

Sanctification Towards all

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[0 : 0 0] analogy as best I understand it in order to try to think about what's happening in the book of first Peter because really the idea of the concept of sanctification can follow the analogy of two a days right if you're going to be sanctified it's like going through two a days and what that is is that it's sanctification is a process whereby you're changed you get into shape if you will and sanctification is a place where you learn instructions you learn how you're supposed to live you learn what the overall plan is of God and the third thing about sanctification is that you do it with others you cannot be sanctified by yourself you cannot be a lone Christian out there and grow in sanctification apart from the church of the living God so Peter has been writing this whole book to help Christians be prepared and ready to endure suffering and persecution and in the section we've been in he's been talking about sanctification related to our relationships because there is no greater test of your Christianity than your relationships that you have how marriage works how parenting works how the workplace works our interaction with society our interaction with one another is both the the field in which we live out sanctified lives but it's also it's also the test and so he comes to verse 8 through 12 and sort of wraps up his discussion about relationships and he makes a transition to the next part where he's going to deal specifically about missions and that kind of a thing and so he gives us basically two points that basically we're looking at how is it that we as Christians ought to treat one another within the church but then secondly how should we treat those who bring persecution to us who sin against us who bring suffering to us and so those are going to be the two points this morning how to treat Christians and how to treat persecutors and I pray that God would use this to challenge us encourage us strengthen us and so our first point then is how are we to treat Christians and that that's in verse 8 and he lays it out in verse 8 with basically five adjectives and here's the here's the verse again he says finally all of you have unity of mind sympathy brotherly love a tender heart and a humble mind what do these five things mean let's just walk through them just for a second unity of mind is being harmonious right it's the idea of having similar thoughts it's about the idea of a similar conviction of things it's not about a hive mind you know what a hive mind is you ever watch star trek the next generation you had the aliens called the Borg the Borg lived on this cube and they assimilated everyone and everything they came in contact with into their species so that they all thought exactly the same thought at the exact same time so as one was going fire they're all going fire that is not what unity of mind is we're not all just automatons connected in the brain wave so that when one person thinks one thing everybody thinks that no it's different instead it's more like the guys who came to fix my fence hurricane Harvey came through knocked down our fence and I called this crew together they came to fix my fence I paid them the money and I watched it was great 10 guys got out there and in two days replaced my 250 something linear feet of privacy fence adding on

the back side a cattle paddle fence so we could look out at the bay and they had that thing just they were just they were just popping I mean by the end of the first day every single post that was broken or still standing was ripped up new posts were in and they were ready to go and it was amazing to watch them they were all united around a common goal a common aim and that's that idea of that unity of mind as Christians we're to have a unity of mind with one another we're to think very similarly to one another but we're to use our differences in order to work together towards that common goal the second word is the word sympathy and it comes from two Greek words that basically mean to suffer together to suffer together we're to be aligned with one another so much that we suffer with each other it's a little bit like the incarnation of Christ he came to suffer with us now he also came to suffer for us but he came to understand our weaknesses that's what we're to do in sympathy towards one another we're to suffer with one another and I will just say that as I look at First Baptist Church and I've heard stories in the past and I've seen some things in you today I just want to say that I think that you do sympathize with one another I've seen I've seen how you've suffered together with one another and I'm just saying that's a good thing that's how we're to live the third thing is brotherly love brotherly love it's basically this idea of a fond affection for one another it's seeing us as family it's looking at one another saying we're family together and so we want to spend time together we want to take care of one another we want to do things together in order that we might grow together it's this it's this fond affection for one another then there's this idea of this tender heart this tender heart this tender heart is this tenderness this compassion it has to do with with your bowels okay now I'm sorry to say it that way but it's just this inner stomach thing that's going on here you know I'm talking about like you get on a roller coaster and you got inner stomach things going on you got these butterflies right before it drops you know or you're about to get up on stage and speak in front of a bunch of people and you got these butterflies going or you get that phone call about somebody you love and it's terrible news and as soon as you hang up that phone you've got this rock sitting in your stomach and it's just dread right we we feel and sometimes we physically feel these things the idea of tender heart is that I'm I'm I'm tender and ready to feel for you that I'm so connected that I'm so fond and affectionate towards you that when you hurt I hurt that when you rejoice I rejoice that when you're sad I'm sad when you need help I want to be the one to help you these are the ways that we are to act as Christians he goes on to say this last one it's this humility of mind or this humble mind a humble mind is this idea of this lowly estimate of ourselves we're not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to it's not it's not trying to insult ourselves it's not trying to disparage ourselves but it's just recognizing that there's somebody else in the world besides me when our kids were little one of the things we sought to teach them was to not walk into a room talking don't walk into a room now I don't know if you as an adult

