

The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer

Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

19 The Call of the Gospel to Suffer with Christ

1 Peter 3:8-22

Today's study will focus on 1 Peter 3:8-22, and the call of the Gospel to suffer with Christ. This "suffering" involves not merely the pain that we receive at the hands of unbelievers, but also the pain we are tempted to inflict upon one another within the body of Christ. Passions can run high within the church and among brothers in Christ. Passions can also run high toward others with whom we are associated in life who may not believe in Christ and who may outright reject everything we believe in and stand for. Christ's work of reconciliation for friend and enemy "to bring us to God" is a paradigm for us in all of our relationships with one another both within the church and on the outside.

"Be of one mind, having sympathy for one another" – 1 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV)

Finally, all of you, have **unity of mind**, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart (**compassionate**), and a humble mind (**humble mind**).⁹ Do not repay (**return**) evil for evil or reviling (**insult**) for reviling (**insult**), but on the contrary, bless (**same word from the Beatitudes**), for to this you were **called** (the call to faith in Christ by the Word of His grace), that you may obtain a blessing.

- These verses address our calling within the Church and among brothers and sisters in Christ.
- **Objectivity**: The "mind" of a Christian is to be governed, not by passion of lust, but by the sober and objective Word of God and call of the Gospel.
- "Sympathy, brotherly love, compassion, and a humble mind" are not chiefly emotions, but of the Christian will that is to be governed by the objective Gospel of Christ.
- "Sympathy and compassion" for our brothers and sisters in Christ identifies them as being just like us according to the flesh.
- The Call of the Gospel "to suffer" with Christ involves bearing with one another, not in a spirit of vindictiveness (works-righteous faith) but in the spirit of forbearance (faith in the grace of God).

Psalm 34:12-16, Peter's Proof Text

¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,

**let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;**

¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For 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."

- The evil tongue and the speaking of deceit is any speech that does not flow from faith in the Gospel.
- This means that "true things" could be said, but they are evil and undermine the Gospel if they do not serve the cause of faith in Christ for others or our witness to Jesus.
- The Lord stands in opposition to those whose words would deny the Gospel of God's grace in Christ.

Suffering for Following the One Who Is Good – 1 Peter 3:13-17

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good (**the person of our Lord and His Gospel of God's grace**; there is only One who is good)? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake (**for the forgiving righteousness of Christ**), you will be blessed. Have no fear of them (**any who would oppose the Gospel from within the church or on the outside**), nor be troubled, 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, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good (**for Christ's sake**), if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

- "Doing good" is to "to do Christ" if you will, that is to say, to do as Jesus does in His grace and forbearance toward us.
- To "suffer for righteousness' sake" is not suffering for the sake of generic morality, but to suffer for Christ's sake and on account of His Gospel—on account of His forgiveness and grace on display in the lives of His Christians.
- The Christian "apologetic" is always about confessing Christ and the justification of the sinner before God by grace, for Christ's sake. This is what animates the life of the Christian.

Christ Suffered Once for Sins to Bring Us to God – 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered¹⁸ once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which¹⁹ he went and proclaimed¹⁹ to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because²⁰ 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, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

- Substitutionary atonement: the righteous for the unrighteous to reconcile us to God.
- Jesus' preaching to the spirits in prison was a vindication of His grace which they had rejected in the days of Noah.
- The objective Sacrament of Baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- The problem of the persistence of sin in the life of the Christian and the Church— Translation differences: "Not the removal of the dirt of the body" OR "Not the removal of the filth of the flesh"?

Conclusion: Peter learned through the things that he suffered from within himself to depend upon the grace of his Lord for salvation and for his life in the church. He passes on this legacy to us.

Looking Ahead

The Mind of Christ and the End of All Things (4:1-11)

The Blessedness of Christian Suffering (4:12-19)

Encouragement for Pastors During the Exile (5:1-14)