

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 3:13-17

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Before I begin to preach this message, I want to begin with a disclaimer.

! I often feel unworthy to preach God's Word, and then there are some Sundays in particular! where I feel unqualified to preach a specific text.

This is perhaps one such text. And before you point the finger and say, aha, I knew it, let me just say perhaps all of us are unqualified to even hear it.

And the reason for that is our text talks about much about suffering, suffering for the gospel's sake. And as an American pastor that lives reasonably comfortable, I have never been thinking of threatened or imprisoned with torture for my faith.

I have never had property confiscated, nor has my family been torn away from me because of my commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I would imagine most of us in this room, the same could be said.

[1 : 21] If I were a Nigerian pastor, though, of the last several years, where my, where Christians have been systematically killed, houses have been burned, churches have been destroyed, Christians have left scattered, scared, and left for dead.

Perhaps then I might be a little more courageous in preaching a text like this. But our text today, then you say, well, Scott, well, that's some opening.

Then what is there for us? And I would say it this way, that we must be a people who are prepared to suffer and be resolved as a people to suffer for the cause of Christ.

Our text, if you are, have been following along with us, we've been in the book of 1 Peter. I encourage you to turn to 1 Peter chapter 3, where we will begin our text for today in chapter 3, verse 13.

And that text will conclude in verse 17. But if you have a copy of Scripture, I encourage you to read along with me this text. 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 13.

[2 : 36] 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 13.

1 Peter chapter 3, verse 13.

The big idea is going to be something... Can you turn me off just for one moment? Let me... Go ahead now. Sorry about that. I hope that fixed it.

The big idea is going to be to resolve to suffer. And we're going to look at today five principles that are in this text that are going to be for us as believers to help us embrace and prepare ourselves against the threats of the unbelieving world.

And so we're going to look at the first one, the first one being that we must have a passion for that which is good. Look with me again in verse 13.

[4 : 19] Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? I don't know how to fix that. I am sorry.

I'll just give myself a little more leash. Okay. Who is there among you to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

Peter is asking a rhetorical question. The implied answer is no one. No one zealous for doing good is usually harmed.

If you mow your neighbor's lawn who is elderly, where it is now overgrown, who used to keep their lawn very meticulously, and you do good, no one's going to harm you for that.

No one is going to harm you if you give grocery money to a family that is in need. No one is going to harm you if you spend time to love and encourage a senior adult who is now homebound just to spend time with them.

[5 : 20] No one is usually going to harm you for doing good. But on the contrary, there is little hesitation for attacking with great hostility charlatans and fraudsters who enrich themselves at the

expense of others.

We can just think of the recent weeks of the state of Minnesota and the Somali Daycare Center's fraud that's coming. There's a lot of attacks that have been thrown at verbally at those who are participating in that.

So it's a rhetorical question. But we receive our first principle in this rhetorical question that how do we prepare and equip ourselves to suffer? And how do we operate in this hostile world?

What is it? It's to have a passion to do that which is good. Look again with that verse. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

So the implication is, so just do good. Do good. So is there an intensity and an enthusiasm to be generous with your time, your resources, your words, your prayer?

[6 : 31] Is there an intensity and an enthusiasm to be zealous, to be selfless? Again, with your time, your resources, with your energy, with your strength.

Is there an intensity and enthusiasm to be kind and thoughtful with your words? You can't help but bless somebody, to encourage somebody. You just couldn't wait to get to church this morning to give an encouraging word because you're zealous to do that which is good.

But what wage is war? Why is it that perhaps that's not what is evidenced in our lives?

Our flesh? Why is it that perhaps that's not what is good? Where there may be an intensity with enthusiasm to protect my time. Nothing gets defended more than my time.

That's my time. The answer is no until I'm overwhelmingly convinced I should say yes because that's my time. Yes. Is there an intensity and an enthusiasm to do what is good?

[7 : 38] My flesh doesn't want me to do that. And so we hear our first principle. We must have a passion for doing that which is good.

And the world is watching your life that is hostile to the gospel and it is witnessing, do you have an intensity and an enthusiasm for that which is good?

Second principle we have, a second of five. Believers need to embrace, this is a principle that we need to embrace to equip and defend ourselves in this hostile world with the threats of the unbelieving world.

What is it? A willingness to suffer for the wrong and for the right. Look with me in verse 14. But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed.

Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. Drop down to verse 17. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

[8 : 50] What is that verse saying? Yes, there is a suffering for also doing evil. But he wishes not for that to be named among us. So in verse 14 he says, but even if you suffer for righteousness sake.