understand and know this but none of us should ever walk into a room talking you understand why right because there's other people who are already there and they're already having a discussion and when we walk in talking we were thinking in that moment only of ourselves and not that there's somebody else doing something somebody prior to us you can't you can't think about not walking into a room talking without having to develop a humility of mind because people who walk into a room talking are only thinking about what they want to say not that there's somebody else going and doing something and so I think it's important for us as Christians to look at these five things to examine these five things and say to ourselves do we have these attitudes do we have these qualities about ourselves because we're supposed to and that's what that's as Peter is talking about our sanctification he's saying listen here's finally as Christians this is the way you ought to look well the question is is what would this look like if we lived it out is there an example is there a way to illustrate what this would look like as a total package right if you put it all together and say this is what this would look like as a total package and here's what I thought of I thought of Jesus and I thought of Jesus in a specific moment the night before he was crucified he was with his disciples in the upper room and as he was there in that upper room he recognizes and knows what's going to happen to him he has sympathy towards his disciples because he knows he's about to leave them and he knows that when the shepherd is taken the sheep will scatter he knows that many of them will walk away he matter of fact he's going to have this conversation with Peter where he says Peter you're going to be tested and he's giving Peter warning ahead of time not to deny him but then telling Peter but it's okay when when you come back you're going to be restored so you have this moment that Jesus looking at his disciples wanting to prepare them for what's coming he does this thing that we kind of don't really grasp and understand but he takes off his outer garments and he picks up a you you sit down and sort of lay down you like you probably on your left hand because the left hand is not the hands you eat with and your feet are sticking out behind you and I would lay down and show you but I don't want to freak anybody out but but your feet are behind you and if you were invited as a guest to somebody's home the lowest slave in their house would come behind you while your feet are hanging off the couch and they would remove your shoes and they would wash your feet this was the job of the lowest slave in the house and the reason they wash their feet is because they wear sandals and they walk everywhere they go so they're dirty and they're doing this as a kindness to this person so that they can be fresh and new and ready to go Jesus takes off his outer cloak gets a towel gets a basin and begins to wash the feet of his disciples he gets to Peter and Peter's just like oh no no no and Peter's confused and

Jesus explains it to him he understands that Peter doesn't get it and eventually washes Peter's feet and then when he's done he sits down and here's here's what happens next in John chapter 13 when he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place he said to them do you understand what I have done to you you call me teacher and lord and you are right for so I am if I then your lord and teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash the feet of one another for I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you you see to wash someone else's feet means to humble yourself it means to have a love for them an affection for them having tenderness and compassion for them and what they're going through and being willing to give up my rights in order to serve them now it doesn't mean that you got to start washing people's feet we're not in that culture anymore and we wear shoes and our feet don't get dirty like they used to you know but instead what does this mean there's so many ways that this could show itself it could show itself in taking someone food or giving a visit to someone it could mean giving a ride to somebody it could mean helping somebody around their house with something it could mean sitting there and crying with someone who's crying rejoicing with someone who's rejoicing it could mean taking time to really pray for one another what Peter is after in this passage he's saying listen you need to understand that you're going to have to really grow together you're going to have to have these attitudes towards one another and really come together as a family because when suffering and when persecution begins you've got to have somebody there to help you get through it how are you going to do this on your own you won't the only way to get through persecution is if we've spent the time building the relationships together having that humility of mind serving one another without that we're just a lot of individuals who when persecution starts will scatter and so I want to challenge you I want to challenge you like I challenged you before Christmas right before Christmas I challenge you to spend some time together and I want to pick that challenge back up and say that's what you need to do I want you to think about those who are in this body and say you know have I spent time with so-and-so have these two families gotten together in a while if not then figure out a way to do that find a way to get together with somebody you haven't yet to get to know one another but I want to I want to sort of kick it up just a notch I want to give you another part of this challenge and that is this I want you to pray for each other and here's how I want you to do it I just want to challenge you now listen how I'm telling you to do this is not the big deal if you don't want to do it the way that I tell you to use absolutely can do it your own way but this is just a suggestion all right you take and every day pray for five households pray for five households go ahead write them down if you need call me and I'll send you a list of the households right and you write those five households day and on Monday you pray for five households and on Tuesday and on

