

SUFFERING FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST

3:13-17

The subject of suffering has been in the background up until this point (1:6-7; 2:12; 15, 19ff; 3:9) but now it comes directly to the front.”

V.13 “Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous of that is good?”

1. **“If you prove zealous”**, refers to a person whose life is characterized by an eagerness of showing goodness.
 - a. Does not refer to a person, who occasional does a good deed...But he or she “zealously” promotes goodness in all their actions.

Question: What makes us a person of zealous of goodness, more than a person with sporadic deeds?

2. **“Who is there to harm you”** (kakoo) continues the concept of evil in verse 12, implies mistreatment and real damage done through such actions. Peter is not promising that you will escape suffering.
 - a. But generally speaking... it is unnatural to be persecuted for goodness, it is an exception though still a possibility.
 - b. Sometime our right and good responses may not silent or disarm people (2:15), in fact it may make them more hostile toward us (4:3-4).
 - c. This phrase is a rare form in the NT and can be taken on one of two ways
 - i. **“Who will harm you?”** Normally a life of benevolence toward others disarms people, they don’t persecute you for your goodness shown.
 - ii. **“Who is able to harm you?”** here the question become a shout of assurance, that though evil people can damage and even destroy what is temporal they cannot the eternal part of us. (Rom. 8:31, 36-37)
 - iii. Probably the first one is more in line with the context, for Peter did not want his readers to overestimate the dangers of this.
 - d. Their **reason** for such hostility is **beyond our goodness shown**.
 - i. The basic problem of human nature... James 4:1-3
 - ii. When our righteous deeds are identified to our faith in Christ.

V.14 **Even if you should suffer...**

1. Uses the optative which stress less probably, meaning that suffering is not usually the expected outcome of doing good.
 - a. Peter is more specific about the reason of suffering... result of righteousness- a life conforming to God’s design and standard.
 - b. You are blessed! **Considering yourself blessed while being persecuted is not natural...**but it is part of our being a Christian in this world.
2. Do not fear their intimidations
3. Do not be troubled...literally shaken up (like water in a shaken glass) it become agitated. The idea is become confused the surging of feeling back and forth because of intimidation.

Peter again offers some practical guidance, when facing persecution...negative (v.9) and now the positive

V. 15a- **Sanctify Christ as Lord...**

1. “But” set apart (sanctify)
 - a. When the Lord sanctifies us... He made us holy. When we sanctify Him...Treat Him as Holy, (not make Him holy) make him supreme, give Him rightful place in all of life.
 - b. **Foundational choice** that has **priority and influences over all other choices**. The fact is all other choices should be a product of this one choice.

2. Sanctified **“in your heart”** Christ as Lord, not just at a meeting on Sunday or participation in a particular function.
3. **“Christ as Lord”** or **“the Lord Christ”** point again to the supremacy of Christ...His position. Actually in the original language this phrase stands before the verb sanctify.

Question: What evidence does our life demonstrate when Christ Lordship has first place?

V. 15b-16, **Effectiveness in our Witness.**

1. One distinguish mark of Christ Lordship under persecution is **“Our hope”** It is so real with such a contrast to the way non-Christians think and act, it ignites our witness as it puzzles them.

Question: Give an example of exhibiting hope when being harassed or persecuted?

- a. It arouses attention, where they **“Ask a reason of the hope”**- (Example is wife in 3:1-7)
- b. Always **be prepared**- being ready to make a defense (formal inquiry)
 - i. Both the people in direct contact and also governing authorities
2. Christ’s Lordship should also be seen in our **response with Gentleness and Reverence**
 - a. Gentleness is meekness which is a quality that shows our trusting God to do the changing. Proverbs 15:1, *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stir up anger.*
 - b. Reverence- respect (fear), could mean both reverence and caution.
 - i. Lest by saying too much it may be used as evidence to the authorities.
 - ii. Maybe trying to explain the truth of God too much maybe misunderstood.
3. One more mark of Christ Lordship in our Life is a **“clear conscience”** probably refers to a personal integrity
 - a. Conscience is that God implanted moral ability to evaluate the moral quality of human actions, as well as your own.
 - b. Good or clear conscience would protect one from building a case inside, that could eventually effect one’s outward response (attack with words) or lack of response because of fear.

Principle: We defend the truth by the consistency of how we live and how we express it.
4. Slandered by **“reviling your good behavior”** (continually- Present Tense).
 - a. The believer’s manner of life was important to Peter: This is the 6th and last reference to their behavior (1:15,18; 2:12; 3:1,2,16)
 - b. Our enemy will hate our good behavior... it is a smell of death to him (2Corinthian 2:15)

V. 17 Suffering may be God’s will for doing good (1:6; 2:15; 4:3,16, 19) this is commendable before God, and better than suffering for wrong you do.

Peter was confident that the believers defense presented in actions and words would have a profound impact on their enemies... it would put their enemies to shame, and bring on them eventual judgment. But also, and attack on believers was an attack on the Christ who resides in them.

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