

A Family Resemblance

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 August 2026

Preacher: Tyler Bittner

[0:00] We're going to get back in our series here in this little letter that Peter wrote to those that are scattered and enjoying this letter.

I hope that you are as well. Brother, can you turn me down just a tad? I feel a little louder than I should. But it's good to be here. Thanks for coming tonight. I know that some of you aren't able to stay, but if you are, we'd love for you to stay afterwards and just eat some cereal.

You say, I don't like cereal. That's your own problem, but you can stay and hang out with us, Justin. And so we can do those things and just enjoy some time together as a church family. A good opportunity just to fellowship a little bit.

And excited about this message this evening here in the epistle of 1 Peter, chapter number 3. You found your place. We're going to read verses 8 down through verse number 12. The Bible says this. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. Not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrawise blessing.

[1:00] Knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.

Let him eschew evil and do good. Let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

So here in 1 Peter, chapter 3, we see that Peter's kind of bringing this section to a close that he started here in the middle part of chapter number 2. And he's reminding us that we're living as pilgrims.

And he's kind of dealt with different situations. And he's going to kind of wrap it all up and say, hey, this is what a Christian looks like. This is how we live life in the family of God. This is how a church operates and what it should look like to the outside world and to those that are even in here in the church family.

So that's what we're going to look at tonight. We're going to talk about this, a family resemblance. That we should resemble somebody. And that somebody's Jesus Christ. And that's what the world needs to see. So let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask him for help tonight.

[2:09] And then we'll jump right in. Father, thank you for this opportunity that we can gather here. Thankful for the songs once again about the cross. And I'm thankful for what you did for me on the cross of Calvary. And I'm sure everybody in here is the same way.

If there is somebody that doesn't know you as their Savior, Lord, that today, this evening, would be that day of salvation. Lord, I pray you'd be with me, that you would just help me. Lord, give me the strength. Lord, give me the words to say that it would be a help to these people tonight.

We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. You know, we all have that moment in our life where we try to avoid it. We try to avoid it. We try to act like it's not there.

We adamantly oppose it. But then you realize you are your parents. It just comes in waves. And it hits you at different times and in different situations.

And we were looking through some of the photos that we took on vacation. And it was just, we're just scrolling through. And Renee's showing us all. And we're looking. And then we come to this one photo. And it was like I was looking at my dad when he was 40 with me.

[3:09] And it was just, you ever had those moments where it just hits you? And I told her, I said, oh my goodness gracious. And I even remember what I was saying. I was saying something that my dad would say. I'm like, this is not great.

I was like, let's delete this photo. But, you know, you see it. And sometimes even as you live with your family, you live with your spouse. I mean, you see older couples that have been married forever.

They just look like each other. I mean, they start to resemble each other in so many different ways. And sometimes it's physical. And, I mean, you see a father and a son standing together. And you think to yourself, you never met them from Adam.

But you're like, there's no doubt they're related. I mean, you can just see it there. Sometimes it's the way that people laugh and the expressions they use, the mannerisms that you pick up from one another.

I'm sure you've heard it. You've said it to other people. You know, I remember we'd go and visit my grandparents in my dad's hometown. And they'd say, you act just like your dad. And, you know, or sometimes you sound just like your mother.

[4:05] And, you know, we try to push it back. But there's a reason that happens. Because families share a resemblance. They share commonalities. They share mannerisms. You spend so much time together.

And then the more you live together, the more that you're around each other, the simple fact is you're going to reflect one another. But Peter's going to remind us, and he's kind of been reminding us through this letter already, that that's how our spiritual life should be as well.

That we are a church family. We're not just a group of people that gather once in a while. No, God has placed us within this body of Christ. He has placed us within this local church.

And if somebody walked into our church for the first time, there should be some things they notice right off the bat. There should be some family resemblances. And the most important thing they should see is, hey, these people, they kind of act like they like to be here.

They kind of enjoy each other's company. And they should be able to see it. Why? Because we should have a joyful spirit about us. We should be thankful that we can gather and we can worship Christ.

[5:08] Because that's who we should all resemble. They may not know why we're all so excited. But here's the reason why. Because Jesus loves us. Jesus died for us. Jesus changed our life. That's what Peter's going to show us here in this text.

See, as we've been walking through this little letter, Peter's been teaching us what it means to live as pilgrims in a world that is not our home. And really, since the middle part of chapter number two, he's reminded us that our heavenly citizenship should shape our earthly relationships.

No matter what situation it is. And he dealt with how Christians should respond to the government. How we should respond in difficult workplaces. He was talking to servants, but he's really just talking to people that are in difficult situations.

