.

This has become even more obvious and evident in our current culture and present reality.

And the thing about all this is, I am not talking about following instructions blindly or following instructions that may lead to sin or immorality or following instructions that perpetuate injustice or oppression.

As followers of Jesus we are called to be different, to live and behave in such a way that is God honoring and points others to the hope we have in Jesus.

And here in his letter, Peter provides important instructions on how to do that. Instructions on how we are to behave and live our lives in a way that represents Jesus and brings glory to God even in the midst of adversity, and times of trouble.

The thing is, these instructions Peter gives us aren't anything new. They are rooted in everything Jesus said and did. They grow out of Peter's time walking with, listening to, and following Jesus' example.

These are the instructions Jesus gave to His followers. Instructions summed up by love. Love God and love others.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be different than the world around us. And this is more than just right believing, but it is also right behaving and right living. We are to be distinct in what we say, in what we do, and how we live.

One of the reasons that Christianity and the Church spread and exploded out of the 1st century was not just because of their beliefs but had more to do with how they behaved.

It was set apart and distinct. It was attractive and unlike anything anyone has ever seen. It was following and living out instructions given by Jesus combined with the transforming work and power of the Holy Spirit.

In our passage this week, Simon gives us some important instructions for how we should act and behave in our relationships with others.

Beginning in verse 8, Simon says “Finally, all of you”. And what he is doing here is wrapping up this section all about Christian behavior in the context of our relationships.

This includes last week’s passage where Peter gave some instruction on submission and suffering as it relates to specific relationships.

And now for the rest of chapter 3, Peter goes on to say on how we should behave in all of our relationships.

Simon says: All of you “be like minded, be sympathetic, love another, be compassionate, be humble, do not repay evil for evil, do not deceive with your words, turn from evil, do good, and seek peace.

Another, shorter, more direct way of saying that is, “Simon says: don’t be a jerk.” Don’t be a jerk. As followers of Jesus it matters, and it is important how we behave in our relationships. How we treat and respond to people. Even people we don’t like. People we don’t get along with. People we may disagree with.

And as we go through this list, of Simon Says, I don’t know about you, but these all seem like reasonable things. Reasonable behaviors for followers of Jesus. Right?

For example, being like-minded. That isn’t saying we have to agree or have complete uniformity with everyone but instead pursue cooperation even in the midst of diversity. And do it with humility, love, compassion and so on.

These practices and behaviors sound like reasonable things and seemingly simple instructions for us to follow.

Until... Until we actually try and do them. Until, we run into someone that quite frankly is being a jerk. Until, we encounter someone who is difficult to love. Until, we get on social media and see So and So’s post or rant about something we disagree with.

Until, we have been “stuck” with the same people in the same house for two months and some days it feels like everything they do or say, annoys or irritates us?

Until, we find ourselves overwhelmed with anxiety, worry, and fear with not much left for sympathy or compassion.

Until I am being told what to do, “To Love one another, Do not repay insult with insult.” I admit, this is where I tend to struggle and fail to follow instructions.

Again, Peter is providing us with straightforward, reasonable sounding instructions. But when it comes to living it out, we can all attest to the difficulty and struggle it can be to actually follow them.

And maybe it's because we don't understand how to live this out or apply these to our "unique" circumstance. Or maybe we just don't want to listen. We don't wanna hear it. Or maybe, maybe we just don't like being told what to do.

We find ourselves still searching for that verse where Simon says, "Love one another and be compassionate, do not repay insult with insult." Unless... they are jerk, in which case, let them have it.

But we know we are not going to find that verse here. Actually, I think it's found in Coronations 2:24. 😊

So ... **How then are we to do this?** How are we able to follow these instructions? To live and behave in a way that points to the kingdom of God and the hope we have in Jesus our savior?

I believe the answer to that is right here in verse 15.

"But in your hearts revere or worship Christ as Lord [of your life].

Worship Jesus as Lord of Your Life. This is probably the most important Simon says for all of us.

Simon Says worship Jesus as Lord of your life. Be rooted in Him.

### **Why is this so important and necessary for us?**

This goes back to 1 Peter 2:21.

*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, **leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.***

When Jesus is Lord of our life, He is our example for all we do!

When Jesus is Lord of our life we are transformed by His Spirit and we want to follow in His footsteps.

When Jesus is Lord of our life ,we are rooted in Him, growing in His love and branching out to serve others.

Peter consistently points us back to the example of Jesus and the example we should follow. Just like in verse 18 .

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you before God.*

Jesus' example is of the one who humbled himself, who gave himself for us, who suffered for our sins and who died and rose again so that we could be redeemed and reconciled to God our Father.

When we worship and make Jesus lord of our life and follow His example, all of these instructions, all of these Simon Says begin to manifest themselves in our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit because we are focused on Jesus. The Lord of our life. The author and perfecter of our faith.

When Jesus is Lord of our life, we begin to live as people who are like-minded, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, humble, and peacemakers.

And when we do this, when we are living this out, people will notice. People will wonder and be curious why we are behaving and responding the way we are. People will notice how we treat others and repay evil with a blessing. People will wonder about the joy that seems to ooze out of us. People will notice, when we suffer for good and righteous things. And people will ask, "why?"

Peter knows this, which is why he tells us not only worship Christ as Lord, but then continues in part two of verse 15 by saying:

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have.*

Simon says be ready. Be prepared to give an answer. To offer a simple explanation of the hope and confidence you have in Jesus and why you have chosen to follow him.

This isn't about giving a whole doctrine statement or a full-on defense of your faith. But simply sharing about the hope you have in Jesus who is Lord of your life.

Because when Jesus is Lord of Your Life, you will want to follow His example, and people will notice the difference in how you live and will ask why.

Simon says: Be prepared to give an answer and to share that hope. And then he adds, "but do this with gentleness and respect."

Do this with gentleness and respect. "How" we respond is just as important as the "words" we respond with.

As followers of Christ we are always to be prepared, always to be ready to share about the hope we have in Jesus, and we are to do this with gentleness and respect.

I couldn't help but reflect on this verse in light of Ravi Zacharias who passed away earlier this week. Ravi Zacharias was an apologist/ evangelist who was committed to sharing the gospel and addressing difficult questions about God and the Christian faith.

His ministry to so many was an example of 1 Peter 3:15 in that he was always prepared to give an answer to the reason for the hope he had in Jesus.

But what I always respected about him, was how he did this with gentleness and respect. He would often say: ""Answer the questioner, not the question". Ravi Zacharias saw people not as a challenge to meet or a debate to be won but as a person loved by God who needed to hear about the hope found in Jesus Christ with both gentleness and respect.

When Jesus is Lord of our life, others will notice. When we follow in His steps and He become our example. Others will notice. Simon says always be ready to explain the hope you have in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

And then tell them all about it... with gentleness and respect.