

# How To Be Prepared To Be A Blessing

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What about your faith? Examine your faith. Another place puts it as confronting you with a truth. A truth about you in order to promote growth or illumination. That is the purpose of this verse. That is the purpose of this verse. Questions are good. They help us to think upon ourselves. So think with me when I read this verse as I gave you that introduction and examine your heart tonight.

It says this, "And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? Who is he that will harm you? Given the assurance in the preceding verse, one might assume that nothing bad could happen. Peter echoes in verse 13 that the Lord promises his support the moment you strive to do good. Right? Look at verse 12. He looks at the eyes of the Lord and he is open unto their prayers for who? The righteous. So he is indirectly saying or implying, he's saying I am going to support you. I am going to help you to do what is good. And who is ultimately good is Christ. Amen.

He is going to allow us to do what we cannot do in our own strength or in our own power to do good, but to trust in the one that is the good, the Lord Jesus. But however, in this verse, it is not set in stone as it were. What I mean by that is living righteously and doing good. You may not always enjoy the good days. In fact, the opposite can often appear true. When you see people who do good suffering unjustly and then while you see those that are evil seem to prosper and nothing seems to bother them.

This apparent paradox relates to how ultimately God governs his world, his universe. You see, God reigns. We know that. We know that he operates at the highest of all highest, the Lord of lords. But yet, in this present moment, that has not happened. We know it is going to happen in the second coming of Christ. But right now, while we are living in the between, there is not an ultimate peace has not arrived. That will happen in the future. Jesus is not directly judging evil. And he is not rewarding the good directly. That will happen in the millennial kingdom. For now the righteous live among and are influenced by unrighteous people who God cannot understand. We cannot understand humanly speaking but he gives them authority temporarily. Mind you this is God. It is his universe. He can do whatever he wants with his universe. Amen.

We might not know all the mysteries of God and the way he works. But there are intricacies, complexities that our minds cannot gather. And that verse in Isaiah, his ways are indeed higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Is he not? This is one area that we must not try to question God, but to trust in what he is doing in and through us. So, it is a good question to ask. And then 14 and 15 helps us to see order in God. God is a God of order, is he

not? And he works decently. And there are in these two verses implications whether you trust in what he says in verse 14 and do what he says in verse 15 to have that ability to do it. I am just giving you kind of a cursory understanding of what I am trying to say here. Because when I read verse 14, brothers and sisters, God has given you ability to do this. This is a command. Read along with me. Verse 14.

Says, "But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." Pause. That means you are blessed. You are blessed when you are suffering for righteousness' sake. We have been reading countless times Peter talking about this, have we not? That those who suffer unjustly that there is a special calling in that person's life. And so we must be satisfied, happy. That is what he is saying to us if you have suffered unjustly. And then he says, "And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." You know, this is where a lot of us fall apart, do we not? Everything seems to be all good until we get a sense of terror. What am I going to do about this situation? Somebody is accusing me. Somebody is slandering my name. Somebody is trying to throw me under the bus at work just because I am a Christian and you get afraid for your job security or I am not going to be able to support my family. If you have a family, these are the day-to-day things that were happening in Peter's time. So, he addresses them.

Do not be afraid. Do not be in terror because who are you ultimately trusting in? In your riches, in your position, in your security, whatever that may entail. That is the question that is continuing on from verse 13. He is hitting your heart. He is hitting your heart. He is striking at the root because fear is at the heart level. It is where we have our emotions. It is the center of where everything commands as it were. So he commands to the heart happy when you are suffering for righteousness' sake. And then trust him. And in the second clause, it says, "And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Because those are the two areas. If you do not trust him, do not fear man what they can do. When you do that, then you can do verse 15. But let us just go a little bit into verse 14 before I jump into verse 15.

Here in verse 14 by the way is he is quoting from Isaiah the prophet and during the time when Isaiah said the original part of this text he was threatened with conspiracy he was threatened by the king of Assyria and in this context God offered encouragement to Isaiah and his followers with this stirring command this is from Isaiah 8:13 and just read along with me in verse 13 and 14. See the similarities here. Says this in Isaiah 8:13. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself and let him be your fear and let him be your dread.

