

“Lower Thirds” Material

3/7/21

Pastor Ben Cross

Much of Peter’s teaching echoes the teaching of Jesus.

In **Matthew 5:10-12**, Jesus framed Peter’s understanding of Christian suffering in **1 Peter 3:13-18**.

Matthew 5:3-9 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...*

Matthew 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

This eighth beatitude is part of a package deal: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (**5:3, 10**) marks an inclusion.

The Beatitudes are eight qualities of the same person. All eight qualities are the norm for life in the kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:11 *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

1 Peter 4:12-16

If we are serious about following Jesus, we should fully expect to be treated like Jesus (**John 15:18-23**).

“because of the name of Christ...as a Christian...you bear that name “

We suffer because people see Jesus in us.

1 Peter 3:13-14 *Now who is there to harm you, if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed.*

1. We are blessed if we suffer for doing good. (3:13-16)

5 ways to suffer well, so we will be blessed

1st - Suffer without unhealthy fear. v. 14b...*Have no fear of them, nor be troubled* (cp. **3:6**)

Unhealthy fear = fear of people.

There is so much more here than simply fearing those who oppose our faith.

v. 14b - literally in the original text...*but their fear, you should not be afraid, nor should you be troubled.*

Isaiah 8:12 *Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread...*

This fixation on conspiracies has taken hold in churches (Register Guard 3/5/21)

Haralan Popov, *Tortured for His Faith*

2nd - Suffer with healthy fear. v. 15 ...*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy.*

holy = to cut, to separate as in “a cut above;” i.e, honor Christ in his sovereign transcendence; hold him in reverent awe

Isaiah 8:13 ...*Yahweh Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear.*

NOTE: Peter equates Jesus with Yahweh Almighty!

Healthy fear = *the fear of the Lord* (**1:17; 2:17**)

The primary motivation: God’s unfailing love – **1:17** (cp. **Psalms 33:18; 118:4; 147:11; Proverbs 16:6**)

If we get all wrapped up and lathered up in the conspiracies and fear of our day, it is an insult to Christ’s sovereignty and the Father’s love.

Isaiah 26:3-4 says, You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in Yahweh forever, for Yahweh Elohim is an everlasting rock.

3rd - Suffer with readiness. v. 15b...*always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;*

“defense” = apologetics – a defense from our personal story

4th - Suffer with class. vv. 15c-16a...yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience...

Gentleness and humility were the two qualities Jesus used to describe himself (**Matthew 11:29**).

Living with a good conscience is the secret to enjoying a blessed life, no matter how difficult or dangerous life gets.

John Calvin - The torture of a bad conscience is the hell of a living soul.

Elizabeth I - A clear and innocent conscience fears nothing.

5th - Suffer with purpose. 16b...so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Our suffering for righteousness's sake, provides the basis for God's judgment of those who reject him.

The ultimate goal: **2:12** – some may come to faith in Christ and glorify God when Jesus returns.

2. It may be God's will that we suffer for doing good. (3:17)

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

3. Jesus suffered for doing good for our good. (3:18)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

"Christ also suffered once for sins" Hebrews 10:12

"the righteous for the unrighteous" 1 Peter 2:11ff - We are to follow Christ's example.

"that he might bring us to God" = the language of a priest offering up sacrifice to God.

Christ, our High Priest, redeemed us through his own blood and presented us before God as holy priests who can offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, as well

(2:9-10).For Jesus, suffering was necessary. (Matthew 24:6)

John 12:20-28 – the cross must precede the crown

Hebrews 2:18 – *able to help*; **4:15** – *able to sympathize*; **5:8** – *learned obedience*

1 Peter 1:18-19 – to accomplish redemption.

For us, suffering is necessary.

Philippians 1:27-29 ...*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.*

1 Peter 1:3-10 – the refinement of our faith

Acts 5:41 *They left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*

Two Reasons to Rejoice in Suffering

Matthew 5:12 *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

- We are in great company. God's holy prophets suffered.

The real test of who you are isn't so much who your friends are, but who your enemies are.

- We have great reward. **Romans 8:17**

When your life reflects God at a level that you suffer for it, it only demonstrates that you really have God, because he really has you.

*We will never be able to return good for evil, if we do not, first of all, realize **we are the blessed ones—ours is the kingdom of heaven!***