

The Formula to Christian Weirdness

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[0:00] 1 Peter, chapter 3, 1 Peter 3. If you're visiting with us, or you're pulling that Bible out, you can, in the seat in front of you, seat pocket in front of you, go to page 182 towards the back of that Bible.

182, 1 Peter 3. 1 Peter 3, we're going to study verses 13 through 18 this morning.

13 through 18. As I normally do, I'll read the passage and then we'll begin.

1 Peter 3, 13 through 18. And who is there to harm you? If you're zealous for what is good, even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.

But do not fear their fear, and do not be troubled. But sanctify the Christ's Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and fear, having a good conscience, so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.

[1:36] For it is better, if the will of God wills it, that you suffer for doing what is good, rather than for doing what is evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, just for unjust, in order that He might bring you to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.

There's been all kinds of responses from the results of the election almost two weeks ago. You might be saying, oh man, not this. But I found a web article that's entitled, American Women Are Suffering from Trump Traumatic Stress Disorder.

And being very serious, Sarah Jones, Thursday, November 10th, on Politicus USA, said this, quote, since Donald Trump won his bid for the White House, the women of America have been suffering Trump Traumatic Stress Disorder.

I wish I were kidding, but I'm not. This is real and it's serious. At first I thought it was just me, but then all of my friends told me they were too, they too were unable to stop crying and in between crying were throwing up or so nauseated they couldn't eat.

[3:03] They can't sleep. They're having nightmares about Trump. I thought this was a joke. And then I kept reading the article and they were serious. Now there were others that were more satirical in nature.

Quote, are you suffering from Trump Acceptance Resistance Disorder? TARD? This was a joke.

Quote, people with TARD are unwilling or unable to accept reality despite irrefutable evidence.

And then the article goes on. Well, one thing is clear. Suffering is not a good thing.

Right? Everyone can agree on that. Nobody wants to suffer. Nobody wants TARD, I guess.

But nobody wants post-traumatic stress disorder. Sometimes I think my father suffered from that.

They didn't have a term for it. He just came back from war and you just had to deal with life.

[4:09] Nobody wants that. Nobody wants to suffer. Nobody wants to suffer from persecution either, do they? What if I told you that it's a blessing?

What if I told you that suffering leads to blessing? What if I told you that suffering for the sake of righteousness actually leads to God blessing you?

By God's grace, because of God's grace, be wise when some weirdos in this wicked world. That's Peter's point in this book.

And today, he gives us the formula for Christian weirdness. The formula is suffering leads to blessing.

The formula for Christian weirdness, suffering leads to blessing. What will classify you as an absolute nutcase is if you really believe this.

[5:26] in a statement, suffering for the sake of righteousness leads to God's blessing.

Short and sweet. I'll give you some more to unpack that for you. But if we believe this, then we've really lost it.

But it's true, because that's exactly what happened to Jesus, not just for His blessing, but then it's for our blessing. We get blessed.

Because we get brought to God. I mean, that's the essence of the gospel. It's true, because that's exactly what happened to Jesus.

And actually, I'll begin to state a case for you for next week's message, it actually also happened to Noah. Same thing. If we suffer for having good conduct in Christ, and I specify that, because Peter does, on purpose, we should sanctify Christ by speaking Christ, fearing Christ, living like Christ, because suffering for good leads to God's blessing and vindication.

[6:46] That's the point of verses 13 through 18 right there, that statement. If we suffer for having good conduct in Christ, so how do we respond to that?

We should sanctify Christ by speaking Him, fearing Him, and living like Him. What's the motivation? What's the reason? Because suffering for good leads to God's blessing and will lead to His vindication.

Another way to put it, God will bless and vindicate us if we suffer for having good conduct in Christ. So there's no need to fear. Or be troubled by people, by our persecutors, or even by suffering itself. Instead, speak the gospel and live wise, winsome lives for Christ. There's another way to put it.

We're called to be wise, winsome weirdos in this wicked world by the way we live our lives.

We live so different from our culture. so that our adversaries may see our good conduct and they'll glorify God. Some may even respond to the gospel.

[8:01] And this conduct is sometimes done within the context of unjust suffering. Unjust suffering, the emphasis we'll see here is persecution. Those who persecute us for our faith, but also suffering that happens that's not directly as a result of something that you've done.

I mean, you get told you have cancer. You get told that you're going to lose your job. You get told that your health is now spiraling downward.

Something's happened in your family. Anything. A family member gets hit by a car or something.

Any type of suffering that happens that's quote unquote unjust.

