

Submission to Authority IV

Suffering as a Christian

I Peter 3:8-17

Life as a Christian is not a bed of ease. While it is easy to love those who demonstrate love; the rubber meets the road when we take on the Christian task to love those who mistreat and malign us. Still, the prerequisite for glory is love. In the following verses, Peter begins to emphasize the need for brotherly love – the attitude and action which accompany the community of believers...even when they endure evil. The following verses provide the believer with powerful tools to employ on their way to glory.

A. Love of a Christian (I Peter 3:8-12)

- a. We love God's people (v. 8)
 - i. In verse 8, there are 5 adjectives which make up imperative commands
 1. Unity of Mind (harmony)
 - a. Common call in the New Testament
 - i. ***II Corinthians 13:11, "Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."***
 - ii. ***Philippians 2:1-2, "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."***
 - b. Some churches may suffer from division and dissension which makes this admonition necessary. We need holiness and harmony.
 2. Sympathy
 - a. Greek Word, συμπαθής (sympathes) refers to a person who is affected by the same suffering, the same impressions, the same emotions as another, or who undergoes identical trials, and finally "sympathizes" with this other person who is in some sort of trouble, has pity.¹
 - i. It requires both (sensitivity and unity)
 - ii. ***Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."***
 3. Brotherly Love
 - a. We have already ready about how the family love of believers for one another was important for ***Peter (1:22, 2:17)***.

¹ Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 319.

- b. Christ brings us into the same family and allows us to demonstrate to the world we are His through our love for one another.
 - i. **Romans 12:10, "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."**
 - ii. **I Thessalonians 4:9, "Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,"**
 - iii. **Hebrews 13:1, "Let brotherly love continue."**

4. Tender Heart

- a. The Greek word, εὐσπλαχνος (eusplachnos), literally means "good bowels" – it is deep affection (compassion)
- b. Compassion is rooted in mercy and forgiveness of sin
 - i. **Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."**
 - ii. **Colossians 3:12, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."**

5. Humble Mind

- a. Ταπεινόφρων (tapeinophrones) – refers to someone who is lowly in mind...a derogatory term and a frowned upon practice in the Greco-Roman world.
- b. Still, this is the life Christians are called to live
 - i. **Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."**
 - ii. **I Peter 5:5, "Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."**

b. We love our enemies (v. 9)

- i. We may recognize, believers may be in view in these verses and still the instructions are the same.
- ii. These admonitions are rooted in the teachings of Jesus
 - 1. Luke 6:28-29, "bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either."
 - 2. Our good works are evidence we have been redeemed
 - 3. What if they take advantage? We must trust God to protect and provide and defeat everyone of our enemies.
- iii. Verse 10 – 12 are an Old Testament quotation from Psalm 34:12-15

1. Good days are not problem-free days
 - a. Fears (Psalm 34:4)
 - b. Trouble (Psalm 34:6)
 - c. Broken heart (Psalm 34:18)
 - d. Afflictions (Psalm 34:19)

B. The Lordship of Christ (I Peter 3:13-15)

- a. The distresses of this life don't have the final word, therefore, no one is able to harm a Christian zealous for doing good.
- b. Peter draws two implications from the fact suffering is an indication of God's blessing
 - i. Do not fear intimidation
 - ii. Do not be frightened
- c. Verses 14 and 15 are a reference to *Isaiah 8:12-13*, "***Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread.***¹³ ***But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.***"²
 - i. Just as Judah was tempted to fear their foes, so the Petrine readers were liable to fear what their persecutors might do to them. Hence, the words of Isaiah still spoke to Peter's day. Believers are not to fear the suffering unbelievers might administer to them. They are to trust in the Lord, believing that he will vindicate his own.³
- d. Our consistent Christian conduct will raise questions from those in the world and we should be ready to give an answer for the hope we have.
 - i. Απολογία (apologia) – a defense presented in court
 - ii. Each crisis becomes an opportunity to spread the Gospel
 - iii. Our defense must be given respectfully and not arrogantly. The goal is to win souls and not the argument.

C. A Laudable Conscience (I Peter 3:16-17)

- a. In some languages the word may be rendered as 'the inner voice' or 'the voice in one's heart' or 'how one knows right from wrong.'⁴
 - i. In the last day, those who revile believers will be put to shame
 - ii. Believers will suffer for doing good, but will not be put to shame in the last day
- b. Suffering is attached to the will of God

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 8:12–13.

³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 173.

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 323.