

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 3:8-12

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to be looking at today, this passage is going to be calling us to living for! His kingdom and God's kingdom is an upside down kingdom. This world operates with certain principles! And yet God's kingdom flips those principles upside down. And so we're going to be looking at an! An upside down way of life for the Christian people, for God's people. And we're going to be looking at four things today. We're going to look at honoring Christ with our attitude. We're going to look through honoring Christ with our response. We're going to be looking at honoring Christ by refraining from deception. And we're going to be looking at honoring Christ motivated by a proper incentive and motivation. Those are the four principles we're going to look at today. But I want to just illustrate how upside down God's kingdom is before we begin. That we would think today, we would think strength is found through force. That's how this world operates. If you will, might makes right. Whoever has the biggest stick wins. This is how the world thinks. And yet, biblically, we look at God's principles and we think, well, no, there's strength through weakness. Strength through weakness. The world prizes self-sufficiency and invisible power, and yet God delights to work through the weaknesses and dependency upon Him. We also look at, we do, our world, our culture does everything to preserve life. We fight death at every turn. And we want to live as long as we can. And yet, uh, and we, and we fight, um, against looking bad ourselves. And yet we see in scripture that losing life is the way to gain it.

That self-preservation feels natural and self-denial feels foolish. And yet Christians, uh, God's word calls us and Jesus says, whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Here in this passage, we're going to see that blessing those who harm you. And, but we don't like that in our culture.

We don't bless people who harm us. We, we want to fight back. We tit for tat. We don't, we don't take it. We're not going to let someone take advantage of us. We're going to stand up for ourselves. And yet scripture says, no, no, no, actually bless. And we're going to look at that. And blessing seems so naive, so simple. And yet God's word is saying, bless, don't retaliate, bless.

I'll just keep going. Just name a few more, but you get the point. The last shall be first, but in our culture first shall be first. Greatness is found through servanthood. And yet greatness in our culture is not found through servanthood. There's joy in suffering. There's giving to receive, living under the watchful care of God. All of these things are counter-cultural.

We serve a God in an upside down kingdom. Basically said this way, the way of God's people is upside down because it follows a crucified king. In God's kingdom, weakness is strength. Service is greatness. Suffering is glory producing and blessing, not retaliation is the path of life.

[3 : 16] Our passage today begins with this. It says, finally, all of you. Finally, all of you. Now, why does it say all of you? And finally, what is this the conclusion of? Peter is wrapping up a unit of thought that I would argue begins in chapter two, verse 11. If you want to turn there with me, let's remind ourselves what's the greater context that we're talking about to get to this final exhortation that Peter has. In chapter two, verse 11, it says, beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from passions of your flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. I would argue that's where this passage, that unit of thought begins, and it carries through our passage today, and we're kind of in the culmination of this thought.

And so what is Peter saying here? Hey, keep your deeds, do good deeds, and glorify your God that, and keep your conduct among Gentiles honorable so that when they speak of evil against you, they may one day glorify God that perhaps your way of life will be your greatest testimony to those watching you, and they may come to faith in Christ because of, in part because of you. They see something in you in this upside-down kingdom. And then Peter then begins to talk to different people. He says, okay, all of you be subject to your governing authorities and your, in the institutions. Then he talks about, that starts in verse 13, verse 18, he talks about servants being subject to slaves. And then he talks about, in verse, chapter 3, verse 1, he talks about wives submitting to your husbands and what the home looks like. And in all of this, there is this spirit of also, and be willing to be mistreated in that.

And then he's, so then one could argue and say, well, I'm not a slave. I'm not a master. I don't, I'm not working for an employer. I'm not a wife, and I'm not a husband. I'm single. And so Peter, in a way of saying, okay, all of those people that I've already talked about, and those who I may have missed, let me get an all-inclusive summary statement and say, it says, finally, then all of you. So now he's including everyone, no matter if you're single or married, slave or free, no matter what your status is, what is keeping your conduct good look like, or keeping it honorable before Gentiles that they may one day glorify God? What does that look like?

Well, now all of you, here's his final kind of exhortation. So that's where we are at in context. And we're going to see in verse 8, what he says is Peter's going to argue this upside down way of Christ's people. Let's honor Christ through your attitude. In verse 8, he has five attributes that your attitude must have. And the first one, it says, finally, all of you have unity of mind.