And maybe bosses that aren't kind. How do we respond? The last couple weeks, he showed us how wives ought to honor Christ in marriage. And how husbands ought to honor Christ in marriage. A lot of these relationships that we are going to face every single day. And now he's coming here in verse number eight in a classic preacher movie. He says, finally. And he's still got two and a half chapters left. I appreciate Peter and Paul for those kind of things.

[6:19] They say it and then they just keep writing. But he's not ending the letter when he says, finally. He's bringing this section, this idea of submission and living a life that is visible to others for the cause of Christ.

He wants us to see how that looks as a whole. Because he's kind of dealt with very specific situations. But now he's gathering everything that he's been teaching. And he's kind of widening the application.

And he's saying, hey, this isn't just for husbands and wives or people that are employees or employers. No, this is how every follower of Jesus should live their life. It should be here within the church.

But it should be also outside of these walls and in our homes and in our relationships. Because you remember Peter's writing to these people that are scattered. People that are all over the world because of the persecution.

But he has a burden because the world is constantly seeing division. And that's not just a first century problem. That's the same problem we face today. The world is constantly seeing division.

[7:19] And they've seen enough anger. And they've seen enough selfishness. And they've seen enough bitterness. And he says, listen, when they look at you, they ought to see something

different. When they look at the church of God, they should see something different.

When they look at a Christian, they ought to see Jesus. That's what Peter's bringing them to this point. One preacher said it like this. The world needs to see Christianity. Not buildings, not programs, not successes.

But just genuine Christian living. I think that's what the world does need to see. They need to see what an authentic Christian looks like. Because a lot of times the world has a very bad representation of what a Christian is.

It's somebody that said something but lived a completely different way. And what Peter's saying, these are some things that need to be evident in our life if we're going to be followers of Christ.

Because our greatest testimony is not merely what we say we are, but it's how we live.

It's how we treat one another. So kind of the big idea of the text as we get into it is this. Is the gospel, it doesn't merely just prepare us for heaven someday. No, it changes the way that we live in God's family today.

[8:22] That we need to be reminded of that. So we're taking notes, we're going to answer this question. If Jesus has changed us on the inside. If the gospel has changed our life completely. What should that look like on the outside?

What does that look like in real time? How does it look today? How's it going to look in your life this week? The first thing that we see is found here in verse number 8. Is that we are to love like Christ. Verse number 8, he says this, Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Love as brethren. Be pitiful. Be courteous. In this single sentence, he gives us five characteristics, five marks that should be on every believer's life.

Now, much like the Beatitudes, these aren't personality traits. Sometimes we read the Beatitudes, I mean, I can do this one, but that's just not my disposition.

That's not my personality. That's not what Peter's saying. That's not what Jesus is saying. These aren't suggestions and the ones that are easy for you, then apply them to your life. And the other ones, somebody else can take care of that.

[9:27] Let me say, no, this needs to be a characteristic of your life. The other ones, of how you live. And here's what they are. They're part of that family resemblance. The closer you are to Christ, the closer you are to one another, these should be things that are coming out.

That people get around you, they begin to realize, man, I need that in my life. And as we walk through these little snippets that Peter gives us, I want us to notice how every one of them points us away from ourselves and towards other people.

Because that's what Jesus calls us to do. That's how Jesus lived his life. He didn't come to be ministered unto. No, he came to minister. He came to serve. He came to give his life a ransom for many.

And so the first thing that we see here in our text is Peter reminds us that we are to be united. That we are to be united. He says, finally, brethren, be ye all of one mind.

He brings this out and he's not saying that we all should think identically. Because we don't. Everybody here has different opinions and has different likes and different personalities.

[10:35] And we understand that. He's not saying that we have to all have the same preferences. And we have to be all on the same page and have the same opinions about every non-essential issue.

That's not what Peter is saying. No, unity is much different than that. Here's the unity that he wants us as believers, us as a family of God to have. A shared heart.

The heart that God has. That when we love God, we're naturally going to love people. We're going to love the things that God loves. He's talking about having a shared purpose. Listen, we can gather here for all kinds of reasons.

And I'm excited about eating cereal. I'm excited about fellowship. And I'm excited about things that God is doing in our church. But here's our purpose. To make Christ known. That's why we're here. That's the job that Christ has called us to.

It's this unity. It's this shared commitment to Jesus Christ. That's what Paul urged the Philippians there in Philippians 2. He said, be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind.

[11:37] Listen, unity is not uniformity. No, no, I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful that this is not just a machine shop and God's just trying to make us all the exact same.