Look, God never said He would shield us from the external causes that may bring suffering. He never said He's going to keep that from us. But, He did say He will stand with us supporting us and encouraging us to continue to live and proclaim the gospel in the midst of that difficult persecution or hard, tough trials and then you get blessed for it.

He'll give you a blessing. Notice how He begins though. Verse 13. Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous or you become zealous for what is good?

[9:34] Who will harm or who is going to harm us if we're zealous or if we're eager to do good? Expect an answer? No one!

I mean, Peter's saying, look, even pagans, just absolute God haters, will not persecute someone for doing what is good and right.

This is why He mentioned in chapter 2 verse 11 and 12, keep your conduct excellent among the unsaved. Because in the thing in which they're slandering you, they may be put to shame because they see this behavior in you, they observe it and they glorify God.

It can bring an opportunity by which they respond to the gospel because they see you living out the gospel in your life. They see us as a church living out the gospel.

people. They see, there's something different about these people. It's attractive. It's winsome. And that's why He even mentioned that if you want to have a loved life, you want to see good days, chapter 3, verse 10, you'll live like this.

[10:52] There's benefit. Couple that with verse 17. Notice verse 17. It's better, notice the phrase, if God should will it so. Literally, if the will of God wills.

Why? Why does He say that? Because it may be God's will for us to suffer for doing what is right or good. But not necessarily. Normally, we won't face suffering if you're doing good or you're living for the sake of righteousness in Christ.

Normally, Peter's saying that doesn't happen. I mean, what police officer is going to pull you over and say, you know what? You're going the speed limit. What's wrong with you?

Although, they will pull you over if you're going below the speed limit. They will. They pulled over my wife. I didn't know the speed limit. That's 50 mile road. Lady, why are you going 25? I am sorry,

officer.

I mean, okay. Okay. So, I mean, what are they going to do? I mean, if you're a good citizen, quote unquote, they're not going to go slap you.

[11:56] Normally, they won't do that. That's what Peter's saying. Okay, well, what do we do, though? How do we face persecution or unjust suffering when it does happen?

Have the mindset. Suffering for righteousness leads to blessing. The formula, suffering leads to blessing. Verse 14, notice how he begins. But, even if, there's a possibility, you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of doing what's right.

This is part of the Christian calling. Chapter 2, verse 21, he says, you are blessed. So, if we live for the sake of righteousness, but are persecuted or harmed, harmed, because of that, God will bless us.

He mentioned that in chapter 2, verse 20. If you're doing what's good, doing what's right, and you suffer, patiently enduring it, this is grace with God.

Here, he says, you're blessed. So, and, you know, there's the, what does blessed mean? It can mean praise, it can mean benefit, it can mean happy. Will you benefit?

[13:13] Yeah, maybe. Is it praise? I don't know. It seems kind of odd. But it seems more like he's saying, you will be satisfyingly joyful.

You have happiness. There's also the fact that God will benefit you, which we'll look at that in a second. So, he's saying this.

It's true, some Christians will suffer for doing what's good. Persecuted for the sake of righteousness. facing abuse from non-Christians, even Christians.

Yeah? Yet, in Christ, we find true happiness. Remember chapter 1, verse 8? Though you don't see him, you love him.

Though you don't see him now, but you are, because you're believing in him, you have inexpressible joy. they cannot ultimately injure us.

[14:15] Because life is Christ, and death, that just merely puts me in a place that I want to be anyways. Right?

If we end up suffering unjustly, for doing what is good, God promises he will bless us.

Not taking away the suffering, say that, but he'll bless. Think about it. Paul said this, if God is for us, who can be against us?

John Knox said this, quote, with God in his side, man is always in the majority. If we do evil and someone harms us, we have only ourselves to blame.

Right? But, if we do good and harm comes, God is with us, he strengthens us, he'll bless us. That's the formula. So, don't fear.

[15:18] Or be disturbed. Or be troubled. Verse 14. Don't fear their intimidation. Literally, don't fear their fear. And don't be troubled.

Don't fear their fear or intimidation. Don't be, the word means shaken, agitated, troubled by their intimidation. Don't be agitated by that.

Don't be troubled. Don't be shaken. When they're trying to put fear into you because you're, you're trying to have good conduct in Christ.