Now think with me why this admonition is here. Because we're prone to suffer from division and dissension at every turn. And so that's why this admonition is here is because we're prone to differ and have divisions among us. Our flesh is self-willed. We want to demand our own ways. We want to judge those we don't get along with. And Peter here is saying, I want you to be a harmonious people.

[7 : 12] And why, what makes unity so difficult in the church? Well, our flesh, number one. But we also understand that we are all growing in obedience to Christ. Some may be infants in Christ. Some may be very mature in Christ. We differ in our maturity. And the result is we may differ in having various convictions. Let me just share this. When I got saved at 19 years old, let me just share, I have grown in some convictions. Some are more important to me. Some are dead to nil to me that I used to care about. I'm like, I don't really care anymore. I don't even want to talk about it.

But we all differ in our life experiences, which shape our perspectives in where we have liberty. So some may think they have liberty here. Some may think they have liberty there. And there's differences. And so in the body here, we're all prone for division and dissension. And Peter is here saying, I want you to have unity of mind. I want you to be a harmonious people. One of the best things I learned in seminary, you can save your shekels and not spend any more money by going to seminary because I'm just going to tell you what I learned. So here it is. In two minutes, you're going to learn what I learned in six years. So probably this is the most helpful perspective I heard.

is that there are matters that you die for. There should be matters biblically, theologically that you die for.

Then there's matters that you divide over. Then there's matters that you debate. And then there are matters that you have Christian liberty that you just decide. Let's talk about a few of those things you we ought to die for.

And think about what the martyrs throughout history and church history have died for. Things like the inerrancy of scripture. Things like the exclusivity of Christ, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and nobody goes to the Father except through him. The doctrine of the Trinity, that we worship one God in three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The deity of Christ.

[9 : 35] Christ. We should die for these things. That we will go to the mat and fight for these things madly and if not even, if necessary, even lose our life for the sake of standing for those things.

Because if we don't believe these things, then you miss God, you miss heaven, you miss it all. It's that important. Your eternal salvation is dependent upon these kinds of truths that you die for.

Second, you divide over things. These are passionate commitments that people hold to. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. And think about this. We witness what Christians divide over because we witness different denominations. If we will, we say to one another, we say, we understand, we don't discount that you may be a believer in Christ Jesus, but you differ on some theological things to the degree that I just, I can't get to. And so we're better off just having unity but not worshiping together. That's why denominations exist because they have these things that they hold dearly. Let me just give you one example of them. One would be like, how people understand the nature of salvation. There are some churches that have a more Calvinistic, and you don't have to, I'm going to say a few words, you don't have to understand these words, a Calvinistic understanding of salvation, the nature of salvation. One may say, like, you cannot lose your salvation would be a Calvinistic, one of the outgrowths of a Calvinistic understanding of salvation. So most Baptist churches would be in this category. Most Bible churches would be in this category. Most Presbyterian would be in this category. Most congregational churches would be in this category. Most Anglican churches would be in this category. So these, then you have what is contrary to that, those who believe you can lose your salvation. It has to deal with how they understand salvation, though. And that would be an Arminian understanding of it. This comes out of most Methodists would be in this category. Most Nazarenes would be in this category. Most Pentecostals would be in this category. Most Adventists would be in this category. And they would follow kind of more of a Wesleyan understanding of the nature of salvation. So notice what we just observed when I mentioned those denominations. What we observed is we said, we agree on the things that we die for, but because we see the nature of salvation so differently, it's better off that we just worship in separate congregations so that we have unity there. Because these things actually do matter deeply, and they affect a lot of other things. So it's just better off if we don't worship together. So those are things, not that you die for, but you divide over. Thirdly, lower, is there's things you debate over. These are things you, you can host robust debates within the church, but you don't have to worship separately, even though you may disagree with them. Things like, perhaps, some churches baptize infants, some churches baptize believers. Can we worship in the same church and yet not divide over that, but just say, I see that differently? We can debate long about that if you care. Lastly, is there's things you debate for. I mean, sorry, die, divide, debate, decide. Decide are things where we have Christian liberty and we may disagree. So for example, one person says, I have the liberty to have this form of entertainment in my life, music, movies, whatever. Another person says, no, I can't do that. Now we know within this sphere there is sin. So not everything is healthy. So there are vile things that you can listen to and vile things that you put before your eyes. But aside from the sin, there is liberty here as well. Same with modesty. One person, I bet we all hear if I said, how would we define modesty? And I point and I have us all stand up and I say, does the dress have to be this low? And then you sit down when you get uncomfortable and we all would sit down at different levels because we're like, we're defining modesty differently. But we have liberty here. Again, but immodesty exists. You get the point. That's

