

Sanctify Christ as Lord - February 7, 2021

The whole Bible is given to us so we can know how we are to live for God, what we are to do for Him. And we need to know what it says, for the world and all the unbelievers are sure not going to tell you. So we're going through 1 Peter, and it has lots of good instructions for Christians.

1 Peter 3:13. This vs. talks about doing what is good, which is a general way of telling us how we should live for God. But our natural flesh wants us to think about our self, and what we can do for our self, which in most cases are sinful things. Now this word good means doing what is godly, what is positive, righteous and holy, what is a blessing to others, and what promotes the spiritual welfare of others. And this is the main theme in the book of Titus - Titus 1:8; 2:7; 2:14; 3:3:2-3, 8, 14

But this vs. in 1 Pet. doesn't just talk about doing good, but being zealous for good deeds, being passionate and eager to do good, being excited and enthusiastic about doing good. Now in the Greek, it doesn't use zeal in the verb form, but in the noun form. It says you are to be a zealot, you are to be a zealot for good deeds.

- And this should be your desire, your ambition - every day you should get up and think about how you can do good for God, for both the believers and the lost. And doing good for God and others should be the way you live your daily life. So much so, that when your life is all said and done, this could be written as an epitaph on your gravestone. *"Here lies John Doe, a Christian who did many good things for God."*

But this vs. is a rhetorical question, that is, a question we immediately know the answer to. Now this word "*harm*" means to do evil, to hurt, to injure. And the obvious answer is that no one can really harm you, can really hurt you. Now this persecution and suffering is physical and verbal in nature. It is not spiritual, and it's not that which can spiritually harm or hurt you, and keep you from God, can keep you from having a relationship with Him, and keep you from going to heaven. No one can really harm you because God is your protector. As it says in 2 Tim. 4:18, *"The Lord will rescue you from every evil deed."* And in 1 Jn. 5:18 it says, *"but He, (Jesus), the One born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him."* John 10:27-29

But what are some good things you can do? First, I want to say that you need to pray and ask God and the Holy Spirit to lead you. But here are some examples: you can be kind to people, you can give them good things, you can help meet their needs, you can give them money if they need it. You can say nice and positive things to them, and you can encourage them if they are discouraged. You can share God's word with them, and you can pray for them.

You can call someone on the phone or text them and see how they're doing. You can send them a note or a card if they're sick. You can be a friend to someone which means you are in touch with that person on a regular basis. Using your spiritual gift is another way to do good to others., 1 Sam. 25 - Abigail, Acts 9:36-40, Acts 10:38

Eph. 2:10. The thing you need to remember is that God is the One who saved you and is now working in your life so you can do good works for others. And the good work you do for others is really God working through you. And you need to know that God has so positioned you, so placed you in the world so you can do good works. And so think about how you can do good to the people you're with, the family you have, this church you are in, and the people you meet on the street or in a store. Heb. 10:24

1 Pet. 3:14. Now it says that we may suffer as Christians, we may be persecuted as we live for the Lord, as we do what is good. And note that it says "*for the sake of righteousness.*" Doing good never means doing what is unrighteous, what is evil, what is fleshly. It always means doing what's righteous, what's pure and holy. Tit. 2:1-10 - And Peter goes on to say that if you suffer for the Lord, you are blessed, for God will give you what is good. You do what is good on earth, and God will give you what is good, He will bless you with both physical and spiritual blessings. He'll bless you now and in the ages to come. Mark 10:29-30, 2 Cor. 4:17, Rom. 8:18, Matt. 5:10-12

Now as Christians we're engaged in this spiritual battle, and Satan, and all our enemies on earth, want us to be afraid of doing what is good. Fighting spiritually for the Lord is a battle, and can be very difficult, for we have these enemies who are against us and who want to intimidate us and keep us from doing good. Oftentimes, when we think of doing something good, it seems like the enemy is right there trying to intimidate us and make us fearful, and keep us from doing what is good.