They're trying to demean you and disgrace you and shame you and that. He says, don't, don't let that bother you. he's quoting from Isaiah chapter 8 verse 12 and 13 I think some of your Bibles might have that capitalized Isaiah the Lord speaking through Isaiah the Lord spoke to me he said you're not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it it is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy and he shall be your fear and he shall be your dread that's why in just a moment we're going to look at how he says you sanctify Christ by speaking Christ, fearing Christ and living Christ don't fear them, fear Christ don't fear people, fear God the Lord called Isaiah to tell the people to fear him

Peter picks up this command ascribing to Jesus deity and says don't fear people but fear God, fear Christ or in other words the next point sanctify Christ by speaking Christ, fearing Christ and living Christ sanctify Lord the Christ or the Christ Lord in contrast to fearing our persecutors those who may harm us for doing good fear should be directed to the Christ Lord and here when he says sanctify sanctify means to be holy not in the sense of making Christ holy we don't make Christ holy he just is holy the idea is declaring or treating him holy accord him the proper place in your life Christian does Jesus have the proper place in your life he's the one who is holy he's the one whom

you should fear he's the one whom you should dread not people not our persecutors not even the suffering that you're facing itself not any of that you dread Christ you love Christ you fear Christ notice he says

[18:25] Christ the Christ Lord in your hearts the wellspring of life says the writer of Proverbs chapter 4 verse 23 see suffering suffering shouldn't bother us because we have dedicated our entire lives to Christ Jesus that's the mindset I'm just going to get blessed so bring it on don't fear them in other words acknowledge God's excuse me Christ's holiness and authority in your life in your lives we are called to honor trust and obey Lord the Christ that's what he means by sanctify always ready to speak and live out the gospel word to those who persecute us or harm us for doing good for righteousness sake so we truly trust Christ we have inward confidence in Christ and we have the will to obey Christ not wanting to dishonor Christ in any way that's our thinking and that's why he says you sanctify Christ and how are you going to do that how is it going to show itself by first speaking Christ always ready next part of verse 15 always ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you you sanctify Christ how you're ready to speak Christ speak the gospel always ready he says there's a sense of urgency because the opportunities to give the gospel usually are unexpected they come at you and you you'll walk away you went

I am such an idiot I could have given that person the gospel there was an open door what was I thinking I wasn't thinking right you've had that happen I've had that happen numerous times to me frustrates the dickens out of me if we're not prepared to answer we can miss the opportunity to give the truth and so this you're sanctifying Christ by speaking Christ and the purpose so you can have a defense defense is the Greek or apologia whether in a formal or informal situation whether you're actually in a court scene or it's in your backyard with your neighbor we should be prepared to defend the gospel tell you what living in a pagan society it puts you on trial every day you always feel like you're on trial to give a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account to give a reason or to give an answer we must always be ready to speak to the unsaved about the gospel so we probably should know the gospel that's probably a good idea what is the gospel

God man Jesus respond God is holy and just our creator he's not obligated to us we are totally obligated to him humans we are sinners we've rebelled against him and broken his law we deserve his judgment we are totally obligated to him but God is also love he's righteous and just but he's love and he's merciful and gracious God the son the second person of the trinity took on flesh lived perfectly was crucified suffered and died upon the cross and yet was resurrected as Jesus response repent turn away from your sin and put your trust in Jesus Christ alone that's the gospel we should know the gospel and then pray Lord make me witty and clever to proclaim this gospel to be ready to make a defense everyone who asks me to give an answer or reason for the account notice he says for the account for the given account for the hope that is in you hope is given to us in God he said that in chapter 1 hope is a factual reality it's not

I hope it doesn't rain today because I already washed my cars that's true no it's not like that it's hope is a factual reality our lives are so drastically different that they ask us about this hope this factual reality we have in the Lord Jesus Christ it's future expectation it's going to happen we have patient confident expectant trust in the Lord so we're speaking Christ and notice how do we give an account we speak with gentleness he says but with gentleness or courtesy or graciousness or meekness not hurtful slander I was on Friday and Jerome it was witty and yet I think it was kind of strong although she didn't respond in a negative way if I had a nickel every time someone said this to me me and all of us can retire tomorrow that's how much money I can get from this statement you ever heard this

I don't want any organized religion so I said why no I don't want any organized religion oh okay I'm sorry would you rather have disorganized religion and that's exactly there was a group of us and they all started laughing and I kind of went oh maybe that wasn't so gentle so don't follow my pattern kind of felt bad but there was no negative response to that then it was kind of well what I mean is anyways she said that well what I mean is interesting side note this is for free you know we don't live that way do you want a disorganized way of driving no I'd like to have organized driving how about you I would I don't want somebody driving on the right hand side of the road when I'm trying to drive on my hand side of the road wouldn't you want organized driving