probably the most helpful thing I learned in all of seminary. Now, the two things that ratchet up the value we place on a doctrinal matter is this. Two things that affect, is this a die-for issue, that help us know what category should we put that thing in, that doctrinal issue in. The two principles that we govern that is the proximity to the gospel that that doctrinal issue is. That matters. So proximity to the gospel. Does this relate to and how closely does it relate to the eternal God sending the second person of the Godhead, the Son, to earth for the express purpose to live a sinless life, to die for sin, to raise victoriously over sin, seated at the right hand of God and one day will return? How closely does that issue, whatever we're talking about, how closely does it affect the gospel? So it's proximity to the gospel. The second issue is the how abundantly clear is it in scripture? Whatever we're talking about, is that abundantly clear in scripture? So if you have abundance clarity, abundance of clarity, and it's super close in proximity to the gospel, that matters the most and we should die for those things. Now, the less clear in scripture the issue gets, it should go down. And then the less proximity to the gospel, it goes down into other categories.

That's helpful when we understand this admonition here where Peter is saying, hey, have unity of mind. We're not all going to agree about everything in this room. Not all of us are going to do that. So how is that possible? Well, I believe that Peter has this kind of understanding in his mind to say, hey, we as a church, we're going to gather together and it's super important that you understand what is, has proximity to the gospel and abundance of clarity.

[16 : 12] And so I want to now step out of the ethereal and give us really practical, something really practical that we're all going to wrestle with. And I'm going to step on everybody's toes just to make it equal.

I don't really want an email. And I would appreciate that everyone would just believe the best about me whenever I say this, because this is going to step on all of everyone's toes.

But I want to, I want to, I want to show you how easy it is to be divisive over this thing. And if you don't understand these categories and you don't understand proximity, gospel and products are clarity in scripture.

If we don't understand this, we could be a divided group over a lot of things. So let me give you an example. Okay. Believe the best. My wife and I went down to visit family and we were out of town for a week.

And in one of the conversations that I had with someone that I met, she said this to me. Now, now listen, die, divide, debate, decide, have those categories.

[17 : 18] And what's interesting is I had already prepared this message before I left. And so all these categories are washing through my mind as I'm thinking about the sermon. And she says to me, I would never go to a church that doesn't have the American flag in the worship center.

So far first, what category is she putting this in? Die, divide, she's going to divide over this issue. Then she says to me, because she learned I'm a pastor.

And by the way, there's other things you can talk to pastors about than this matter. We're open to that. Next, she says to me, what about your church?

Do you have a flag in your worship center? And I'm like, oh, I cannot win in this conversation at all. Now, before I give my response, let me share with you.

Everyone in this room has an opinion about that. Every one of us. And we're probably not all going to agree if I had us all stand. Should we? Shouldn't we? We're not all going to agree, nor am I going to take a poll. But let me share with you how important should that matter be to us.

[18 : 29] It's not a die for issue. It's not even close to the gospel. We're not even going to divide over that matter. Because it's not close to the gospel and the clarity of scripture.

If you wanted to, you could put it in the debatable topic. But I think it's actually in the deciding issue. We can agree to disagree. And that's all the matter it needs to be. I said to her, At our church, we esteem Christ in his word.

We esteem Christ in song. And we esteem Christ in prayer. We seek faithfully to preach God's word and be a transformed people.

And be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. That's what we seek to do. I didn't even talk about the matter of the flag. I don't think she was impressed.

Okay. But do you see why Peter would say, Church, all of you have unity of mind.