And so God is saying that you are not to be afraid to do what is good, or if you do feel afraid, then by God's grace, you need to push ahead and just do what is good and right, whether it is serving the Lord, the saints, or reaching out to the lost. James 4:7 - Now we have many examples of believers who wanted to do good, but were fearful, but God gave them grace to overcome their fears, and do what was right and good. 2 Chr. 20:3, Josh. 1:5-9, Acts 4-5

1 Peter 3:15. There's something else that's foundational to being zealous for God, to doing what is good, and to not being afraid to suffer for the Lord, and that's that you're to "*sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart.*" A true Christian knows that Jesus is the Christ. And he knows that Jesus, this one born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, was anointed by God to be the Lord and to be the Lord in his life, to be the sovereign ruler over his life. But he also sees that Jesus is his Savior, is the One who died for him, rose again, and saved him from his sins.

- A true Christian believes that Jesus the Christ is both Lord and Savior, and in fact is his Lord and Savior, which he first realized when he was saved. Acts 2:36, Rom. 10:9-13

But Jesus isn't our Lord just at that time when we are saved. But Jesus is our Lord from that point on through all eternity. And real spiritual growth happens only as we recognize that, and personally sanctify Christ in our heart as Lord, which means we personally set Him apart as our Lord, as the Lord of our daily life, our daily walk. We should get up in the morning and say, "*Jesus, You are my Lord. I love You, I submit to You, and I want You to lead me today, and I want You to live Your life in and through me today.*" Gal. 2:20, Phil. 1:21

- Truly living for the Lord means that Christ is Lord in our lives, and Lord of our lives. And this happens through the work of the Spirit. Rom. 8:12-14; Gal 5:16-18, Eph 5:18

I can't stress enough the importance of this truth, that we are to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts on a regular basis, on a daily basis. And it's one of the main ways by which we grow in the Lord, live a holy life, and by which we live for the Lord. And we know Christ is Lord of our life if we worship Him, submit to Him, obey Him, and are bearing fruit for Him. John 14:16-17

- If something or someone else controls our life, some idol, some person, some pleasure, some game, sports, money, or alcohol, then the Lord is not in control of our lives, and we won't be pleasing God and living for Him. 1 Cor. 6:18-20

1 Pet. 3:13-15. The context of this vs. is saying that the person who sanctifies Christ as Lord in his heart is one who is zealous to do what is good, who is willing to suffer for the Lord, and is not fearing the enemy, is not intimidated by him. And when that happens, when people see your courage, your zeal for the Lord; your love for the Lord, then there will, at times, be people who ask you why you're different, who wonder why you have this hope, who wonder why you believe the way you do.

Peter is saying you need to be ready to make a defense for why you believe the way you do. Now this word defense comes from the Greek "*apologia*", which means a verbal defense, and is also translated as the word answer. Acts 25:16, 2 Tim. 4:16. And you need to be ready to share the truth, the gospel, to share your testimony to people. You need to be ready to tell people how God, how Christ saved you from your sins, and changed your life, so that now you are a child of God and on your way to heaven.

As Christ is Lord in your life, as you live for the Lord, you will have opportunities that come up, times when you can witness for the Lord, can make a defense, when you can give an account of who you are as a Christian, and how that actually happened. Testimony - Col. 4:2-6. This tells us three things – that you need to pray for opportunities, be looking for opportunities, and make the most of the opportunity. Eph. 5:6-17

1 Peter 3:16-17. What you need to understand is that there will be times when people see your life, and will ask you about your hope, and why you are different, but they do it in a mocking, critical, and slanderous way. 1 Peter 4:3-5. When people see your life, they may make fun of you. You may be sharing your testimony and they make mock you, slander you, revile you, put you down, and even attack you for being a Christian.

And what are you to do if this happens? You are to respond with gentleness which means you are not to attack them, to retaliate against them. You are to be gentle and patient and loving towards them. And you are to be reverent, which means you are to be humble, and respect them as a fellow human being. And you are not to put them down, but rather, you are to see yourself as one who has been saved, and you should try to help this one who is unsaved, who has the same problem of sin that you used to have. 2 Tim. 2:24-26

You're to also have a clear conscience. That is, they're slandering you and attacking you, and having a clear conscience means you know who you are in Christ, and their attacks against you don't make you doubt your salvation, and your relationship with God. And you are confident, you know you're doing the right thing when you share the gospel with them, and therefore, you aren't afraid of them, are not intimidated by them.

And finally, you know that those who don't turn from their sin and turn to Christ will be ones who are put to shame. And so you are not ashamed of who you are and what you are doing, but they are the ones who will be ashamed and eternally so, for they will be judged by God and be in hell forever, being rightly punished for their sins. 2 Tim. 2:26, 1 Pet. 4:5