That word fear is literally the fear of the Lord. That is in the original Hebrew. And then let him be your dread. It means he is the one that holds the ultimate power of everything. He is the one that you are to submit to with all awesomeness. That word all comes from this word dread. He is all powerful. He is sovereign. He knows everything. So why are you fearing Isaiah what the king can do? Who at that time is humanly speaking of the highest authority and yet God says sanctify the Lord of hosts himself meaning only him only him and in the same way Peter taking that verse he is facing the same sort of storm in persecution against Christians and he offers the brethren here in this text powerful reminder that is rooted in what Isaiah had already said in Isaiah 8:13 and he says this and he puts a slight difference in that word Lord of hosts himself one of the translations puts it like this sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord because now we are living in a New Testament time Christ as Lord this is important to notice because what did Jesus ask Peter

who do you who do men say that I am you remember that and he said thou art the what the son of God the living son of God and then Jesus answer said only the father was able to give you that I am paraphrasing that that did not come from you Peter and so that was a reminder of myself again he was thinking about what the Christians are experiencing and what kind of fears are being brought into their day-to-day and he is going, "Oh, watch out. That is your flesh. God does not want you to be there." And so, he is reminding them. It is a reminder. They know ultimately Christ is King. Christ is Lord. And as often as Christians, we need to be reminded over and over and over again. Amen.

Because it is so easy to just get caught up into this world of entanglements. It is so easy. We got it so good comparatively to other parts of the world. We have so much safety and comfort than anywhere. And that can be a hindrance. That could be a hindrance. And sometimes we just need to go back to first century Christianity and going what is Christianity normally like? Because this is not normal. This is I believe temporary what we are experiencing as Christians. So we need to connect ourselves to the biblical world. Amen. The Bible world is the real world as A. W. Tozer puts it. So what exactly is the implication of this?

What is the implication when you in your heart of hearts claim Christ as Lord? One of the things that is really important is just looking at John apostle John when he says the word made flesh the word of God made flesh. You see when we completely grasp Jesus Christ as part of the trinity everything belongs to Christ then everything this whole world belongs to him. So he has therefore control of everything. If we forget that everything unravels and this fear will get you as quickly as you think that he is not. And so this is very important to Peter. This is very important to the spirit of God telling the Christians through him what it means to make him Lord. And that is obviously the Holy Spirit doing that. It is not of our flesh. As noted here, our flesh wants to fear man. It craves it. And praise God, he does not allow us to stay there. Amen. This is the central truth that we must strive to comprehend and to remind ourselves. We must never doubt Jesus Christ as part of the trinity. When you remove this truth from the New Testament again, everything goes into chaos. So, Apostle Peter emphasizing this word sanctify. You see that it may seem unusual to put it here in this context, but you will understand it when I parallel it with the Lord's Prayer. And I have used this illustration or this example before is that that first part of the phrase hallowed be thy name. Hallowed means sanctify.

And what does that mean? Is to put Christ separate from everything else. There is no comparison. There is no comparison to Christ. That is what hallowed be thy name. And that is why Jesus wants us to put that at the forefront of our mind. If we get that wrong, everything else in that prayer does not make any sense. Does not mean anything. It is the hallowing. It is the sanctifying of the Lord in our hearts that is most important to Christ the Lord as well as to apostle Peter who heard that very prayer.

So Christ as Lord to sanctify him alone above everybody else. Everything else. Exalting him as holy above everyone. Honoring him above everyone and recognizing as he is above every king and authority. That is what allows us as Christians allows us to have reverence for him. See, reverence, that respect, that submission comes from putting him above. That comes naturally. But when we do not, we exalt something else. We honor something else. And so this is all important in how we respond to our setting Christ in our hearts and sanctifying him. You know,

one of the things again I kind of pointed it out in the beginning, but we deal with a world full of sin.