[19 : 41] Because it's natural to be divisive. Quickly and easily over matters that should not be. Second, Peter goes on. Sympathy. I'm going to go faster.

Sympathy. It's to suffer or experience the same of another. In this way, we model Christ. Who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses.

Christ knows what it is to experience and suffer with the same weaknesses as we do. And yet, he did so without sin. What I appreciate doing from time to time is I love getting to know you because when I see you, I sometimes think, if I walked a week in that person's shoes, what would I have faced?

So it's good to look around the room and look around the body and imagine if I spent a week in that person's shoes, what would I experience?

Why? That helps me understand what sympathy is getting at, is to suffer or experience the same of another person. So what would it have been like this last year to have lost a child, to loss a spouse for those who are rejoicing over a provision that God had given, a job?

[21 : 02] Are they rejoicing over the long-awaited marriage that they so desired? Did God bring that person a spouse? Those who brought new children into this world, those who suffer chronic pain and have health concerns, those who struggle in their marriage and their home each day and night, it's just hard.

Sympathy. What ought that do or might that do? I'll give you a little secret. Now it's not going to be a secret.

Every Sunday, I sit right there and I have a piece of notepad and I write down anywhere from three to five names generally. And every Sunday afternoon, I go home and I either write a card or send a text to someone because I imagined what life would be like in those shoes for one week.

I encourage you to do the same. How can you, the sympathy ought to move you, motivate us to do something. Write a card, send a text, give a hug, celebrate, rejoice with, weep with.

Brotherly love is the next attribute. It points, the word points out that as believers, we are members of the same family. This brotherly love toward one another opens the door to testify of Christ.

[22 : 30] The opposite would be a self-willed person looking out for themselves. Tender-hearted would be similar to sympathy, so I'm not going to speak much about that. And a humble mind.

A lowly mind. This is what Christ modeled. I find it interesting that when Christ described himself in first person, this is what he said of himself. And by the way, the first person expressions of Jesus describing himself are actually very rare.

This is an occurrence. It says to me in Matthew, it says to us in Matthew 11, 28, this is how Jesus describes himself. Come to me, all of you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon me and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. You will find rest for your souls. He describes himself as gentle and lowly in heart.

Gives us an idea of what humble in mind looks like, humility in mind. I think Barnabas, if I were to take all these attributes and say, who modeled these attributes well? I would say Barnabas in the New Testament.

[23 : 34] He did this beautifully. He expressed brotherly love and generosity. He sold a field and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet.

He showed sympathy and a tender heart to Barnabas. He was the one who came alongside Barnabas at the Jerusalem Council and advocated for him and came alongside of him when everyone was afraid of him.

The Saul of Tarsus, this murderer of Christians. Barnabas is the one who came alongside of him. He demonstrated a unity of mind. When divisions and suspicions were prevailed, he promoted a unity of mind.

Barnabas demonstrated a humble mind in his ministry. He's an example to me of one who describes the attributes of verse 8. Verse 9. Okay, we're going to go faster. Verse 9.

We're going to, this upside-down kingdom, we're going to honor Christ through our attitude. That's different than our world. Then we're going to honor Christ in verse 9 through our response.

[24 : 37] What is the response that we have? So we're not talking about our attitude now, but we're going to talk about our responses. Look with me in verse 9. 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. There's some aspects of our speech that we're to have.

First, we're not to retaliate. The assumption here is there's a response. You're repaying evil with evil. You're repaying reviling with reviling.

We're sniping back when we've been reviled. Evil has been done to you, and reviling is being rallied against them in return. We're not to retaliate. This principle runs counter to this world.

I don't have to share this with you. If someone abuses you verbally, you don't want to take that. You stand up for yourself. You assert your rights. Let them know that you have more self-respect for yourself than that.

[25 : 36] Just take it. That's what our world says. But here it says, do not retaliate. So what does blessing them look like? Instead, but on the contrary, bless.

That's the contrary. That's the upside-down part of this instruction. I appreciate what Jesus says in Luke 6.

But he says, but I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. This is different than what our world would say.

To bless them. I think, why is this so important? What does blessing people look like? I think Peter, why this was so important to Peter, is on the, in the chapter of people sinning against you, Matthew chapter 18, Peter, if you will, raises his hand and asks Jesus a question.

