

03-22-2015

Message: The Inner Qualities of Those Who Suffer Righteously

Text: 1 Peter 3:8-12

Introduction

A. Two major themes that our risen Lord Jesus is inspiring Peter to weave throughout his letter to the churches are 1) suffering righteously according to the will of God, and 2) the hope of Christ's return in glory for us. Present sufferings and future glory.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, **you have been distressed by various trials,**⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested by fire,** may be found to result in **praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;** ...¹¹ ... the Spirit of Christ within them (the prophets) was indicating as He predicted **the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.** ...¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, **fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

B. After a long list in 1:1-12 of past, present, and future grace that is our in union with Christ, Peter from 1:13 - 2:3 gives us a number of commands on behalf of Christ, calling us to live in the image of Christ.

1 Peter 1:15-16 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;¹⁶ because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

C. Then after another reminder in 2:4-10 of how God has blessed us in union with Christ, begins another series of commands to avoid fleshly passions and submit for the Lord's sake to every authority God places over us, even those who through disobedience to God cause us to suffer unjustly, for we are called to imitate Jesus in His sufferings.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ...¹³ **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution,** whether to a king as the one in authority ...²⁰ ... But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.²¹ **For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,**

D. Having encouraged believers who are most vulnerable to suffer while submitting to authority - citizens, servants, wives of unbelievers, he now summarizes in 3:8-12 the inner qualities of a Christlike heart that enable us to suffer righteously in the steps of Jesus.

E. What all too easily happens when we are put under severe stress? We give in to sinful passions to alleviate our stress - anger, retaliation, impatience, biting tongue, profanity, etc. And the casualties of our outbursts and passions are both fellow believers and those causing our stress and suffering. ("If mamma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.")

I. **Avoid fleshly lusts that cause us to sin against believers while under the stress of suffering by putting on Christ.**

1 Peter 3:8 To sum up, **all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;**

A. Here Peter artfully arranges 5 descriptive adjectives, underscoring what is to be our Christlike

thinking, feeling, and motivation. The first and last adjectives describe how one is to think, the second and fourth how one is to feel, and the third at the center describes what is to be our motivation.

homophrones = thinking one way, harmonious
sumpathes = sympathetic
philadelphoi = brotherly loving
eusplagchnos = compassionate
tapeinophrones = humble thinking, humble minded

B. How we are to think like Christ

1. Homophrones = thinking one way, harmonious

a. we are to think the same way in terms of world view and Christlikeness.

Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by **being of the same mind** (thinking the same), maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.⁵ **Have this attitude in yourselves (think this in you) which was also in Christ Jesus,**

b. The key to thinking the same way, is having the mind of Christ.

Philippians 4:2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to **live in harmony (think the same) in the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ...¹⁶ ... **But we have the mind of Christ.**

2. Tapeinophrones = humble thinking, humble minded (verb: tapeinoo = to make low, humble)

a. Christ, by very nature, is humble. He made himself low.

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** (tapeinoo = made Himself low) by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

b. We are called to live in the image of the humble Christ.

1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and **all of you, clothe yourselves with humility (tapeinophrosune) toward one another,** for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE **HUMBLE** (tapeinos).⁶ Therefore **humble yourselves** (tapeinoo) under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

c. The O'Donnells' recent prayer request to remain humble gives insight in how suffering can tempt one to fleshly pride. As the number of sent ones in their country and city shrinks, they realize the temptation of taking pride in remaining, and thinking more highly of themselves than those who left for safety reasons.

3. Sumpathes = suffering with, sympathetic

a. Christ is our sympathetic high priest.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot **sympathize** (sumpathein) with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

b. Therefore, we are to share the feelings of others in their situations

1 Corinthians 12:26 And if one member **suffers** (pathein), all the members **suffer with** (sumpathein) it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember the prisoners, **as though in prison with them**, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

4. Eusplagchnos = compassionate

a. splagchnos = inward parts, bowels, liver (we often feel emotion in our abdomen).

Acts 1:18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his **intestines** (splagchnon) gushed out.

b. Eu = good, so eusplagchnos = good bowels - having good feelings in our abdomen toward others = compassion. Again, to put on compassion is to put on the image of our Lord.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, **compassionate** (eusplagchnos), forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5. Philadelphoi = loving as brothers, brotherly loving. Love is what motivates us.

a. love of the brethren (philadelphia) is not a lesser love than "agape".

1 Thessalonians 4:9 Now as to the **love of the brethren** (philadelphia), you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to **love** (agape) one another;

b. we need purified hearts to love in such a way.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere **love of the brethren** (philadelphia), fervently **love** (agapao) one another from the heart,

II. Avoid fleshly lusts that cause us to sin against our persecutors while under the stress of suffering, and put on Christ.

1 Peter 3:9 **not returning evil for evil or insult for insult**, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

A. While the virtues in verse 8 apply to the body of believers, since only philadelphia and homophrones (thinking the same way) could only apply to fellow Christians, the good will and compassion are to spill over to even those who wrong and persecute us.

B. Jesus taught and left us such an example.

1 Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps**,²² WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

Luke 6:27 "But I say to you who hear, **love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,**²⁸ **bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.** ...³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them.³³ "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same. ...³⁵ "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and **you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.**

C. ... as did His apostles.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but **always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.**

1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; **when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;**¹³ **when we are slandered, we try to conciliate;**

III. Put on Christ by being a blessing.

1 Peter 3:9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, **but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.**

A. We were called to be a blessing to others by bringing the blessings of Christ to others.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, ..² ... And **I will bless you,** and make your name great; **and so you shall be a blessing;**³ ... And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**"

B. We were called to inherit God's blessing of life, goodness, and answered prayers by a faith that follows in the steps of Jesus. Peter identifies God's blessing of life, good day, and answered prayer by quoting from Psalm 34.

1 Peter 3:10 For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES **LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.**¹¹ "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.¹² "**FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER,** BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."

Psalm 34:12 Who is the man who desires life and loves *length of days* that he may see good?¹³ Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.¹⁴ Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are *open* to their cry.¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.¹⁷ *The righteous* cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

Conclusion

A. Don't we want the eyes of the Lord turned toward us and His ears open to our cries?

B. Just as we need a purified heart to love one another fervently, so we need such a heart to suffer righteously after the example of Jesus.

B. So come to the throne of grace, to our sympathetic and compassionate High Priest, Jesus, and request
for yourself and for one another mercy and grace to help us purify our souls of all that dampens a
love for one another and a love for Christ that motivates us to follow in His steps, even when
suffering.