

No Turning Back

1 Peter 1:22 – 2:10

Theme

You probably remember the song lyrics: “I have decided to follow Jesus / I have decided to follow Jesus / I have decided to follow Jesus / No turning back, no turning back.” But some *have* turned back. And others will. Sad reality though it is, God has constantly encouraged his people – from Abraham and Sarah traveling through strange territories to Moses and the Israelites in the Negev to Peter’s original readers – to “stand firm in the faith” (5:9). With so much against the apostle’s first readers, how could these “elect exiles” (1:1) hold on? Resist turning back?

Dinner Table Questions

- Has the pressure to turn back ever been severe in your own faith journey?
- From your own experience (or that of others you have reached to and helped), what do you think helps discouraged or frightened believers to stay strong?

Open Bible Questions

Read 1 Peter 1:22 – 2:10 from a couple of different translations. If possible, read both the NIV and *The Message*. Then spend some time with these questions based on the biblical text . . .

- Many scholars see the language of 1:22 – 2:3 as a reminder of the baptismal commitment (“born again,” v.23) made by Peter’s readers. How does Peter trace out the “birth/newborn babies” and “spiritual milk/grow up” metaphor? *Why does the New Testament use this word picture so often to describe Christian experience?*
- If the “normal” experience of Christians is birth, infancy, and growth toward maturity, what should we understand from that? *Hint: Are you ever guilty of expecting too much too soon from other believers? From yourself?*
- The metaphor shifts at 2:4 from organic growth from infant to adult to the word picture of spiritual house/temple made from “living stones.” The Roman Empire had many grand and ornate temples to false gods. The temple God is seeking to build on Jesus (as the “precious cornerstone”) is a living body of obedient and transformed people. *Why would this be important information for the earliest Christians?*
- Why do many students regard 2:9-10 as “the highest compliment paid to believers”? *Do you see any nuances of translation in The Message that challenge you?*

Monday Morning Questions

- A priest’s calling is, of course, to “offer spiritual sacrifices” (2:5b; cf. Rom 12:1-2). How will you carry that responsibility into a new week?

Prayer: *By your grace, oh God, we are your people. Teach us to live that identity as a chosen people in a world that is not always friendly to you or to us. Deliver us from the temptation to whine, grumble, or turn back from following the Lord Jesus when our faith is challenged.*