

## 1 Peter 3:8-22

### Week 5 - Smiling Through Suffering

? Can you share about a time when you or someone else disarmed a potentially volatile situation in a clever way?

#### 1 Peter 3:8-22 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For,

“Whoever would love life  
and see good days  
must keep their tongue from evil  
and their lips from deceitful speech.  
<sup>11</sup> They must turn from evil and do good;  
they must seek peace and pursue it.  
<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup> Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” <sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— <sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

#### The Spiritual Big House

Verses 18-19 are a bit cryptic, and scholars have debated Peter’s true meaning for centuries. Who are the spirits in prison? Why were they imprisoned? Where exactly did Christ go when He preached to them? Scholars have interpreted these verses in a number of ways over the years. Peter may have been alluding to fallen angels in these verses. Some have suggested that Peter is saying that between the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ descended to the underworld and preached to deceased human souls. Another interpretation speaks to how the pre-incarnate Christ may have spoke to Noah, preaching repentance from sin. Ultimately, Peter’s true meaning may be lost to us, but we can take comfort in the fact that Christ’s work on the cross justifies us before our Creator. This is incredible news that deserves to be shared, and even Christ wants people to hear about it, so that more people can draw closer to Him.

*For more: See Faithlife Study Bible*

### **A Christ-Centered Response**

? Peter lists a series of behaviors/actions in verses 8-12. How do these behaviors help us reflect Christ?

? In verse 9, Peter explains how we should not repay evil with evil. In what ways have you been tempted to respond to evil in the past?

? What kinds of evil and insults should we expect to see in the world? How can we seek peace as a response to those kinds of things?

? How can we better trust God with ultimate justice when we see evil in the world?

### **Suffering and Sharing**

? Verses 13-18 deal with the topic of suffering. Peter and many early Christians suffered and were challenged because of their beliefs. How does Peter encourage them to respond in this passage?

? In verse 14, Peter says that we are blessed if we “suffer for what is right,” which seems counterintuitive. Have you ever felt blessed after suffering for Christ? How did it compare to how you might have expected it to feel?

? How can we hold tighter to our blessings in the midst of suffering?

? In verse 17, Peter talks about how we can actually suffer more in this life for doing good than if we just indulge our evil impulses. Can you share about a time in your life when this has happened to you?

? Peter says that we should share our faith with gentleness and respect (vs. 16). What does this look like, practically? Why is it important?

**A Side Note...Verses 20-22**

"A comparison is drawn between salvation in the ark and baptism. In both instances, believers are saved through the waters of judgment. The mere mechanical act of baptism does not save, for Peter explicitly says, 'not as a removal of dirt from the body', meaning that the passing of water over the body does not cleanse anyone. Baptism saves you because it represents inward faith ... Christians have generally agreed (irrespective of denominational differences) that water baptism is an outward sign of the inward reality of regeneration, which is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit and which may be received only by grace through faith." - ESV Study Bible

*How has baptism been a meaningful and important part of your Christian life (if you have been baptized)?*

**For Discussion And Accountability**

? 1 Peter 3:8-22 lays out the Gospel message of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and eternal promise in heaven. How can you better prepare to give an account for that hope in your own life?

? Think about your upcoming week. In what situations, relationships, or interactions can you behave as Peter describes in verses 8-12?