Wednesday on Thursday on Friday that'd be 25 households that would just about cover us and you just take time every day praying for part of this body of believers that's that's the that's the best way to start serving one another but here's here's the other thing I just want to hit before we move on and that is this that one of the things about this whole idea of the body of Christ loving one another serving one another having sympathy compassion that tenderheartedness that that harmony of mind and unity of mind is captured in Jesus's words there that night in the following verses in verse 34 he says a new commandment I give you that you love one another just as I have loved you you also are to love one another and then here's the kicker he says this by this all people will know that you're my disciples if you have love for one another in other words one of the best ways that we have as a body of believers to be able to do pre evangelism work to be able to do the kind of work that that exposes the world to the goodness and the greatness of the gospel is when we live in love for one another loving one another is not the gospel but our love for one another is a way to open the door to get to the gospel because if we don't love one another then why would anybody want to listen to anything we have to say so he says Peter says we need to finally have these attitudes among us because here's the thing when Christ saves a person he is saving you to be a part of something it's not it's not just an individual thing yes it has implications for you as an individual but it's about joining a family being a part of the body of Christ and and no the body of Christ is not perfect the body of Christ is full of forgiven sinners but they're forgiven you say well I'm not sure I would ever want to be a part of a of a church because you know there's a lot of people that do a lot of bad things and there's a lot of sinners it's like yes every one of us are sinners the difference between somebody who's saved and not saved is just that we've admitted that we're sinners and we've asked the Lord to forgive us that's how we should treat Christians as servants let's talk then about the second half of this and that is how do we treat the persecutors this is really verses 9 through 12 and I want to go back and reread those verses if we can he says do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling but on the contrary bless for to this you were called that you may obtain a blessing now just pause there for a second and just think about what he's saying he's basically telling us that we've been called to do something we've been called to treat those who would persecute us those who would sin against us we've been called to treat them in two ways and they're really one way and it's like two sides of the same coin and the first part is that we're called to not retaliate we are called to not retaliate we are to not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling evil it's the Bible's largest most broad-based term for evil and sin and wickedness you can have any kind of evil we're not to repay any kind of evil with any other kind of evil reviling is the idea of using your mouth to insult or slander someone so we're not to we're not to revile when we are reviled this is what Jesus is is said to have been in Isaiah 53

[19 : 04] that he opened not his mouth he didn't revile when he was reviled if you study the gospel of Matthew just as one example Jesus when he's on trial and he is being asked about things so many times it tells us that he was silent or that he did not give an answer Jesus even taught his disciples in Matthew 5 39 he says but I say to you do not resist the one who is evil but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek turn to him the other also or Paul talks about in Romans chapter 12 verse 17 repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all as Christians we are not to retaliate and this is a hard thing I think it's a hard thing for Christians I think it's a hard thing for non-Christians to hear about Christianity and a lot a lot of times lost people will look at this and say that Christians are weaklings because of this kind of a thing there's this guy that's on the social media he's he's supposedly a Muslim now and he always attacks Christians for being weak and not standing up for themselves and I think to myself but you don't even understand the scope and the and the heart of what the Christian religion is all about if you say well no you should retaliate immature Christians will often balk at such a suggestion and and part of it is because we we immediately run to those worst case scenarios and those those things where we say well wait a minute don't I have a right to defend myself and so so just want to just talk about that for a second just to lay this out because