So having a passion for doing good doesn't necessarily guarantee us against suffering. It may only make it less likely or less frequent. But Jesus went along his whole life just doing good.

And yet the hostile world eventually killed him. There's reasons for that. So we will not escape suffering if our Lord did not also. Look how the early apostles were treated and how they responded.

Look with me in Acts chapter 5 verse 40. I believe the verses will be on the screen. And when they had called the apostles, they beat them and they charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

So imagine being the apostles. You're preaching the gospel. The authorities take you. They beat you. And they say to you, do not name the name of Jesus.

[9 : 59] Stop preaching. And then, verse 41, they left the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Many do suffer for righteousness sake. And they uphold upright and godly behavior. And they have a passion for doing good. And yet doing good is not sufficient to necessarily avoid suffering for those who proclaim the name of Christ.

Here the apostles have a zeal and a passion to make Christ known to the Jews in Jerusalem. And they paid a price for that. What is the motivation in our text to continue walking with God and proclaiming the gospel?

What is the motivation that is mentioned here? Look with me in verse 14. For even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Being blessed is the motivation.

There is a blessing to suffering. Notice in this context, suffering is the means by which one is blessed. Want to be blessed? Well, you first must suffer.

[11:15] Blessing here is the motive. Suffering is the privilege. Suffering is the honor. And why do I say that? Because this word blessed is used to express privilege and honor.

So when Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, heard that Mary was pregnant with the Messiah, she says, blessed are you among women.

What was Elizabeth saying to Mary? Elizabeth, or Mary, you are so privileged. It has been given to you the honor of bearing the Messiah.

You are blessed. So in this case, blessed are you who suffer for righteousness' sake. It is your privilege. It is your honor to do such for those who name the name of Christ.

blessed. Matthew says the same thing in the Beatitudes. Jesus says the same thing in Matthew.

We read this in Matthew 5, verses 10 through 12.

[12:17] Notice the word blessed. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who are reviled and persecuted and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

What's our response? Because of this blessing, this honor, this privilege of being persecuted and reviled, verse 12 says, rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. being convinced that there is a blessing for suffering is the only way you can have a godly response in and through it.

So how do we see suffering? Are we convinced? And if you remember last week in verse 12, for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, these ears are open to their prayer.

if you're convinced that Christ sees all, He hears all, His mind knows all, He is good and His just and my suffering did not take Christ by surprise and His reward and His promise is sure is the only way to make sense of being blessed to suffer for God's glory, for His fame, and His name is more valuable than even my life.

[13:47] I have shared with you in times past, in a previous sermon, of my occurrence being in Jordan, the nation of Jordan, and all of, I was at a pastor's gathering from many of the persecuted countries around the nation of Jordan, from Iran and Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, many pastors were in this room of whom I should, I did not belong.

I was not worthy to be in the room of these men and women. I've shared with you about the one woman that I saw that is basically a skeleton with flesh because she was so emaciated because her parents gave her acid to drink in her tea, which eroded her esophagus that makes food hard to digest and so she's just wasting away.

In that room though, there was another man whose name, for our sake, I'll just call it Danny. Danny was a man who was a pastor in Syria and he was sharing one day with everyone in the room that he's concerned.

He says, my life is in imminent danger. I've already been beaten, I've already been put in jail, the police sent thugs, his wife and children were beaten, they were threatened at gunpoint to stop preaching, he can't find a place to meet as a church, they go to house to house but it's not secure and so he says to the group there, my life is in imminent danger, like if I return to Syria, I'm going to die and he said, my wife and children are safe but they can't last long where they're at.

So he was wanting to go back to Syria and get his family out and then he says this, because of Christ, my eternity is certain, it is sure.

[15:54] So too are the unbelieving Muslims that I preach to. Their eternity is sure as well. So I must continue to preach the gospel, I will return, assuring my wife and kids are safe, I want to return to Syria and continue to preach.

I don't know what ever became of Danny. I'm not certain that he is alive on this earth today. It doesn't make sense unless you believe Matthew 5.12 that we already looked at.

Rejoice and be glad. Your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. And then our verse that we're looking at today, verse 14, 1 Peter 3.14, but even if you suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.

You will be blessed. Is Christ the greatest thing you cherish or is it even your life?

Another principle to defend ourselves and prepare ourselves in the threats of this unbelieving world and hostile world against Christ is a passion for goodness, a willingness to suffer.

[17 : 23] Thirdly, it is this, is to have a devotion to Christ. Thirdly, to have a devotion to Christ. If we look in verse 15, the first part of the verse reads this, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy.