No, he's given us different talents and personalities and interests and gifts. And we're one body, but we're many parts. We see that multiple times in the New Testament. Paul talks at length about that. And the church should be wonderfully diverse. I'm thankful that this church is a church. It's a multi-generational church. That we're not all just, hey, this is the age group you have to be in to be plugged in this church.

No, if you're breathing, you're welcome here. No, we need that. I'm thankful we're having all these baby showers. And then we have teenagers that are locked in and engaged here in services. I'm thankful for the young classes. I'm thankful for the older saints. Listen, we need that diversity. We need different backgrounds. The church should have different gifts.

[12 : 36] That's why God's placed you here, by the way. You're not here by accident. You're here because this is where God led you and you have a gift. And here's what he wants you to do. Use it within the body of Christ. We have different personalities.

But we are united around one Savior, one gospel, one mission. And that's what Peter's saying. He said, listen, you need to be all of one mind. Because here's the reason why.

When we're focused on the mission, then we're going to continue on the mission. Because Satan cannot destroy the church. Praise the Lord for that. Jesus said the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

But he can't destroy it from the outside. But here's what he's very good at. Dividing it from the inside. That's his kind of M.O. And what he wants to do is to render it ineffective.

Because the sad reality is, even today, all across this country, there were so-called churches meeting. But they're not really a church anymore. You've got different sects and you've got different groups and you've got this and you've got all these things.

[13 : 34] The mission, nobody really knows what it is. Here's the mission. Go ye therefore. And we have to be reminded of that truth. And one of his greatest weapons against the church and against the people of God has always been disunity.

You get a little rumbling within a church family. You get a little rumbling within a family. Things start to go sideways. And Peter's saying, listen, we're going to have some family resemblance. We need to make sure we're on the same page.

We need to be of one mind. See, healthy churches fight for unity. That's the thing we should be fighting for. That's what God wants us to be striving for.

You read John chapter 17 as Jesus is praying the prayer right before he goes to the cross. Here's what he prayed for, that we might be united. He said this, Lord, I'm praying for them.

That they would be like me and you. We'd be on the same page. Because when people walk into a church, they should know something different. They should say, hey, something different is here. Here's what it is. Jesus is alive and he's guiding our lives individually.

[14 : 33] And when we come to that realization as a church, we're going to move together as a whole. See, we're not here because we always agree and everybody loves everybody all the time.

No, we're here because Christ loves us. And because of that, we're going to do our very best to love one another. We're going to do our very best to stay on the same page. And we love Jesus more than we love getting our own way.

That is the goal that God has for us. So Peter says, here's what you need to have, some resemblance. You need to have this family resemblance of being united. Also, he wants us to be compassionate.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. The word literally means this, to suffer together.

It carries the idea of entering into another person's joy or another person's sorrow or another person's grief. See, here's what compassion does.

[15 : 31] It doesn't mean that we just remain emotionally distanced. You know, we have things in the South where we say things like this, bless their heart. You know, sometimes we say that because that means they're really dumb and they shouldn't have done that.

Sometimes there is an actual need, but we just feel better about ourselves if we say, bless their heart or I'm praying for you. And we just like kind of let it be. That's not what Peter is saying here. Being compassionate, showing compassion one of another is not just kind of remaining at arm's length. We don't say, hey, that's your problem. No, one of the wonderful things about a church family is that you step into the burden with them.

The Bible commands us in the New Testament to bear one another's burdens. To pray for one another. To lift one another up. Hey, because here's the idea. When one member hurts, the body hurts. I mean, stub your pinky toe.

Some of you probably didn't, you've not thought about your pinky toe all day. You stub it, you'll think about it. I mean, it renders you ineffective. And when one little member of our church hurts, here's what we all do.

[16 : 35] We hurt as a church body. We hurt as a church family. When one member rejoices, the family celebrates. And that's what Peter's reminding us, that we move towards each other. Because one of the greatest testimonies of a healthy church is that no one has to suffer alone, or celebrate alone, or walk through life alone.

No, we're here on the same goal and the same mission. We get to do it together. And we can have compassion one for another. So we need to be united. We need to be compassionate. And then he says this, love as brethren.

See, the church is more than an organization. It's more than a gathering. It's more than a weekly meeting, a weekend activity.

No, it's a family. And that's what Peter uses here. He intentionally uses family language. He said brethren. Brothers and sisters in Christ.

And it means that we care for one another. And we do these things. Because we know this.

Families aren't perfect. Yeah. You don't have to pretend like it is.