And what I mean by that is we have people that lie and cheat all of the time in the world when it comes to money. We have people that are trying to destroy you physically through killings and murders and all sorts. People want to take your job because they want to challenge you and go I am better than you. That kind of thing in the workforce. And then we have people again slandering your name, putting you down so they can exalt themselves. But you know with all of that, nobody can touch the soul. Always remember that no one can touch your soul. They can touch everything else externally, but only God can. What did he say when he said that? Do not worry about those who can destroy the body, but you are the one that can destroy the body and the soul. See, only God can touch the soul. So, whatever happens above everything else, your relationship with the Lord is all important.

He is the one that knows your soul the best. He is the one that is the one that redeemed you, forgave you of your sin. That is what Christ the Lord did for you. Nobody can do that. Amen. Nobody could have redeemed you. Nobody could have forgiven your sins. That is a good reminder for all of us the love that Christ has for us. That is why we make him Lord in our lives because everybody there is no one in comparison. There was no one in comparison like the sinless Lord Jesus. But we must be sure to give him all that is due to him. You see, it is not enough to just say, "I love him with my heart." It is not enough to think about him as lord of lords and king of kings. It is more than that. And you know, the Puritans were really good at this. There is one Puritan writer who said, "A lot of people hear good sound preaching, but what is the gap between the ones that actually do what the word of God says is this." He says, "It is the one that meditates on the word of God." That is the difference. We live in a very shallow time, very superficial Christianity. Sometimes it is important to go back again. Questions are to probe us, to make us think more about who we are as a Christian, everything that we have in him to say something that you are blessed right now without whatever you can come up with. Oh, I have this, I have this, I have this, I have that, I have that. No, no. He is saying you are just blessed for just being a Christian.

Think about that. That is a lot to just and then you can be happy when you think that way. It is a glorious thing. So think for a moment.

I the idea of terror in this passage, this is the part I think is missing in Christianity. There are sound biblical Christians, mind you, but for the majority, one part of the aspect of Christianity today is missing the respect, the awe of God. A lot of talk is about, oh, I know the doctrines. I am reformed. I am a reformed Christian. I have I love the Lord Jesus. But I do not often hear Christians say, "I have a lot of respect for God. I have a lot of awe for him, for who he is and what he has given to me."

Think about that. That is what is missing. That is what is missing, I believe, is that reverence aspect. Unfortunately, a lot of modern hymns, modern worship songs get a lot of the love in the song. Almost like a love song that you would hear on the radio pop song, just repeating the same phrase over again. But where is the respect? Where is the awe? That is what is lacking. Because you see the respect and awe is what allows for the deep work to happen. That is where the deep work happens. So we must not have an incomplete view of Christ at the end of the day.

We must not grasp only a fraction of the fullness of Christ. Because the consequences are indeed drastic. It can be positive or negative and we want to be on the side of being a positive witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. And we if we fail on sufficiently hallowing him in our hearts then we will miss it. So here are some of the things that we can respect in awe him and there is scripture after scripture about this. He is the savior but he is also the judge. He is the lamb which taketh away the sins of the world but he is also the lion of the tribe of Judah. He is my brother, my elder brother, but he is also God manifest in the flesh, our creator as well as our redeemer. Amen.

So Peter urges us to remember his instructions. Embrace the whole Christ. This is what I want you to meditate on. When you embrace him, when you fear him above everyone else and respect and honor him, amazing things will happen because then he takes care of everything else in your life. All those things that you are worrying and fearing, he takes care of it. He takes care of all those things. Just think of all the stuff that you are just fearing right now. All the stuff that you are worrying about, he takes care of it because you put him at the highest priority. Guess what he is going to do? He is going to take care of everything for you because now you got your orders right. Cares about order above everything else. That is what a good king does. He is orderly. He is orderly. So this command goes to verse 15.