I want us to look at this together. Why is this blessing those who speak evil against you and who revile you so important to Peter? Perhaps it was because he got first-hand answer from Jesus himself on this very specific issue.

[27 : 00] And let's look at what he says. Matthew chapter 18. We're going to look at two verses, 21 and 22. He says, Then Peter came up to him and said to him, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

As many as seven times? And Jesus said to him, Do not say to, I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times. Peter, notice it's Peter that asks this question of Jesus.

And he's saying, How often, Jesus, should I forgive my brother? Seven times? I can do that. Not 77 times. Seven. No. And that's not Jesus' point to keep track.

It's just, you are to keep forgiving someone. And that forgiveness is a way to bless somebody who had done you harm. Dropping down in that passage, then Jesus tells of this account where he tells a parable of a man who, a king that had a servant who owed him much.

There's never in his lifetime enough hours in the day or money that he could repay this debt. It's an insurmountable debt. And this master ultimately forgives him. He pleaded with mercy and the master ultimately forgave him.

[28 : 19] Then that guy who is now forgiven has another servant who owes him a debt that's much smaller, that can be repaid. And he pummels that guy and puts him in prison until his debt is paid off and he doesn't forgive the debt.

Then Jesus says, at the end of that chapter, Jesus says to Peter, or to conclude that, he said, Then his master summoned him and said to him, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you? That's his question. That's his question.

That's his response. I mention that because how, what was baked into Peter's mind from Jesus' response?

What was baked into his mind? How is it that we can, on the contrary, bless, and for this you've been called that you may obtain mercy? How is that?

[29 : 24] Because it's unthinkable for believers to live in a kind of blatant double standard that we have been forgiven of much, an insurmountable debt we could never repay, and Jesus paid it, and he forgave us.

So how is it that we could bless others? It would be like saying, I am going to hold you to an account that I'm unwilling to be held to myself.

Jesus has forgiven me all and totally. I can forgive someone who reviles me. I can forgive someone who does evil against me. I can bless them, and maybe my blessing them looks like forgiveness.

And Peter knew that all too well. And the motivation is given to you and me there in the verse, what's the motivation that you may obtain a blessing? For this you've been called.

This blessing may not occur in this life, but one day the Lord will make right all things. No one is getting away with anything, and he will make right.

[30 : 26] And one of the things he will make right is if you have that response of blessing someone who does evil against you, you too will be blessed. Thirdly, we get into this passage, and Peter is saying, how is this upside-down world that we live in, this way of Christ's people, what does that look like?

The third way, it's through our response, it's through our attitude, through our response, and then thirdly, it's by refraining from deception. 1 Peter 3.10 begins a quote that is from Psalm 34, verses 12 through 16.

I want to read this psalm with you because Peter is referencing this psalm, and the psalmist focuses on the sufferer and the suffering and the Lord's deliverance of God's people who have been afflicted.

So let's read this psalm together. What man is there who desires to live and loves many days, that he may see good? So there's the question, and the implication is, will all of us want to live that way?

What man is there who desires life and love many days, that he may see good? All of us want to be that. Well, then the Lord tells us, well, what does it take to be that kind of person?

[31 : 41] Then he responds in verse 13. Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and the ears toward their cry.

The face of the Lord is against all those who do evil. to cut off the memory of them from earth. This is what Peter is quoting and referring to when he says this in verse 10.

But we are to refrain ourselves from deceit. Deceit, we are to do nothing that is deceitful, that is misleading, or that distorts the facts.

Deception is a barrier to communication that is healthy. It's a barrier to relationships, and it destroys trust. You know this. It may be a deliberate attempt to bend the facts to suit your side of the story, or perhaps it, you don't mention certain facts, and you omit things that the other person will get a skewed view.

Your listener will get a skewed view of what really happened. It may be telling someone to their face or saying something behind their back. Deceit is a form of exaggeration.

[32 : 48] Also, when someone says, you always or you never is a form of deceit. Last way that we are told to live in this upside-down kingdom, this way of God's people that is altogether different.

We're to honor Christ through our attitude, honor Christ through our response. We're to refrain from being deceptive. But God also gives us a motivation here, and this is how we'll conclude.

