

Chapter 3

When we come to chapter 3 Peter then deals with **domestic problems**. There were a couple of things going on that Peter was concerned about.

- 1) The state of marriage was a mess (Roman; Greek; Hebrew).
- 2) If one spouse was saved and the other one was not.

Peter talks to the **wives** more than the husbands and the reason was the wife's position was far more difficult than her husband's.

If the husband became a believer he would take his wife to church and there would be no problem. On the other hand, if the wife accepted **Christ** without the husband he could cause all sorts of problems. Back in the day, for a woman to change her husband was unthinkable.

Verses 1-2

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

We need to notice what Peter does not **advise**- and that is to divorce her unbelieving husband, as long as he does not send her away. This is the same advice Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:13-16.

Be subject (or submissive to) your own husband- notice it is not **all men** but to her husband. This *being subject* is not a spineless submission but rather **voluntary selflessness**. It is based on the death of pride and a desire to serve.

This submission is not **based** on the husband's walk with the Lord.

Won- means winning someone to one's **view** and they are won by conduct rather than **words**.

The conduct of their wives- is speaking of a morally **pure** lifestyle.

Verse 3

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—

Peter is not saying women should not wear **makeup**. Back in the day, the attitude was that a woman's beauty was only external so they would go to great lengths to get the external looking good. Peter does not want beauty to come from this only.

Verse 4

but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Peter tells the ladies that instead of making it all about the **external**, instead let people see what has happened inside- the change the Christ has done (1 Samuel 16:7). This will be seen in her **spirit** that a Christian woman should show and Peter describes it using two words-

- 1) **Gentle**- which consists of **humility** and **meekness**, like her Lord (Matthew 11:28-29).
- 2) **Quiet**- reflects how **she** responds.

Verse 5

For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

Peter reaches back into the Old Testament and tells the ladies that these Old Testament women showed their **faith** by being submissive to their husbands.

Verse 6

as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Paul wrote that by faith all believers are children of Abraham because they followed the same **path** as Abraham who believed God's word and placed his faith in God.

Peter is saying the same thing for Sarah. All believing wives who follow Sarah's example of submission have become **daughters** of Sarah.

Peter also tells the wives *do not fear* about submitting to their **husbands** or the persecution they are going through (Psalm 94:19).

Verse 7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Likewise (or in the same way)- This refers back to the duty of submission and this time it is for the husband to submit to the **wife** by serving her in three areas.

- 1) **Understanding**- This refers to being **sensitive** to the wife's deepest physical and emotional needs. Husbands are to cherish their wives.
- 2) **Considerate**- In the ancient world, consideration for women was practically unknown. The believing **husband** needs to remember that the wife is the weaker vessel (this does not mean she is inferior in any way- she is weaker physically than any man). The

Christian husband is to sacrificially provide for and protect their wife (Colossians 3:19; 1 Timothy 5:8).

- 3) Equal Spiritual Rights- The believing husband needs to recognize that their wife has equal **spiritual rights** as their husband. This was not true in Roman culture, Greek culture, or even the Jewish culture.
- 4) A Christian husband's prayers can be hindered- our relationship with God can never be right if our **relationship** with one another is wrong. God makes it very clear that if the husband does not treat his wife the way God wants him to, God may not answer his prayers.

Verses 8-9

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

In these verses, Peter concludes his teaching on submission and lists six things we must practice as believers with each other and with **unbelievers**.

- 1) Unity of mind (harmony)- Peter is talking about working together to spread the gospel (Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10). Both Peter and Paul stress how important **harmony** is in the church and in spreading the gospel.
- 2) Sympathetic- The New Testament urges us to be people who are to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:26). We need to remember that **sympathy** and **selfishness** cannot coexist. As long as self is the most important thing in a person's life there cannot be sympathy. Sympathy comes to the heart when Christ reigns there.
- 3) Brotherly love- This is the love for other believers and others. This is a very important trait we need to have and Jesus said this about brotherly love- John 13:34-35. The Apostle John talks very strongly about this (1 John 3:14-15; 4:20). The love of God and the love of **others** go hand in hand.
- 4) A tender heart (compassionate)- This word Peter uses literally refers to the internal organs and refers to one's **deepest feelings**. Like sympathy; compassion means "to be touched by what others are going through" but then acts upon those needs.
- 5) Humble mind- Means having an honest estimate of **oneself** before God (Ephesians 4:2). Being humble for Peter did not come easily. But through the Holy Spirit, Peter changed and became compassionate and humble.
- 6) Forgiveness- Peter wrote about this earlier when he said that when people said terrible things to Jesus and did terrible things to him he did not strike back but he **forgave** them. A mark of a Christian is they **forgive** others as God has forgiven them (Ephesians 4:32).