Some translations say it this way, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. What is it to sanctify Christ in your hearts? It is to set apart or consecrate Christ in your heart.

The idea is giving Christ the adoration, the exaltation, the worship of your life, but he holds that place in your heart that motivates your actions.

It is the same word that we find in the Lord's Prayer when Jesus said, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.

When I was in China, you would go to a rural house, but they practice ancestor worship there among many other things, forms of idolatry there.

[18 : 39] But ancestor worship is a big deal, especially in rural China. And you would go to a rural China's home, Chinese home, and there would be a shrine about the size of a chest of drawers, sometimes even larger than that, that on the top of the chest of drawers, the altar there, they would have images of their ancestors.

So there usually was a man and a woman and some great, great figure, grandparent figure, was there. And sometimes they would burn incense on that chest of drawers thing, on that altar, sometimes there would be an apple or a piece of fruit that they're offering to their ancestor.

And what are they doing? They are setting apart or consecrating their home where they have set up a primary place to adore, a place to exalt, a place to worship a dead ancestor who they believe is watching out for them.

So anyone who visits their home would know they worship these ancestors, sadly, who can do nothing for them. So take that image, it's kind of a horrible image to liken it to, but let's apply this to the concept that Peter is saying.

So we are to sanctify Christ in our hearts and the Lord as holy. none competes with him, none compares to him, no affection in our heart.

[20 : 11] It is he alone that occupies the affection of our heart and in our heart we set him apart as holy. No competition. He alone occupies the affections of my heart.

If you want to weather persecution, if you want to weather suffering, you want to prepare yourself, it is in that case where the Lord, he matters the most to you, where you are preparing yourself for a day you may suffer.

this phrase, sanctify the Lord God in your heart, is found, is an allusion to Isaiah 8, 12 through 13. And before I read the text with you, I want to give a little background. In this text, there's a faithless king, a faithless king, King Ahaz in Judah.

So the southern tribe of Israel, Benjamin and Judah, those two tribes are in the south, the rest of the ten tribes are in the north, and in that southern kingdom of Judah, there's a faithless king, Ahaz.

[21 : 21] And he has allied himself, unfortunately, with Assyria. Because what's his problem? The northern ten tribes of Israel and Syria, not Assyria, but Syria, are allied together to come against Judah.

And so this southern king, Ahaz of Israel, goes into alliance alliance with Assyria to say, help us. Please, we have a buffer on the north to attack, we'll be on the south, we might withstand this attack coming, help us.

So they've made this ungodly alliance. And the Lord is going to encourage Isaiah and this faithful remnant who is speaking out against the king, Ahaz, and saying, don't do this, this is ungodly, why are we doing this?

We're aligning ourselves with a godless people. The Lord, our God, is God. Let's trust him. But it's in that tension God is saying to that faithful remnant with the prophet, he says this, Isaiah 8, 12 through 13.

Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. And so remember that, the line, but you're, and then he says this, but the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy.

[22 : 52] Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. You faithful remnant, Isaiah the prophet, you let him be the Lord of hosts.

Him shall you honor as holy. So then what, so Peter takes this allusion to this verse. He brings it into the New Testament, and he says, but in your hearts honor Christ as holy.

Think of the similarity, what's happening here. All around Judah is this enemy. suffering is coming. It's imminent.

Your king is faithless. He's allied himself with a, with an opposed, with a godless army, a godless nation. You be faithful.

I'll tell you who you should dread. Fear the Lord of God of hosts. Him you shall honor. Let him be your fear.

[23 : 58] Let him be your dread. God. This northern alliance that has been formed against you, they may cause you to suffer physically, but the Lord can cause you to suffer eternally.

He is the one who controls all circumstances. He is the one who is in control of all things. He is the one who should be your ultimate fear, not some godless, faithless alliance that's been made, and not against the opposing tribes of Israel and Assyria that has been made.

Don't fear them. And Peter takes that, but the Lord your host, him you shall honor as holy.

But notice how, I love this, how Peter does this. He changes. In the Old Testament, it says, the Lord of hosts, but here it says, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord.

Who is the Lord of hosts? Christ the Lord. And it is to him that in your hearts you should set aside as holy. So, that is the third principle that we are given to fortify ourselves against the threats of the unbelieving world.

[25 : 11] We'll start off with number one, a passion for goodness, a willingness to suffer, a devotion to Christ, and then fourthly, we have a preparedness to defend the faith.

The latter part of verse 15 says this, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is within you, yet to do it with gentleness and respect.