It says, The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His ears are open to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. Notice there's three eyes, ears, and a face that are mentioned here that I want us to pay attention to.

The eyes of the Lord is a common Old Testament phrase that relates to God's special caring and watching over His people. God's special caring and watching over and watchfulness of His people.

Now, why is this important? What's the context? Remember, we're talking about being reviled. We're talking about evil being done against us. We're talking about things that you and I want justice now and today.

[34 : 04] I don't want to necessarily bless and the question can come to our minds. God, are you seeing this? Do you see this? And Peter gives us the assurance that is quoted from the psalm.

I see you. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His caring watchfulness of you is present.

His omniscient awareness of every detail of your life, He didn't miss a thing. He saw it. Secondly, He's watching over you.

Secondly, the ears of the Lord are open. God hears you when you cry out to Him. God hears you when you have been harmed. When you pray that prayer of blessing over that person who has just done you wrong and evil, He hears that.

God is quick to hear, to meet in your need. and this ought to be a great incentive for the believer's life. He's watching.

[35 : 09] He is waiting. He is ready to hear and He's ready to respond with an answer to prayer. On the other hand, the verse says, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

And the face of the Lord is another, in the Old Testament, it doesn't refer to God's watchfulness like His eyes do, but it refers to God's judgment.

For the believer that responds unworldly in this upside-down way of living, that for the believer, you have God's eyes and you have His ears.

But the wicked, those who do evil against you perhaps, are those who have the face of the Lord. Let me conclude with this story. There's a man whose name was Richard Wurmbrand.

He was in Romania. He was a Lutheran pastor under communist persecution shortly after World War II. He was, after World War II, he was preaching the gospel faithfully, and verse 12 meant the world to him.

[36 : 21] For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and the ears are open to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. After World War II, after faithfully preaching the gospel in 1984, I'm sorry, 1948, shortly after World War II, 48, he was imprisoned in Romania.

He's a Romanian pastor, Lutheran pastor. He was imprisoned, and for 14 years, he spent much of those years in solitary confinement in a cell that was five foot by six feet.

That's it. Solitary confinement. He spent over two years not even seeing a single person. Just a plate of food would be put under his door.

Two years. Never saw a person. Never talked to anybody. Nobody. He was starved. He was beaten. He was subjected to psychological torment to break his faith and force him to denounce Christ.

Wurmbrandt, though, was not merely known for his endurance. He had the subtle conviction that God saw him. He was convinced of that. God, you see me.

[37 : 34] Just what Peter is saying here. Later in his writings, he testified that he was completely isolated. He prayed aloud. He preached sermon to the walls.

He trusted the Lord's, the Lord's eyes were upon him. And his prayers were heard. He was convinced of that. God sees me and he hears me. Even though the rest of the world doesn't even know I exist and probably thinks I'm dead.

God's eyes and this confidence kept him from despairing. And what was even more interesting to me than his life while he was in prison is when he was released, he deliberately chose to love and to bless those who harmed him.

How did he do that? Well, he is the one with his wife, Sabina, that started the ministry of Voice of the Martyrs, which is a ministry to try to come to the aid of those who are being deeply persecuted for the cause of Christ that exists even to this day.

After his release, he did not seek vengeance or vindication. He devoted the rest of his life for serving the persecuted church worldwide. His life, to me, stands in testimony.

[38 : 52] What is my other worldly response to being spoken evil against, to being mistreated, to being reviled?

I pray we would be a church that blesses and forgiving is one of those ways we bless. Let me pray. Father, thank you for this day.

Thank you for Peter's instruction that began calling us to live otherworldly lives that those who see the way we honor you will one day perhaps glorify you and come to faith because of our otherworldly response.

Lord, your kingdom kingdom is upside down. You are the crucified king. There is strength through weakness. Losing one's life is a way to gain it. Blessing those who harm.

Last become first. Greatness is found through servanthood. There is joy and suffering. All of this the world does not know. But you've been called, we have been called to this.

[40 : 10] I pray that this week and this year our affection for you would be cultivated. Our desire to obey you would be sharpened. Thank you, Lord, for calling us to serve you.
Love you. Amen. Amen.