[25:30] I do yeah I don't want somebody driving 200 miles an hour on my side of the road we don't live that way anyways I was going to go there with her but anyways we must hold our

orthodoxy in humility yes Christian we are right but not pridefully so yes we are right but not pridefully so we hold our orthodoxy with humility and notice he says but with gentleness and reverence in the new American standard excuse me the Greek word is actually phobos and remember class when Peter uses phobos it's in reference to fearing God not people when Peter in his first

Peter this first Peter letter when he uses the word phobos the Greek word phobos meaning fear it's directed to God not to people so what he's saying is you're gentle with the people but you're fearing Christ that's where fearing Christ comes in we speak Christ and we fear Christ we don't fear them we fear God we fear God not those who persecute us for doing righteousness we speak the gospel word with gentleness fearing God not them verse 16 having a good conscience which he'll describe in the next few phrases it's good conduct in Christ our lives are oriented towards God so that our consciences are clear with lives that please him we can sincerely and honestly say we live our lives for his glory and the times where I don't because there's many times that I don't praise him for his grace that's why

Jesus had to die yes you're looking at a hypocrite and I'm looking at hypocrites as well but we stand before a God who brings forgiveness and grace notice once again our relationship to God and Christ Jesus it motivates us to have this good conduct it motivates us to have this good behavior it motivates us to sanctify Christ and speaking Christ and we fear him and we speak graciously to other people and notice the purpose that he gives here for doing this so that verse 16 and the thing in which you are slandered in that situation in which they slander you or they abuse you those who revile or malign your good conduct in Christ notice the parameters this is how we live good conduct in Christ this is what it means to live for the sake of righteousness it's living for Christ fearing Christ we have a relationship with Jesus we're living how we live they may be put to shame or the word means disgraced they're disgraced the very way we live our life the very way we live which is drastically different from them it shames hostile people shames them now when will they be shamed now or at judgment day it seems like now but even more so is it true they will be ashamed on judgment day because everything will be revealed right but we live such good lives now that they may be shamed or disgraced and there may be an opportunity where as we're speaking Christ to them and we're fearing Christ having sanctified

Christ in our lives they respond to the gospel so all this all this why what's what's the reason behind this verse 17 why because it's better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil it's better to suffer for good conduct rather than suffering for doing evil he says or to suffer doing good is better than to suffer for doing evil he talks about that in chapter 2 verse 20 and notice suffering is under God's sovereign control if God should will it so or if the will of God wills it may be it may be God's will for us to suffer for doing what is right his will is for us to do what is good what's right even if this results in suffering rather than to do what is evil that's his will besides if we endure through this wrongful suffering it may become a powerful opportunity to proclaim the gospel to someone where you can preach

[31:01] Christ when we live for Christ and are subject to unjust suffering we can have a guilt free conscience and entrust ourselves to God knowing that he wants us to continue to do what's good and suffer for it so the first reason is because it's better to suffer for doing what's good but then he gives a second reason that's why verse 17 starts with 4 and verse 18 starts with 4 verse 17 starts with guard in the Greek and verse 18 starts with 4 and this is a hati which means here's the basis here's an even greater basis for all of this that we're talking about because Christ's suffering led to his blessing and our blessing so here's the driving point of everything that he's just told us why does suffering lead to blessing what's going on here is because for

Christ for Jesus Christ he did the same thing and not only was he blessed but then he got to bless others us his people notice what he says for Christ also suffered for sins once for all just for unjust in order that he might bring us to God now let me unpack this this is a transition verse it connects with 13 through 17 and connects us to 19 through 22 which that's going to be a doozy next week that'll be fun the whole focus though in this section is Jesus Christ his suffering to exaltation so let me first unpack some of these words as well I think your new American standard Bibles have for Christ also died ESV has for Christ also suffered why the difference some manuscripts have suffered other manuscripts have died for all you techies out there it seems better given the immediate and larger context of Peter's letter that it would be

Christ suffered rather than died scribes would have altered suffered to died rather than vice versa but either way it doesn't change the meaning does it no it doesn't notice for Christ also suffered the correlation is that suffering is the path to glory the point is not that we imitate Christ's suffering that's not the point he's not saying that the point is not that we imitate Christ's suffering the point is he assures us that Christ overcomes suffering and reigns supreme the way of suffering leads to blessing and God's vindication Jesus Christ is example of that it is mandated to us to keep speaking and living out the gospel word just like

Jesus did just like Noah did because he's going to give Noah as another example of this next week 19-22 excuse me did I say Moses it's a Noah right Noah Noah did the same thing Noah did this he suffered he was doing righteousness he was doing what was right he was doing what was good he suffered for it and yet he was blessed in the midst of the judgment he was being blessed because he was in a boat with a bunch of sticky animals that ain't no paradise that's why that man was still suffering nasty the path of suffering is leading to blessing that was the path Jesus called his followers to take if anyone wishes to come after me let him deny himself take up his cupcake and follow me oh wait no that's that's probably the wrong version take up his cross and follow me the paradox he who loses his life for my sake will find it suffering leads to blessing followers of Christ just like

