**1 Peter: A Safe Haven in the Midst of an Unfriendly World, Pt 2**

1 Peter 3:13-17

**Context**

**1 Peter 3:13-17**—*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?****14****But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,****15****but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;****16****and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.****17****For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

In the uncertainties of life and an ever-increasing hostility toward a biblical worldview, Christians must maintain their strong convictions and be resolved to use the challenges they face as opportunities to be salt and light.

Our hope and anchor is the Lord Jesus in the midst of the storms.

**Psalm 22:11a**—*Be not far from me, for trouble is near*

Whatever hostility we face today was not dissimilar to that which occurred in the first century when Peter was writing to these scattered aliens (**1:2**). One could argue that it was worse that certainly our current situation in America. Scripture is clear that it will ramp up.

**2 Timothy 3:1, 12-13**—*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. …* ***12****Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.****13****But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

Peter is giving us ways to be equipped, prepared, and ready to defend ourselves against the onslaughts that will come.

**How does the Gospel give the believer**

**hope in a hostile world?**

1. **Do good**

***13****Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?*

1. **Suffer well**

***14****But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…****17****For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

1. *Even if you should suffer*
2. *Suffer for the sake of righteousness*
   1. These believers did suffer
   2. Many early followers of the faith (and since) have suffered

*Cf.* ***Acts 5:40-41; 13:50; 16:20-24; 17:5-9; 26:9-11***

1. *Blessing comes with those who suffer persecution*
   1. The long view tells us that our struggles are short-term and are significantly less than the resulting blessing

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18***—Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.****17****For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,****18****while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

* 1. Therefore, keep the right perspective
     1. We must have eyes of faith
     2. We must not be deceived and short-sighted
     3. Know and believe the promises of God will come about

1. *You are blessed*
   1. *Blessed—*supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off; declaration of blessedness[[1]](#footnote-2)
   2. *Here the emphasis isn’t so much on the effect (the blessing of happiness or joy) but more of privilege or honor*
2. *And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…*

**Isaiah 8:12b-13***—And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.* ***13****“It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread.*

* 1. **Historical context:** In 734BC, the king of Assyria was invading many nations—including Israel, Judah and Aram (modern day Syria). The kings of Israel and Aram wanted the king of Judah (Ahaz) to enter into an alliance with them to defend themselves against Assyria. King Ahaz refused. Instead, Ahaz aligns with the Assyrians. The prophet Isaiah had strongly warned Ahaz to not make ungodly alliances but to trust in the name of the Lord their God. He did not.
  2. It is the same idea for Peter as he’s counseling these believers

**Psalm 118:6***—The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?*

**Proverbs 29:25***—The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.*

**Matthew 10:28***—Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

* 1. *Do not be troubled*—to agitate, trouble (a thing, by the movement of its parts to and fro); to cause one inward commotion, take away his calmness of mind, disturb his equanimity; to stir up[[2]](#footnote-3)
     + - 1. Remain calm
         2. Also remain determined, resolute, steadfast, immovable, and courageous

**Joshua 1:7, 9**—*Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go…****9****Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*

**10:25**—*Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”*

Suffering must be viewed as an opportunity to receive spiritual blessings, not as an excuse to compromise the faith before a hostile world.[[3]](#footnote-4)

* + - * 1. Set your affections on thing above

**Colossians 3:2-4**—*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.****3****For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.****4****When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*

1. ***17****For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right…*
   1. We accept hardship as part of God’s wise and sovereign plan
   2. It is often His greater plan for blessing
2. *…rather than for doing what is wrong*
   1. There is a corresponding disciple from the Lord for disobedience
   2. Do not be surprised

***1 Peter 2:20***—*For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.*

**1 Peter 4:15-19***—Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;****16****but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.****17****For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?****18****And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?****19****Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

1. **Sanctify Christ**

***15a*** *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts…*

**Isaiah 8:13**—*Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* (KJV)

1. *Sanctify*—set apart or consecrate; to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; to separate from profane things and dedicate to God[[4]](#footnote-5)
2. Here, it also means giving primary place of adoration, exaltation, and worship
   1. Jesus is to have the sole place of worship in the life of the believer
   2. There is nothing that compares
   3. Our affection, devotion, love, reverence, loyalty and obedience is to our Master

**Romans 13:14**—*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*

**Philippians 3:14***—I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

**Colossians 3:4***—When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*

**Matthew 6:24***—No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

* 1. We are continually submitting to His will

**Mark 3:35**—*For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.*

**Romans 12:2***—And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

**Ephesians 6:6***—**not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*

**Hebrews 10:36***—For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

* 1. Sometimes, submission to His will includes suffering

1. Sanctify Christ from the heart
   1. These are not simply external behavioral responses for show
   2. They are deeply rooted desires coming from the heart of a genuine worshiper
2. The outcome requires courage, boldness, strength, and a tenacity to endure and triumph through His Spirit
3. **Defend Faith**

***15b****…always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*

1. Opportunities avail themselves through the suffering
   1. Do you see (and even pray for) opportunities?
   2. Are you defending the truth?
   3. Are you seeking opportunities to witness in the midst of the persecution?
   4. The opposition is not the enemy but the mission field
2. Make a defense
   1. *Defense* (apologia)—verbal defence, speech in defence; a reasoned statement or argument[[5]](#footnote-6)
   2. From which we get the word: apologetics
   3. Often used in a judicial courtroom setting