When we grasp verse 14, we can understand the greater layers of verse 15. My apologies. The second clause. So what is it says this? And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

This is the central part of these verses 13 to 17. This is it. But to arrive here, you see how long it took for us to arrive here. It is not something you just shoot to and go, I got something to say about Jesus. I can tell people how much I love him. I can tell people how much I know about him through the scriptures and all the verses. No, you must end with this respect and awe.

That is what he is saying here. When you do that, then you got some hope to share because you are going to be able to say, "Oh, God has got control over this situation, my health. God got control over my situation in the home. God has got control in the situation at my work, at my school. He is all sufficient for me. I do not need anything else except him. I just need to just stay in his presence. That is what he wants above everything else. And you know the kind of peace that surpasses understanding is that it is when you know he has got everything under control. That is when you have that peace. And people are going to ask, "Why are not you troubled by this? What in the world is giving you this peace?" I am glad you asked. Let me tell you about my savior. Let me tell you about my Lord. You see how the difference is?

You know, another thing that happens with this is that worldliness does not creep up as much in your life. Passions for this world is under control. Sins do not creep up so much because again, he has you in control and he is going to take care of you when you hallow him in your hearts.

Nothing drives more than knowing him, knowing all of him, mind you, because what he does, it is an illustration of when he goes into the temple, what did he do when he saw the money changers? He is going to flip everything. Everything that is in your heart that is just not sanctified, he is going to take care of it. He will. I have seen it in my own life. You have seen it in your life, right? When you have been going through things and when you go, "Lord, you got

this." He fixes everything. He orients everything. Just fix your eyes on him, the author and finisher of your faith. Let him richly dwell in you. That is another way it is phrased in scripture.

By the way, this is true Christian courage. This is true Christian courage when you can connect this word reverence this respect for God and then when you obey him this way when you do not neglect sanctifying Christ in your heart what inevitably happens is the presence of Christ fills you takes care of you defends you you are no longer having to defend yourself. He is your defender. He is the one that is going to take care of those fears. And what is the opposite of courage is cowardice. So you are going to be able to pursue difficult situations with the right spirit, with the right power, God's power behind you, with his spirit, of course.

And when you have again this kind of thing, you are going to start seeing people differently. You are going to start wanting to talk with people. You are going to start wanting to be around lost people as a Christian because it is not you. Christ is wanting you to be in those situations. He is going to open up opportunities after opportunities where before you were just afraid and I do not want to be there. I do not know what they are going to say to me. Remember what I said about humility. It is not thinking better of yourself. It is not thinking lower of yourself. It is just self forgetfulness. Do not think about yourself. Think about exalting Christ. He will take care of everything else. He really does.

He is our strength. We shall not be afraid. Because you see what the lost do not have and I remember this myself when I was lost. I remember people telling me cheer up when you are down. Just be strong. Just do not worry about it. Just very glibly like just nonchalant just no depth into it. Just have a stiff upper lip, you know? It is just it is nothing. None of that helped. You know that, right? You know that that really does not help. And when God puts that into your life, like I want something more, there is that part where God can come in. That you want more than just that. You see, that is more concrete. When you go, I want more than just these glib accolades, just puffing myself up, saying I am going to be able to make it through when truly you are not. And so you can go into the eye of the storm when you have Christ and you can tell in great detail what he is doing for you. You see that? That is a cause for Christ and glory for him. Amen.

That is what we want to do as followers of Christ is go in even though we are afraid. Even though we might be troubled, we go anyways. We go in because we trust God that he will take care of us. When we put him above everyone else in our hearts, we will always be ready. I love that. You will always be ready. When you have that right, when you have those orders right, you will always be ready. So, I do not need to come up here on stage and here is a strategy for evangelism. This is it. This is it. This is all you need. Just listen to the word of God. Let it speak to you and let it cause you to want to have the faith to trust him in this. And then when people say they ask you, what is the reason of this hope of the hope? Notice the hope, not a hope. The hope that is Jesus that is in you. And he says it with meekness and fear because he is meekness is the idea. It is not me. That is the word of meekness. It is this gentleness. It is not this, oh yeah, I got this. He made me strong in the Lord. And you are just really boasting.