[17 : 38] I mean, you look at some people's Instagram and Facebook. They're like, their family's perfect. No, that's the highlight reel. Because I'm sure you have some family photos like this. We look all happy. But getting that photo was difficult.

You're going to smile. And you're going to act like you love each other. And then, like, I mean, you're storming off. I mean, we've probably all been there. Listen, families aren't perfect. Every family has disagreements. But here's what a godly family does.

Is they are committed to one another. And Peter says that should be real in your life. That should be real in your church family. That we are committed one to another. That's how we should function. That this shouldn't be a place of division. No, it ought to be a place where people come and they discover something much different than they experienced all week at work. Maybe what they experience in their home. Maybe what they experience in their neighborhoods and whatever relationships they have.

No, when they walk into the family of God, they're thinking this. I don't know what's going on here, but I want to be a part of something like this. Peter's saying that should be real in your life. That the love is not manufactured.

[18 : 40] It's not some fake smile. It doesn't mean that everybody in the church, you have to be best friends with everybody. But we understand this. That we're all in the same thing together. That we're all in the same family. And we learn to love.

We learn to grow. He goes on and says this. In the next phrase, be pitiful. The idea is tender hearted.

See, in our English language, this word has changed a lot over time. When we say, oh man, they're pitiful. You know, we would think they're weak and they're pathetic and they can't really do anything. That's not what Peter is saying here. That is not the idea behind showing pity or being pitiful. What he's describing is a heart that is tender. A heart that is merciful.

And I'm thankful for the mercies of God in my life. I'm thankful that Jesus Christ is merciful to me. I'm thankful that his mercies are new every single morning. I'm thankful that God's heart is tender towards mine.

[19 : 40] And that's the idea that he's showing. That yes, we're going to have difficulties as family. But we should be quick to forgive. We should be quick to care. And instead of becoming hardened by life or hardened by things that happen, a Christian, somebody that's in the family of God, should allow the Holy Spirit to keep their heart soft.

It's something we've got to think about. Something we've got to pray about. Because if we don't seek the Lord and we're not asking for his help, here's the reality. Our hearts can become calloused really fast. Even within the church family.

I'll be here, but I'm not saying anything to them. I mean, they took my seat one time, and I'm never going to forgive them. You know, grievous sins like that. But in all seriousness, God says a hard

heart is not something that should be cultivated in the family of God.

Do you know what a hard heart does? It builds walls. It doesn't let people in. It keeps people out. And we kind of have our little group and our little people and our little family. No, but Jesus is reminding us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through Peter that a tender heart, here's what it does.

It builds bridges. It finds opportunities to love one another. And think about Jesus. Everywhere he went, he had a tender heart. He was moved with compassion. He moved towards people.

[20:59] He had pity on them. He touched lepers. He welcomed children. He cried and wept with grieving families. His heart towards people was always tender.

And if we're going to say, I'm a follower of Christ, and he's my Savior, and I love him with all my heart, then our heart should be like his heart. It should be tender one towards another. And he says here at the end of verse number eight, he says, be courteous.

Now, this isn't just about manners. It's good to have manners. I think it still should be taught today. You know, I still ask my kids, where'd your manners go?

Did you lose them? You know, that's what my mom used to ask me all the time. She'd look at me, she's like, you better find your manners right now. It's not what he's talking about. He's not saying please and thank you are the magic words. That's not the idea behind being courteous.

The idea here is humility. That we need to be humble. We need to be humble in mind. We need to be humble in spirit. You study the New Testament, especially, you find that humility has always been one of these secret ingredients that holds Christian relationships together.

[22:06] We see that Christ was, our ultimate example, was more humble than anybody. We see that we need to live that way. Because here's what pride says. Hey, what about me?

Something happens that we don't like. Well, what about me? Hey, they recognize so and so. Well, what about me? Well, they got that. What about me? But here's what humility asks. How can I serve?

How can I be a blessing to other people? We see it all the time. We probably heard the acronym that real joy, it comes from Jesus, others, and you. That's a humble mindset. I love, I'm sure you've heard this quote before.

I don't know who it's attributed to, but it says this. Humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's not having this Eeyore syndrome. No, it's thinking of yourself less. That your mind and your life is not consumed about what I need and what can I get.

No, here's what it's about. It's about other people. It's about thinking of others in that situation. The most joyful Christians are rarely those who demand their own way. They say, hey, I deserve this.

[23:10] I need this. No, I would submit to you, and I think you would agree, that the most joyful Christians are the ones that just put others first. They just live and love like Jesus. Because they realize they're not living for the applause of man.