Noah will have to tread the same path of suffering as they speak and live the truth and since Noah was vindicated by God saved Christ was vindicated by God resurrected so we will be vindicated by God and in the end we will be saved that's the ultimate blessing notice again Christ also suffered for sins once for all in other words suffering is finished for all time and he did this for sins on behalf of sins here you have vicarious or substitutionary atonement Christ suffered on behalf of the sins of another he died for his people for that's the exact meaning of vicarious instead of hell

[36:46] Christ suffered on behalf of us for all those that would turn and trust in Christ that's who he did it for an actual salvation as he was hanging on the cross and notice how he explains that even more just for unjust it's not just talking about factual stuff oh now it's personal because now it's a righteous man for unrighteous people people full of sin it's very clear that Jesus is the righteous one and we're the unrighteous ones and notice the purpose here's here's the blessing that we get now in order that he may bring you to

God some versions have you others have us either way means the same so Christ's suffering is not an example for us to follow in this passage but as a way to lead us or bring us to God there's the blessing to have fellowship with God himself a relationship that was marred, broken and wrecked by our sin but Jesus' suffering deals with our sin and brings us to God to enjoy his presence and have fellowship with him just like it was in Eden in the garden fellowship communion connection a relationship with God John Piper says this quote the gospel is the enjoyment of fellowship with God himself

God is the gospel I mean if you ask someone would you want to if you could go to heaven and you have the body that you've always wanted the hair that you've always wanted the eyebrows you've always wanted you know the calf that you've always wanted you know you know everything is perfect for you great relationships but God wasn't there would you still want heaven? that's the whole point of heaven I mean what does Jesus say? this is eternal life where you can have the body that you've always wanted John 17:3 this is eternal life that they might know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent heaven is a relationship why do you want forgiveness? why do you want restoration? why do you want freedom from sin? why do you want to be justified? why do you want the gift of eternal life? is it because you want to enjoy God?

[40:16] is it because you want to be brought near to God? let me put it in a negative way if you only believe in Jesus to get out of hell then you do not truly believe in Jesus the purpose is not to get out of hell the purpose is communion with God that's the blessing you get now John Piper again quote the gospel love God gives is ultimately the gift of himself this is what we're made for this is what we lost in our sin this is what Christ came to restore end quote there's the blessing suffering leads to blessing there's the formula and then he says how Jesus did this or what caused to bring us to God verse 18 having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit what does he mean by this?

the meaning is put to death in the realm of the flesh but made alive in the realm of the Holy Spirit spirit referring to the spirit another way to put it he moved from an earthly existence to a resurrected existence Christ now lives as a resurrected person in the realm of the spirit the flesh means the

human sphere of existence the spirit is the spiritual sphere or in the realm of the spirit and his activity it's lasting it's eternal that's how Christ did this or this is what caused us to be brought to God what caused us to be brought to God he was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit that's the cause it brings us to God so this formula of suffering leading to blessing suffering for doing what is good and right that is good conduct in Christ it leads to God's blessing and you know how we know this is true because it happened to Jesus himself that's what we can hold on to that is the foundation of everything that he said since chapter 1 if we suffer for having good conduct in Christ we should sanctify Christ by speaking Christ fearing Christ living like Christ because suffering for good leads to God's blessing and vindication it happened to Jesus are you going to follow him?

it happened to our Lord are you going to follow him? not in the sense of we're going to suffer for sins but in the sense of if you follow Christ you will suffer but as he was blessed and he gives the blessing so you will be blessed we could even say we give a blessing to others too because we give them the gospel I wish they can get a blessing Father thank you thank you for Christ our Lord thank you thank you that we have forgiveness thank you that we have justification thank you that we're given eternal life but thank you as we come to this week thank you that we are no longer your enemies we are your friends reconciliation relationship communion connection to you Father we have your presence we've been brought near thank you Jesus Christ oh let us be a people who speak you fear you and live out you oh Christ we glory we glory in you

Redeemer take some time a few moments a few moments of silence to ponder to reflect what we've seen in God's word take time to praise the Lord for the blessing of the gospel maybe you want to pray for a person you know that does not know Christ that you would speak Christ into their lives take some time just between you and the Lord a few moments and then we'll to a time of giving with our last two songs in closing prayer we will humble as long as we thank you my last one and then we'll to be