Peter's argument goes something like this, people may wonder after seeing your passion for doing good, your generosity, your thoughtfulness, your kindness, and they may persecute you for doing good, even proclaiming Christ.

And finally, they may ask, why do you do that? Why do you have a compassion on the unborn?

Why do you risk personal harm to be a faithful proclaimer of Christ?

Why do you do this if your life is at risk, your family is at risk, and the text is saying to us, always be ready, always be prepared, to make a defense to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is within you.

[26 : 24] Always be ready. I appreciate Pastor Jay, him sharing with us a few things, his Uber ministry stories where he is constantly fielding questions from those who are in his car, and this, today, was the day our discipleship quarter began, and if you haven't, if you're not attending the nine o'clock hour and you would like to know what class to attend, he's going through this book called The Story of Reality, and it's a way we can fortify ourselves with understanding of truth where we can field questions from those asking us and have a reason for the hope that lies within us.

We don't have a foolish faith at all. Well, I was talking to a father this week of four girls who attends a different church, and he was snow shoveling recently, and he and his neighbor were shoveling their driveways, and then they paused because the snow was heavy, and their backs needed a rest, and they got into a conversation, and the neighbor mentioned to the man, hey, I notice you have four daughters, and I love seeing how you play with them, and you're an amazing father, you're a great father, but then he said this, but four girls, isn't that excessive?

And the man paused, and he says this, as he recounted the story to me, he said, I shared with my neighbor that my aim of my life is to make Christ known, and I believe that the Bible is authoritative, and how God has revealed himself to humanity, so he began with those two premise statements, my life exists to make much of Christ, and the Bible is authoritative, then he said this, the Bible shares with me that children are a blessing, children are not an inconvenience, children do not get in the way of our goals, children are a way to bless the next generation, and then he got a little more specific with his neighbor, he said, by raising thoughtful, generous, kind, articulate, wise children who love the Lord, and will raise their own families in the same accord, he says, the next generation is blessed in two ways, the next generation has a way of blessing the next generation because there are children who know the Lord and can communicate the gospel, and he said, and it makes for a better society by having kind, thoughtful, generous children, so he appealed to the man who doesn't know the Lord that this makes for a better society, and it's a way that the truth of the gospel gets to go forward, now that's a spiritual answer that I don't know if the man understood at the time, but the man said,

I appreciate the man, he said, he paused, and he said, thank you for sharing a little more, he said, you've given me something to think about with regard to children, I don't know what will become of that, but I appreciated my friend having an answer for just a simple statement, isn't that excessive for children, but that's not necessarily the hope that lies within us, that's synonymous with the gospel, it's the confidence that we have, and we're to do that in a certain way with gentleness and reverence, not being dominant, not being overbearing when we share these things with our neighbors, but to speak the truth in love, and to be respectful to expression, when we have expresses, I'm sorry, respectful, expresses the devotion to Christ, and with a deep regard for truth, but also a respect for the person listening, so it's important for us to have a way for the way, that we can communicate the hope that lies within us, and so if you do not yet know of a convenient or an easy way to quickly share the gospel with another,

I know Pastor Jay appreciates Carl Payne's manner of God's problem, or I'm sorry, God's plan, God has a plan for all of mankind, but man had a problem, he sinned, God has a remedy that he died on the cross, and man's response to repent and believe, and so God's plan, man's problem, God's remedy, man's response, you can use the hand analogy of what does it take to know the Lord and have your sins forgiven and be assured of one's salvation, believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin, you can do the hand thing, I also like one verse evangelism things, I like the way of sharing the gospel just with one verse, you have to memorize one verse, and that is for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans 6, 23, so this doesn't need to be arduous or hard, but we should have an easy way to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ and be ready to do that, we are often afraid of someone asking a thorny question, and it's okay to say,

[32 : 00] I don't know, but I'd love to get back to you on that, it's okay to claim ignorance when one is ignorant, people appreciate honesty, and the great news is you do not need to defend the Bible, it's like defending a lion, all you need to do is uncage it, it's quite capable of defending itself, and so uncage the Bible, share it, communicate it, the basic problem with every person you meet is still the same, he or she is a sinner and is alienated from God, and every person needs the same thing, and that is forgiveness of sin and new life of Jesus Christ, that's as simple as it just needs to be as you talk to people, remember those two things, and people often raise questions that are objections that divert from the gospel, the hope that lies within you, and so people may ask, well what about the dinosaurs, and if God is so good, why is there so much suffering in the world, and they will ask these questions that get away from their need for Christ, and so I just want to appeal to you and encourage you to remember this,

I sometimes will ask a question this way when somebody gets off into a tangent, when they get away from what we're talking about, their sin and their need for Christ, and they'll ask me what about the dinosaurs or something, and so I'll say to them something like this, if I can resolve that question you just asked me, will you commit your life to Christ?