They're not living for what they can get from other people. They just want to serve. I mean, that's what Paul told us that Jesus did in Philippians 2, that he made himself of no reputation and humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

Even the death of the cross, he did that for us. And the idea is that if our Savior clothed himself with humility, as followers, we should clothe ourselves the same way.

That we should be courteous. We should be humble. We should be tenderhearted one towards another. So we see these qualities here, and every one of them revolves around how we treat other people.

Imagine a church where believers genuinely lived this way. Where unity replaced division. Where compassion replaced criticism. Where brotherly love, it replaced cliques.

[24:12] Where tenderness replaced harshness. And where humility replaced pride. Do you think that church would stand out a little bit? Absolutely. It should. Good. And I feel like we do a lot of things good on this list.

But here's the thing. We need to keep moving forward in it. We don't need to be comfortable like, hey, we're pretty good at this. No. That's not. Jesus didn't call us to be pretty good. He called us to follow him. And then we're pressing towards that mark.

He's the goal. He's the aim. And when someone walks into this church, they ought to encounter something different that they don't regularly experience. They may think we're weird at the beginning.

They're on to something there. But we are. I mean, Peter's already told us, hey, you're a peculiar people. It should be something different. It should be something that is enticing in the sense of, man, I want to know a little bit more about this because they seem to love each other. And some of the married couples seem to love each other. And the kids actually somewhat listen. Like, how does that happen? Here's how it happens. God gets in the middle of it. That God is the one in control.

[25 : 14] When somebody comes in this church, they ought to encounter people who genuinely look and act like Jesus. They may not know what God looks like, but they should get a real quick glance when they realize who's here.

And there's nothing within us. So Peter shows us how believers should treat one another. But here's a question. What happens when people don't treat us like that? What happens when we do the right thing and it's not reciprocated?

Here's what Peter does. He calls us to respond the same way Jesus did. Here's what he wants us to do. Bless like Christ. He wants us to have that same mindset and that same attitude. Look at verse number nine. Not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrawise blessing.

Knowing that ye are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. I mean, what happens when people don't respond to our kindness with kindness?

I mean, it probably irks you a little bit, doesn't it? Well, you know, when somebody, when you're kind to somebody and they just kind of scoff it off or don't even say anything, you're like, what? I want to ask them, hey, where's your manners?

[26 : 25] You know, that's what I want to ask them. I mean, what happens when we're insulted, when we're misunderstood, when we're criticized, when we're treated unfairly? Here's what the world screams and here's what our flesh screams, get even.

You know, we say things like this, I'm going to give them a taste of their own medicine. I mean, that's kind of, sometimes we try to act like we don't think that. I think that's pretty built into our flesh. I think that's just kind of there.

But Peter says, listen, that's not how we're called to live. That's not how God wants us to live. And in this one verse right here, Peter gives us one of the most difficult commands in the New Testament in the Christian life.

Not difficult because we don't understand it. Difficult because it's really hard to obey. It's really hard to live out in real time. Here's what he tells us. Not rendering evil for evil.

Peter says, here's what you need to do as a child of God, as a member of the family. You need to, you need to refuse retaliation. That word render, it means to repay.

[27 : 31] So Peter's just simply telling us here at the beginning of this verse, when somebody hurts you, you don't repay them with more hurt. You don't give them a taste of their own medicine. And I know that goes against our flesh.

It goes against our natural instincts. But Peter is so adamant about this because he wants us to understand this truth. We already know it, but we need to be reminded. Retaliation, it only multiplies evil.

It doesn't remove it. You know, you hit somebody, they hit you back. You don't think, well, that made me feel better. You know what you want to do? You want to hit them again. I mean, that's just kind of how it goes.

And Peter's saying, that's not how you live your life. Here's what Peter is constantly doing in this letter. Here's what the Bible constantly doing. It's just pointing us back to Jesus. You say, nobody can live this way.

Well, Jesus did. And he's calling us to live that way. He gives us the power to do it. Jesus didn't just teach this in Matthew 5. No, he did teach that. Love our enemies. Bless them that curse you.

[28 : 27] Pray for them that despitefully use you. No, he lived it out. He did those things. And he calls us to do the very same thing. And Peter goes on. And he says, and railing for railing.

Anybody's tongue, anybody's mouth ever got them in any trouble? We probably all should raise our hand. I mean, we raise both hands and our feet. What Peter's saying there is don't answer insults with insults.

You know, some of you think, well, that's my spiritual gift. My mind just works that way. And I just, oh, man, I'm really good at those things. Don't answer harsh words with harsher words. Don't answer social media attacks with another angry post.