I think it's important to understand what Peter is talking about here because he is preparing Christians who are eventually going to be arrested by the Roman authorities thrown into the arena because they refuse to light a candle to Caesar and swear that Caesar is Lord and because they refuse to do that they're thrown to the arena for lions and bears to have their way with them and Peter is saying do not repay evil for evil and maybe one day you and I as Christians will face such horrific things we might find ourselves more inclined to say oh well this is the thing but I think there's so much that we deal with that we just sort of let go and just do our own thing instead of walking the way Christ would have us walk

I mean just think about someone slandering your reputation they slandered your reputation aren't you tempted to defend and retaliate and get back at that talk about somebody cheating you out of money talk about somebody manipulating you or taking advantage of you for their own personal gain I mean there's so many things that that happen that we do retaliate against that are nowhere near the level of what these Christians were going to go through we are called to not retaliate but instead we're called to bless the word bless it's got two parts to it it means to speak good or good speak or good good words it's where we get our English eulogy from but in the Bible it's not really talking about complimenting people you know if I bless you it's not because I'm saying oh your hair looks pretty today that's not a blessing okay that's just a compliment a blessing though is to speak in such a way that I'm

I'm looking for divine favor to fall upon you and how does that happen that happens by me praying for you so for me to bless you is for me to go to God and to pray for you for me to ask God to be with you for me to ask God to rescue you to save you to change you to turn you for God to bring his divine intervention into your life even in the middle of the hideous place where you are persecuting me I think about Stephen in the book of Acts chapter 6 7 and 8 Stephen was a Christian given testimony and they took him out to persecute to stone him right they were so angry with him they were stoning him and stoning is not taking little pebbles but it's bigger rocks right you'll get the idea if you just think about it and in the middle of that he's praying for these people who are persecuting him father forgive them we are called to bless and he says there in verse 9 he says for to this you were called in other words that idea is that the idea of being called is being called into salvation and another way to say that is you were saved you were saved for a reason you were saved that you might be one praying for a persecutor you were saved to see someone else saved you were saved to be a blessing for others and then he goes on and he says there at the end of verse 9 he says that you may obtain a blessing in other words we have two two fronts on this on one hand we're saved in order that we might bless other people but we're also saved or called so that we might also obtain a blessing and that word obtain in the ESV is really inherit that we might inherit so there's nothing about this that is like so that I might earn something because an inheritance is a gift an inheritance is something that somebody gives to me and what are we inheriting we're inheriting blessings so I just want you to think about this because the idea is that my salvation is not only for my benefit that I might inherit blessings but my salvation is for the benefit of others that I might bless them as well a blessing then is a gift that is within scripture within our salvation you can think of it this way our being adopted into God's family if you were lost and you got saved then one of the gifts that you get is being adopted into God's family and being his child that's not salvation but that's one of the gifts of salvation another gift of salvation is eternal life now eternal life is not salvation but it's a gift of salvation you get that gift that's a blessing that you get the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not salvation but it's a gift of salvation you understand what I'm saying that we we are saved we are rescued we're forgiven of our sins we're brought from death to life and in that we have all of these gifts that we get from the Lord well Peter takes up that thought and runs to Psalm 34 to tell us blessings that we have when we live the way we're supposed to live as believers look at this in verse verse 10 he says whoever desires to love life and see good days let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit let him turn away from evil and do good let him seek peace and pursue it for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil here as Peter

is quoting from Psalm 34 he tells us that there's this way that we ought to live because we have salvation that we are to use our mouth God's way we're to run from evil we're to pursue peace and then he tells us the blessings that we get so in other words what he's doing is he's basically laying out do not retaliate but instead bless because you have inherited a blessing and he's using Psalm 34 to flesh that out so what are the blessings that he gives that he's telling us about he tells us about two big blessings if you want to summarize it this way one one blessing that we get in our salvation is to love life and see good days to love life and see good days now what does that mean what does it mean to love life and see good days would you say that the way the world is right now is good the writer to well not the writer to but the the