Now, there's often resistance, why? Because I want them to feel the tension of what we know in scripturally, that the person's invariable, the greatest problem a person has invariably is not an intellectual one, it is a moral one, John 3, 19 says this, the light has come into the world and people love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, their problem is a moral one, they, their deeds are evil and they love darkness, that's a moral problem, it's not really an intellectual one, so that's why I keep trying to point them back to the gospel is because you're throwing me a smoke screen with an intellectual problem and a question that you may or may not have truly, but that often may be a smoke screen, the big issue that a person has is a moral one, their deeds are evil and they're rejecting the light that has come into the world, okay, five principles, we've already looked at four, a passion for the goodness, a willingness to suffer, a devotion to Christ, a readiness and a preparedness to defend the faith and last one is to have a pure conscience, how is it that we can live in this world with hostility and opposition eager to suffer, 1 Peter 3, 16 says this, have a good conscience so that when you are slandered those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame, your conscience, what is it?

It's a divinely placed human faculty, one's conscience either accuses you or excuses you, it is either a means of conviction or affirmation and a good conscience is ought to be kept for the believer and better stated, maybe even maintained, having a good conscience, so, but what is it?

In the context, read verse 16 with me, so that when you're slandered and when you're reviled, your good behavior in Christ may, your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame when you are

slandered.

[35 : 50] Those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. I think of a story where, where do we witness this?

Where do we witness in scripture those being put to shame who revile, who slander? Here, let's look at Acts chapter 2. Let's see how this works. Acts chapter 2, verses 12 to 13.

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, what does this mean? But others mocked and said, they are filled with new wine. Let me give the context.

The context is Pentecost. And everyone who speaks different languages in this large crowd and they heard the gospel in their own language and they assumed the people preaching the gospel and they heard it in their own language.

How could they possibly, they're men from Judea, this uneducated little rural place. How in that rural town region can they even know my language?

[36 : 54] But it's a miracle that's happening. They're hearing the gospel in their language. And they accused the apostles for being filled with wine, for being drunk.

The very next verses say this. So there is, there is the revile. There's the slander. Verse 14. But Peter, notice it's Peter. We're reading 1 Peter. He's at this event.

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them. Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what is uttered through the prophet Joel. And then Peter preaches the first message that we see in Scripture post-resurrection of Christ.

And 3,000 people come to faith in Christ. So now let's read that circumstance in light of 1 Peter 3, 16.

[37 : 57] Having a good conscience. So that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. When you are slandered, when you are reviled, may your conscience say, Scott, you had a passion for goodness.

Scott, you're willing to suffer. Scott, you're a person who's devoted to the Lord. You're prepared to defend the reason for the hope that lies within you.

Their slander, you can keep going with a clear conscience. You can be beaten with a clear conscience. This is a sign of a favor for you.

You can be imprisoned with a good conscience. You can do all of these. Let them talk. Let them speak. Let them do actions. But what matters to the Lord about us who suffer is a clear conscience. You did everything you could. You didn't avoid persecution. You didn't avoid suffering. But it's not because you did evil. You did good. And it says they will be put to shame.

[39 : 13] That may be in this life like those at Pentecost. Can you imagine being those who 3,000 people that you're standing around just got saved and you thought, they're drunk. I'm now embarrassed.

I'm going to tuck my tail and walk away in shame. It may be on this earth, but it may be in a time to come. So let us be a people who embrace and equip ourselves when the threats of the unbelieving and the hostile world come.

Let's do that by a passion for goodness, being willing to suffer, being devoted to Christ, being ready to defend the faith, and maintaining a pure conscience.

Let's do that. Would you pray? Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for the opportunity to look at your word today, to study, to be encouraged.

Lord, I pray that any of us here, Lord, for whatever it is that you have communicated to us, I pray that we would be obedient to you.

[40 : 22] Are we eager to do good works? Are we willing to suffer? We want to be a people who are devoted to you, preparing ourselves to defend the faith with a good conscience, Lord.

May our lives exalt you, honor you. May we set you apart as holy in our hearts. May there be no other affection that competes.

You are our desire. We love you. Thank you for the privilege to worship you, adore you today, together as a body. May we not take it for granted. We love you, Lord.

Amen.