We don't answer gossip with gossip. We don't answer sarcasm with sarcasm. You know, I love how one, I was reading the wrong commentary. It said this, just because somebody throws mud at you doesn't mean you have to pick it up and throw it back.

That's a good way to live. One of my favorite observations, and I was reading a commentator, Warren Wiersbe. He said there's three ways people can live.

[29 : 36] You can return evil for good. That's satanic. That we do evil when somebody does good. You can return good for good or evil for evil. That's human. It's just kind of how we operate.

You're nice to me, I'm nice to you. You scratch my back, we'll do those things. You cross me, I'll cross you. But to return good for evil, that's Christ-like. That's what we're called to live.

That's what Peter is reminding us. Hey, we're not to render evil for evil or railing for railing. You know, we've got to be careful how we respond to situations. Because it's naturally going to come up.

I mean, this is something I'm sure all of us struggle with. I mean, there's times you're really good. Nothing's bothering you. But somebody says just the right thing. I mean, the wrong thing at the right time. And it just sets off a spark.

I mean, it's like lighting the fuse there. I mean, have you ever noticed how quickly your tongue responds when someone hurts you? When somebody says something about you? I mean, there's no praying about it.

[30 : 33] I mean, you're unleashing. It's like a blitzkrieg coming on. I mean, sometimes before we even have thought about the words that we are saying, they're already out of our mouth. And Peter doesn't just remind us.

We see it all throughout the New Testament that the tongue is rarely just a tongue problem. It's not a speech problem. Here's what it is. It's a heart problem. It takes a temperature of what's inside. Jesus told us, See, our words just simply reveal what's going on inside. So Peter says, hey, we need to refuse retaliation.

But he doesn't just say, he doesn't say, hey, don't do that. That's bad. Stop that. No, he says, I want you to do this instead. But contrawise, blessing.

Well, you think, well, that's not what I wanted to hear. I don't like to do that. You know, I'll stop saying mean things. But I'm not going to do anything nice. Well, that's not what Jesus calls us to do.

[31 : 33] It's not how he calls us to live. This is not a natural response. Now, I would imagine we could take a poll and it would be pretty high. Our flesh doesn't want to bless our enemies. You know what our flesh wants to do?

Keep score. Just mine? Okay. No, I think that's kind of how we operate. So how can Peter, I mean, like Peter, man.

Sometimes you read this and I was kind of studying. I thought, of all people saying this, Peter. How did Peter get over this? Because I don't know if you know this. Peter liked to open his mouth and stick his foot in there.

Kind of his spiritual gift. I mean, he wasn't known for thinking before he spoke. And now he's telling us, hey, don't render evil for evil. Don't rail on somebody just because they rail on you.

No, here's what you need to do. Bless them. Think, Peter, how's that possible? Here's how it's possible. The gospel changed your life. Jesus showed up and changed everything. We don't bless people because it's a natural instinct.

[32 : 29] We bless people because Christ is transforming us from the inside out. That's how Peter can sit down here and write this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The man that couldn't control his tongue is reminding us, hey, you need to control your tongue because it's an important testimony.

It shows that you're in the family, that God is working on your heart. Because the same Savior who forgave you now empowers you to treat others with kindness and forgive them and to love them and to bless them.

Because Christianity is not about modifying our behavior. It's about allowing God to transform our hearts and our lives. That's how we can do this. Because there's no other way to say, hey, well, you know what?

That just comes naturally to me. I just want to bless people that are absolute jerks to me. Said nobody ever. But we think about our example, Jesus.

As the nails were driven through his hands, what did he say? You're going to regret this. That's not what he said. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

[33:34] We see a man that lived a life that was pleasing to God. His name was Stephen there in the book of Acts. And as they were stoning him to death, not because he did anything wrong, just because he preached the gospel to them, because he showed them who Jesus Christ was, as the stones crushed his body, he said, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

Listen, those responses don't make sense to our natural man. They don't make sense to the unsaved world. But they make perfect sense to someone whose life has been changed by Jesus Christ.

That's how we can bless other people. It's not within us, but it is now because his name is Jesus Christ. So we need to refuse retaliation. We need to return evil with a blessing.

And you say, well, I'm just really struggling how to get a hold of that. Peter tells us at the end of verse number 9, knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. Why do we bless others?

Because that's what we've been called to do. We are to let our light so shine before men that they see our good works and glorify our Father, which is in heaven. That our life is to be a signpost. Our life is to be a light pointing others.