[28 : 17] Kohelet Kohelet the book of Ecclesiastes Kohelet is the preacher he spends time throughout his book talking about vanity vanity all is vanity he talks about the idea that there's this vaporness to life you know you know what it's like right I can remember you know I think I think it was this past Wednesday Thursday in Bible study I was talking about my girls playing basketball and one of my girls she was really into it and like she was the rebound queen and the other like she was standing in the middle of a court and she'd bend over and she'd pick up what looked like a flower and she'd smell it while everybody's and I remember her smelling that flower like it was yesterday but that's been that's been like 15 16 years ago it's just gone so fast the book of

Ecclesiastes tells us this world and this life is cursed it's been subjected to futility by God because of the fall of Adam and Eve and the subjection of this life to futility means that we run into things all the time that we go what's the use and I want to give you one example in Ecclesiastes chapter 2 he writes this he says what has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun for all his days are full of sorrow his work is a vexation even in the night his heart does not rest this is also vanity now just pause there and think that's an experience that we all have had at least at some point or another he goes on to talk about in other places about toil he says you work you work you work and you leave it behind for someone else who's going to spoil it all

I mean one day you're going to leave everything you know I watch this show where these guys are building these cabins way out in all these different places in Canada these cabins are costing four and five million dollars a piece right they got this one tree that's got this fourteen foot root ball that's in the middle of the house and it's like goes up eighty five feet it was eighty thousand dollars for that one log and within a hundred years that thing's probably going to be just gone turned over to someone else turned into something else why is that because that's the way the cursed world works and so why why is it that we as Christians don't become so negative and down about these things because of the next verse in Ecclesiastes look at it there's nothing better for a person than that he should eat drink and find enjoyment in his toil and this also

I saw is from the hand of God when we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and we live life his way even though the vaporness of life and the havel of life and the vanity of life and the cursedness of life is there even though we look at it and we think to ourselves when is this ever going to be over and life has passed me by so fast and I feel like I don't have anything to show for it in that moment God gives those who have trusted in him who've walked in his ways the gift of being able to enjoy life even though all of it feels cursed it's one of his gifts that he gives to us one of his blessings of us being his children and then he tells us at the end of that in verse verse 12 that he he gives us his protection he gives us his protection he hears our prayers you see when we choose to live in the blessing that he's given us and we choose to bless others part of our salvation that we're inheriting is this blessing and this gift of him listening to our prayers and protecting us now here's the thing most people would just take that and they would just run with it and immediately think that this means that he's going to protect us physically and I don't think that's what it means at all

I think it means he's protecting us spiritually what do I mean by that because you go through the difficulties go through the grief and the loss that most people go through and your spiritual state is vulnerable yet God keeps his children so what is the sum of all this what is what is it we as Christians need to think and believe and do what Peter is doing for us is that he's telling us that living a life of blessing towards others is when we refuse to retaliate but we pray for those who persecute us and the motivation for that is that we have been saved and we have these gifts and blessings that he's given to us and so do we want to be able to enjoy life the way he's called us to enjoy life then we need to seek peace and pursue it part of what has to happen is a massive massive shift in our hearts and if we're going to really live in such a way as to treat and have that that holiness towards all that we need to have we've got to recognize first what

[34 : 08] God has done for us in Christ what has he done for you in Christ how has he saved you what is your walk with him like second we're going to have to recognize that this life is not all there is this life is not all there is there is more to this life than what we see in front of us and then we have to recognize that the blessings of the Lord the good things that he gives to us are all soaked and saturated in him and his glory and when we get these blessings we are getting more of him and there are going to be some people who will hear such a thing and they're just like don't want to have anything to do with any of this and it's because your heart has never been changed you've never had your heart changed by the Lord and so the question for you today is why not you know so the truth is that we've all been born sinners we were all sinners from birth and we have broken God's law again and again and again and because of that we rightly deserve the punishment that Jesus came to take and our only hope is to turn to him in repentance and faith that he might forgive us so maybe today you need to turn to him and maybe today you as a

Christian you need to go and look at the people that maybe you have actually retaliated against and you need to repent of that and ask the Lord to forgive you and maybe there's some people who are hurting you right now that you need to be praying for however you need to respond I pray the Lord would help you do that let's pray together