**Acts 25:16**—*I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.*

**2 Timothy 4:16***—At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.*

* 1. Also used in a less formal way about responding to those who question

**Philippians 1:16**—*the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel*

1. Always
   1. The preparedness and readiness to speak
   2. Given any situation or circumstance
   3. Is that your mindset?
2. *everyone who asks you to give an account*
   1. *Account* (logos)—of speech: a word, uttered by a living voice, embodies a conception or idea; what someone has said[[6]](#footnote-7)
   2. Saying the right thing at the right time
   3. We are to witness, or testify, or give an account
   4. When someone asks about the gospel (or your life and a gospel opportunity is present), are you ready?
3. *for the hope that is in you*
   1. Here the gospel is presented as “*the hope*”
   2. What is the hope that believers have?
      1. They are the promises that God makes to His own
      2. It is the outcome of our faith
      3. It is salvation; it is the gift of eternal life with God
      4. There are eternal implications to our suffering well and honoring Christ in the process that far exceed the temporary difficulty (momentary light affliction – **2 Cor 4:17-18**)
   3. And this glorious hope is in you
      1. What a staggering reality
      2. The eternal, transcendent, holy God lives within the believers
      3. God takes up residency within the Christian
4. *yet with gentleness and reverence*
   1. Firmly held and deeply resolved convictions does not equate to mean, rude, insensitive, or uncaring behavior
   2. There is no room for anything but Christlikeness in our behavior
   3. *Gentleness* (prautēs)—mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness[[7]](#footnote-8)
      1. The meaning is not taken in the sense of weakenss but in the sense of not being dominate or overbearing[[8]](#footnote-9)
      2. Paul speaks of the need for our response to every situation as speaking the truth in love

**Ephesians 4:15***—but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ*

**2 Corinthians 10:1a***—Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ…*

* 1. *Reverence (*phobos)—fear, dread, terror; that which strikes terror[[9]](#footnote-10)
     1. We are to have a deep regard for God and His revealed truth
     2. If that is lacking and their faith is not clearly communicated, it can undermine their witness

1. **Good conscience**

***16****and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.*

When you believe everything is under the control of God, even opposition and disaster, you can face the future with confidence and hope. [[10]](#footnote-11)

1. *Conscience*—the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other[[11]](#footnote-12)
   1. The conscience is the divinely-placed internal mechanism that either accuses or excuses a person, acting as a means of conviction or affirmation.[[12]](#footnote-13)
   2. The conscience is not infallible
   3. It is neither the voice or God, nor His moral law
2. *Keep a good conscience* is meaning that we hold ourselves to the highest level of obedience to all of God’s word
   1. Believers should constantly fill their minds with the truths (moral code) from scripture
   2. Those truths will call the believer to obedience to those truths

**1 Timothy 1:5, 19**—*But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith…****19****keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.*

**1 Timothy 3:9***—but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

**1 Peter 3:16***—and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.*

**Acts 23:1***—Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”*

**2 Timothy 1:3***—I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.*

**Hebrews 13:18***—Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.*

* 1. At salvation, God cleanses the conscience from its lifelong accumulation of guilt, shame, and self-contempt.

**Hebrews 9:14***—how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

**Hebrews 10:22***—let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

* 1. The cleansed conscience no longer accuses because of the forgives of past sins which are forgiven

**Psalms 32:5***—I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.*

**Colossians 1:14***—in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**1 John 1:9***—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

* + 1. We win the battle of holiness on the inside where the conscience works

**Acts 23:1***—Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”*

**2 Timothy 1:3, 5***—I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day…****5****For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.*

* + 1. Christians are to maintain a pure conscience
    2. Conversely, an impure conscience (because of unconfessed/unrepentant sins) is not only uncomfortable, but will struggle to withstand the stress from trials and persecution

**Genesis 42:21***—Then they said to one another, “Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.”*

**2 Samuel 24:10***—Now David’s heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.”*

**Acts 2:37***—this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

1. *Regarding the things in which they are slandered*

**Acts 24:16***—In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.*

**2 Corinthians 1:12***—For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.*

1. *Slandered* (katalaleō)—to speak against one, to criminate, traduce (speak badly of or tell lies about (someone) so as to damage their reputation.)[[13]](#footnote-14)
   1. Even though they may be falsely slandered; the evidence of their good behavior (and therefore a good conscience) will be deemed meritless
   2. Additionally, they have a conscience at rest
   3. They are untroubled by guilt
2. Revile (epēreazō)—to insult; treat abusively, use despitefully; to threaten[[14]](#footnote-15)
3. *Put to shame*
   1. The reviler’s intent is to harm the one doing good
   2. The “shamer” becomes the shamed

**Conclusion**

Difficulty and adversity is a reality of life. Suffering for the cause of Christ is a spiritual privilege for believers. I pray that in the midst of the suffering, we honor the one who is controlling all things and allowing it for our good and His glory.

**1 Corinthians 10:13***—No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

***Romans 8:28****—And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

**Notes**

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**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

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John MacArthur, Securities Against a Hostile World, 1 Peter 3:13-17, Sept 24, 1989, gty.org

John MacArthur, Finding Security in This Troubled World, 1 Peter 3:13-17, May 12, 2013, gty.org

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. Strong’s G3107 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Strong’s G5015 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. MacArthur, 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Strong’s G37 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Strong’s G627 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Strong’s G3056 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Strong’s G4240 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. MacArthur, 201 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Strong’s G4501 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. DeHaan, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Strong’s G4893 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. MacArthur, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Strong’s G1908 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)