[34:44] See, the Christian life has never been about demanding our rights. It's always been and always will be about displaying Christ in the way that we live. We don't live so others can say, wow, what a great Christian.

No, we should live in a way, we should live as a church family, and others say, I want what they have. What is it? Here's what it is. It's Jesus Christ. That's what he's reminding us to do. See, Peter reminds us that we have already received far more than we deserve.

I mean, the fact that we're here today is a miracle. But if you're saved, you know Christ is your Savior. Listen, you can look at that one situation in your life, and you know what you should be thankful for?

That God didn't repay you according to your sins. None of us would be here. None of us would be saved. You know what he did? He showed us mercy. He was all of those things that we read in verse number 8.

He didn't answer our rebellion with his wrath. He took all that wrath on himself. He bore it in his own body. He answered it with grace.

[35:48] And here's what Peter's saying. Live like that. Live like Jesus. Go treat others the same way you've been treated for Christ's sake. We see that all throughout the New Testament.

Freely you've received, freely give. That's what Peter's calling us to do. But he does, right there at the end of verse number 9, he says that you should inherit a blessing.

Now, don't misunderstand what Peter's saying. He isn't saying that we earn God's blessing by blessing other people. We're not going to go out here tonight and just start blessing people all over the place. I'm like, the more I bless, the more blessed I'm going to be.

That's not what Peter is saying. Here's what he's doing. He's reminding us who we already are. You remember the very first chapter? It's been a long time. But he opened this letter in reminding us of everything that we had in Christ.

And he reminded us of this wonderful truth, that our inheritance, it's incorruptible, it's undefiled, and it doesn't fade away. That what we have in Christ is not some earthly treasure that we're going to hold on to for a while and it's going to decay.

[36:49] No, it's eternal. It's something that we haven't even really fully grasped. And the idea is that because our future is certain and our inheritance is certain, we can live differently here on this earth.

We can live differently with our relationships and our church family. Because we know what awaits, we don't have to win every argument today. I like to win. Anybody else like to win?

Sometimes, I mean, I'm going to the death in the argument. I already know I'm lost, but I'm still trying to win. Not great, by the way. It's not a good thing.

But we don't have to get even. We don't have to fend ourselves every time somebody misunderstands us. Why? Because our future hope should change our present behavior. That's the idea that Peter's saying.

We've already received an inheritance. We may not have it all right now, but we have enough of it to understand this. My life's different. My life's not about what it used to be. And I think one of the clearest evidences that Jesus has truly changed a person is how we treat one another.

[37:57] Anybody can be kind to anybody that's kind to them. That's pretty simple. Anybody can love those who love them. Jesus said, hey, even the publicans do that. Even the Pharisees do that.

But I think the gospel is most clearly seen not in how we respond to friends and loved ones, but it's how we respond to those that are maybe enemies. Because there's going to be people that don't always appreciate your response.

There's going to be people that may misunderstand your kindness, that may continue to oppose you. But here's what Peter reminds us. Your responsibility is not to control their response. That your responsibility is to faithfully reflect the Savior.

That's our job. That's what God has called us to do. You say, preacher, why live this way? I mean, sometimes doesn't it just feel better just to let them have a piece of your mind?

Doesn't it feel better? I mean, you know, retaliation. I understand certain things, but there's got to be some different ways. Or, you know, why should we pursue peace? Here's what Peter reminds us lastly.

[39:05] Because none of this goes unnoticed. Our Heavenly Father sees it. And so as believers, as children of God, we need to live our life as we're living before Christ. Because He does see all things.

See, Peter in these last few verses, verse 10 through 12, really what he's doing is he's quoting Psalm 34. Peter gives some very tough commands. He gives some hard ways to live.

I mean, even verse number 8, they're not rendering evil for evil, but they're still hard to live that way.

But Peter doesn't appeal to us by popular opinion.

He's not saying, hey, you should do all these things because that's just the cool thing to do right now. He doesn't appeal to culture. This is so countercultural what Peter is telling us to live like. He doesn't even appeal to, well, this works for me.

This is some good advice. Now, here's what Peter appeals to in verse 10 through 12, the Word of God. He's saying, you can do this because this is what the Word of God calls us to do. And see, Peter reminds us that a life that God blesses has always looked the same.

[40:08] Whether it was David's day in Psalm 34, or it's Peter's day in the first century, or it's our day right now, God honors those who walk in His ways. That's who God's looking for.

Blessed is the man that follows the Lord. And he gives some real quick characteristics here in these closing verses of things that please God.

Number one is this, is that we guard our tongue. For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.