But rather, it is this humility. You know, I was actually really afraid. You know what? I was really troubled. But I trusted in God because he is sovereign in my life and he took care of it. And he gave it to God. And then with fear because maybe I might get this wrong. God help me even in

this. Let me pray. You see how amazing the connections are when we just read it as it is and not rush through it. It is a powerful thing. Well, I do not have too much time to go into detail, but actually 16 and 17, it is quite straightforward. Let me just read it to you.

Having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

You see, when your heart set is right, you have a good conscience. But when you try to go to the mind first, does not work. He wants our hearts. Is not that true to any relationships? Would not it be crazy if I love you with my mind? That is weird. I love you with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength. And then I love my neighbor as myself. You see that? Because you have a good conscience when you have done things in this order. This is how you have a good conscience. It is as straightforward as that. So it flows to them. Whereas they speak evil of you. They might speak evil of you. They still might try to get in there and but he is that person or whatever. I do not know. They could say something about you, but you will be like, "Well, that is not really true." You do not say it to them, but in the heart of hearts, you know, in your conscience that that is not true of you because I really examine my heart. I really did exalt the Lord. I really sanctified him. I really love him. I really respect him. I really trust him. So, it does not really again, it says falsely there. You know, there is nothing to be ashamed because they are falsely accusing you of your conversation in Christ. Is not that amazing? You have a conversation in Christ through the Holy Spirit. You are communing with him whether in prayer or reading his word and the Holy Spirit speaking to you maybe right now. This is opportunity to commune with him. You have so many opportunities. And then verse 17, for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. It is similar to verse 12 where it is talking about the eyes of the Lord were the righteous and he is against them that do evil. There are these two paths again. But for the Christian, you are on the better path. You are doing the will of God. That you suffer for well doing than for evil doing. May this be an encouragement. That is ultimately the theme of Peter in this text. He wants you to be so encouraged. If you are doing this already, amen.

If you have been slightly off, go back. Repent. He has given us a heart of repentance. He has softened our hearts. He has given us grace. And he gives more grace to the humble, does he not? But the one that resists, what does it say? He opposes. So, if you are that person here tonight that I have been speaking majority to Christians, but you are just I do not really believe this, but then something happened. You said that at the beginning, but somehow God is speaking to you while I was preaching. You go, you know what? I have been opposing him. I have not been really respecting and honoring him. I have not really fully understand Christ as I should have. Lord, help me in this. Help me in this. Help me to understand. Come to me. Come to Pastor Walter. We would love to speak with you. This is the time to do it if God is speaking to you. Amen. Let us go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you for this word of encouragement from Peter. God, so rich for us to think about, to meditate on when this world that we live in, Lord, it just feels so meaningless. Feels so meaningless.

But when we have Christ, everything comes to life. Even the sorrows, there is joy. There are things that we cannot comprehend unless your spirit speaks to us. And when he does through your word, it just makes sense. It just makes sense. And we thank you, God, for that gift of

understanding. And we thank you for Jesus praying for us. He prays for us to be sanctified in the truth. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters this evening. Give them strength in areas they need strength in. Give them wisdom where they need wisdom. Lord, help them to really fully grasp the Lord Jesus Christ. And as they do, Father, as their lives become more and more orderly despite of all the external circumstances that attack their heart, Father, strengthen them. Give them the courage to sanctify the Lord in their hearts.

And as they do, Father, that they will be able to answer the very hope that is in Jesus Christ to all the lost loved ones that they surround themselves with, Lord, that you would use them, Father, in greater and greater ways to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ to bring people to salvation in him. Bless in all this, Father. And then I pray for the lost, Lord. Please work in their hearts. Please help them when you are near God, when you are speaking to them, that they would humble themselves under your mighty hand and that they would come to know you through the Lord Jesus Christ as savior and lord. Please, Father, help them to seek counsel. If they are, if you are working in them, Lord, I pray that they will. Amen.