

1 Peter 3:13-22

**What To Do When You Suffer as a
Christian
Because of Your Faith**

1 Peter 3:13-22

1 Peter 3:13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

1 Peter 3:13-22

¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 3:13-22

¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,

²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 3:13-22

²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Introduction

Believers in Peter's time, living in the Roman Empire, faced all kinds of cultural degeneracy and depravity. They faced persecution for their faith more frequently, and more viciously, than believers face today in our culture.

However, as we all know, there is an escalating hostility toward biblical Christianity throughout Western culture.

Introduction

Our passage today explains what a Christian is to do, and how a Christian should act, when being persecuted because you have chosen to live your life according to the Biblical pattern given us by God.

Peter teaches us to follow the example of Jesus who was persecuted for doing right (that is, obeying Scripture with the right attitude).

Scriptural Explanation of Passage

¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

- The chances of persecution are lessened, but not eliminated, if you are zealous for doing what is good,.
- The “good” has already been defined in 2:11-3:9 – our attitude and behavior toward the authority structures God has allowed to be in our lives.
- What are we to do when we get in trouble for doing right? (obeying Scriptural principles)

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

- The term “suffer” does not refer to physical illness. It refers to unfair or unkind treatment by other people.
- God promises a blessing to Christians who demonstrate proper attitudes and behavior when being unfairly treated for doing right (obeying Scriptural principles).

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

- Do not be terrified by non-Christian threats against you.
- Do not allow your mind to focus on the “what ifs” and worst case scenarios.

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

- Remember your primary love and loyalty belongs to Jesus. As Lord, (owner, master), Jesus is to be honored, reverenced, and obeyed, no matter the cost.
- Make sure your behavior is guided by Scripture, and be able to share with anyone who asks why you made the choices you did.

Scriptural Explanation

15 yet do it with gentleness and respect,

- How you respond to unfair treatment due to obeying God's word, and following Biblical principles, is important.
- “Gentleness and respect” - a humble, non-defiant, explanation of why you did what you did.

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

- A “good” (clear) conscience – you know you have not done wrong and you know, in order to keep your conscience clear, you must obey God rather than man, no matter the consequences.

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

- A Christian is not being persecuted for Christ and the faith if the Christian has broken some civil law or job requirement and thus truly deserves to be rebuked for wrong doing.
- But if the conscience is clear, one can stand confidently before God and, if they are slandered, it is because of meanness and unkind attitudes of others and not because of you did wrong.

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

- Jesus was treated unjustly. – He was righteous, yet He was persecuted and suffered.
- Jesus submitted to unfair treatment in order to bear the penalty our sins rightly deserved.
- Jesus' purpose in His suffering was to make it possible for us to be right with God.

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,
being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

- Jesus was not destroyed by His sufferings – though he died physically, he was raised from the dead. There was no permanent loss; only ultimate victory. The same is true for the Christian sufferer.
- Jesus' sufferings, unfair treatment, and death does not need to be repeated. - “once”

Scriptural Explanation

¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,

²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Scriptural Explanation

- After Jesus' death and before His resurrection, Jesus went in the spirit and announced to the people in the domain of the damned, who are awaiting the final Great White Throne judgment at the end of the age, that what Noah and all the preachers of righteousness preached before the flood was correct and their confinement is just.
- They have only themselves to blame for their bleak eternal destiny.

Scriptural Explanation

- They could have been saved from the flood, just as was Noah and his family were, if they had chosen to repent of their sins and had believed the warnings God sent them.
- Christians experience conversion/salvation similar to Noah. Just as Noah, because of being in the ark, was saved in the midst of the water of the flood, so Christians, who testify to their faith by water baptism, are saved from the penalty of their sins by being united by faith to the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Scriptural Explanation

- **Romans 6:3-5** explains our relationship to Jesus and the role of water baptism.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

Scriptural Explanation

- We are not saved by water. We get baptized in order to have a “good conscience,” – a clear conscience that we have obeyed Scripture.

²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

- As our example in unjust suffering and unfair treatment, Jesus has ascended into heaven and has been exalted above all angels, authorities, and powers.

Scriptural Explanation

- Jesus showed the right attitude and obeyed God's will in spite of unjust suffering and unfair treatment.
- Jesus set the example for all Christians to follow.
- Have no doubt, if we will follow the example of Jesus, we, too, will receive a heavenly reward.

1 Peter 3:13-22

**What To Do When You Suffer as a
Christian
Because of Your Faith**