I would imagine everybody in this room wants to enjoy life. Everybody wants to experience good days. And Peter says, hey, those things are connected to the way that we use our words.

And that really shouldn't surprise us. And the Bible talks about this constantly in the incredible power of the tongue. James refers to the tongue as a fire, set on fire from hell.

[41:08] Proverbs tells us that death and life are in the power of the tongue. We've already mentioned that Jesus said, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. He's like, well, didn't Peter already talk about this just in the previous verse?

Yeah, he did. But Peter also knew who was reading this. And the Lord knows us. You ever have to be reminded of something over and over and over again? That we need to make sure we get a hold of this.

And he returns to our speech. You know why? Because he's writing to a people that are going through difficult times. And they've tried to be kind. And they've tried to be humble. And they've tried to be tender. And it's been met with resistance.

It's been met with cruelty. It's been met with all kinds of things. And when suffering begins to pile on, it has a way of tempting us to say things that we're going to regret later. And Peter says, we've got to be careful of that.

We can't allow the bitterness of life to control our words. And what he's reminding us is the answer is not just to say nicer things. No, the answer is to continue to let Christ work in your life.

[42:05] Continually seek him. Continually be in his word. And when we do that, people who live with hope, when we're reminded of all that we have, we're going to live a little differently.

We should. We should live differently based on our heavenly citizenship than everybody else around us. We don't have to talk like them or think like them. So he tells us to guard our tongue. But verse number 11, he tells us to pursue what is good.

Let him eschew evil and do good. Let him seek peace and ensue it. See, Peter doesn't just tell us what to avoid. He tells us what to pursue. Listen, the Christian life is not about avoiding sin.

We should strive not to sin. But if all we're trying to do is not sin, there's much more to it than that. Here's what it's about. It's about pursuing righteousness. It's about pursuing Jesus.

Sometimes we get so fixated on, I'm not going to do this. Well, what are you going to replace it with? What are you going to pursue instead of? And he reminds us, listen, peace doesn't just happen.

[43:08] Healthy relationships, whether we're in a church family, whether we're in a marriage, whether we're in workplace situations, they don't just drift towards peace. No, they require intentional effort.

That we have to move that direction. That we have to move forward. And Peter says, he doesn't say, hey, if peace happens, be thankful and enjoy it. Now, here's what he tells us.

Pursue it. Chase after it. Fight for it. And it needs to be something that we're seeking after. Sounds a lot like Jesus in Matthew 5.

Blessed are the peacemakers. For they shall be called the children of God. Listen, a peacemaker isn't somebody who ignores problems. It's not a peace at any price.

A peace at all costs. And just let's bury our head in the sand and we'll all be fine. No, they aren't people who pretend that life is all rosy all the time. No, a peacemaker is somebody who works towards reconciliation whenever possible.

[44:07] They pursue it. They make it a part of their life. And we should be known as people who pursue peace that seek after it. Why? Because we are following the prince of peace.

That should be a family resemblance that we have. Finally, Peter tells us in verse number 12 that we can rest in God's care. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers.

Peter gives this encouragement to end the passage. He says, listen, God sees. God hears. God knows. Because if we're honest, sometimes it feels like nobody notices.

Even within a church family. You quietly serve. You forgive. You refuse retaliation. You pursue peace. And it just seems like nobody even notices that I'm trying.

Nobody even noticed that I took a step and was willing to kind of let that thing slide. Here's what Peter reminds us. Your heavenly father does. He knows exactly what's going on. He knows your heart.

[45:11] And what a comfort that must have been to these first readers. To the recipients of this letter. They had been suffering and scattered all across Asia Minor thinking, man, nobody knows what's going on.

The Holy Spirit allowed Peter to write this letter and say, I know what's going on. God knows where you're at. And it's not just for these people scattered across Asia Minor. What a comfort for us today.

That you're never forgotten by God. That God sees the things you're pursuing. He sees when you try to be of one mind and compassionate and tenderhearted and humble. When you're trying to love as a family does.

But at the end of verse number 12, he says, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. See, the same God who lovingly watches over his children also stands opposed to the persistent evil that we face.

Sometimes we can fall into that place where we refuse to do these things. Here's what we are doing. We're going against God. Not a great situation. Chances aren't real good.

[46:13] In fact, they're zero. We're not going to stand against God. But we can rest. And as children of God, we can rest because God sees every injustice.

Just because you're going to try to apply these things to your life, here's what's going to happen. You're still going to be wronged. You're still going to be insulted. You're still going to be the recipient of things that you shouldn't be. You may even show kindness and tenderness and compassion to others.