Verses 10-12

For

*“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
11let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
12For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

Peter then quotes Psalm 34. These verses show that God is on the side of those who do not strike out against those who do evil. In other words, those who respond with evil to those who have done evil to them- God will judge them along with the first offender.

Verse 13

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

Peter is reminding **believers** this is the way we are to live in an evil world. The word *good* refers to a life of generosity, unselfishness, kindness, and being thoughtful of others (Ephesians 2:10; Psalm 37:3; Galatians 6:9-10; Colossians 1:10).

Verse 14

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

Usually, people were safe when they lived lawfully and did what was right. But sometimes persecution will come to **believers** even when they live good lives. But even if believers are **persecuted** they will be blessed (Matthew 5:10-12).

Peter in 1 Peter 5:10 tells us what the blessings will be (James 1:2-4; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

The second part of this verse is taken from Isaiah 8:12 where God tells Isaiah to trust God and don't be intimidated by people around them.

Verse 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,

Peter is telling believers that instead of being **intimidated** they need to submit to God's sovereignty and submit to His will in their lives.

The second part of this verse reminds believers to be able to **defend** why they have placed their faith in Christ. The response is to be gentle and respectful.

Verse 16

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

Our response when facing persecution should be **God-honoring** and not aggressive. Our response should be full of grace.

Verse 17

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

Peter tells us that when we receive unjust treatment that sometimes that is the will of God. But we need to make sure our suffering is for the right reason not because we have done something **wrong**, but because we are living for Christ.

Christ's death for our sin: Verses 18-22

Verse 18

For Christ also suffered that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Peter is showing believers who are suffering about Christ's suffering and how great things can come out of **suffering**.

Suffered once for sin- Peter is telling us that Christ paid for all sin for all **time** and that His **purpose** was to bring us back to God (2Corinthians 5:19).

"Put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" - Peter is not saying that Jesus did not rise **physically** from the grave. Peter is telling us that Jesus died physically and was resurrected through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 19-20

in which he went and proclaimed the spirits in prison, 20because 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, persons, were brought safely through water.

Here is a passage that is kind of tough to understand because we have not been taught about it but the people of Peter's time knew exactly what he was talking about. The key to understanding this passage is two-fold.

- 1) Looking at **Genesis 6** and 2) understanding the Greek words that are used.

Genesis 6:1-2

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, 2the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

The first key to understanding Genesis 6 starts with these words that Moses uses in these verses- **sons of God**. The words *sons of God* are only used three other times in the Old Testament (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). When these words are used they mean "**spirit beings** (angels)". The first two occurrences refer to fallen angels who came with Satan to appear before the Lord in heaven. And the third time in Job these Hebrew words **describe** the angelic beings singing and shouting for joy at creation.

The second key to **understanding** this passage, is what did the people believe about Genesis 6? In the time of Jesus, the Jewish scholars all believed this passage was speaking about angels. Also, the early church fathers believed Genesis 6 was talking about angels.

Verse 19

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

In which- Refers to what happened with Christ's **living spirit** and His dead body which was laid in a tomb (Matthew 27:57-60).

He went- Means going from **one place** to another.

Made proclamation to the spirits now in person-

1. Proclamation- Christ went to proclaim His **victory** to his enemies. Peter did not use the word to preach the Gospel.
2. To the spirits- Christ's proclamation was not directed to **humans** but spirits. This word "spirit" in the New Testament is never used to refer to **people** but to angels, unless it is qualified by another word (Hebrews 12:23). Again, when used alone, it always in the New Testament refers to **angels**. In other words, the normal use of the plural "spirits" refers to angels, not human beings.

2 Peter 2:4 tells us where these angels were and where Jesus went.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

Peter tells us where these angels were that Jesus went to see. They were in a place called Hell. The word that Peter uses is a Greek word that is only used here in the New Testament. That word is *Tartarus*, which in Greek mythology, was a subterranean abyss that was lower than Hades (Hell), where the **worst rebels** and criminals went.

Peter then says they were **committed** there which means "to turn over for imprisonment".

Jude: There is another passage in the New Testament that talks about this and it is found in the book of **Jude**. Jude was a brother of James and a half-brother of Christ. We don't know exactly when Jude wrote this but was probably written before the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

Jude's letter is a warning about false teachers coming into the church and Jude denounces their false teaching and their godless lifestyles.

Verse 6

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

Back when Jude wrote this it was common thought at the time that the passages in 1 & 2 Peter and Jude were talking about **Genesis 6**.

Putting this all together, both Peter and Jude are speaking about these **fallen angels** in Genesis marrying women and when they did this God punished them and now they are in chains waiting for the final judgment. This is where Jesus' **spirit** went and told these fallen angels that he had won and how he did it. There is a verse in Colossians (2:15) that could refer to this very thing 1 Peter is talking about.