

Suffering For Righteous Causes -- Suffering For Doing Good

1 Peter 3:13-22

A. Suffering for doing good occurs in the world around us.

- a. Suffering occurs for various reasons. (both divine & human)
"It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil." (1 Pet. 3:17)
- b. At times when doing good, we will be falsely accused (1 Pet. 3:16)

As found in Peter's letter we are to keep "... a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander....."
(1 Pet. 3:16 - also 'pledge of a good conscience' see 3:21)

Previously he wrote: "Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you for doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us"
(1 Pet. 2:12)

The Scope & Priority Of Doing Good:

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
(Gal. 6:10)

- Sometimes it is very hard to continue to do good to people.

Raising an ungrateful child (Ex. 21:17), taking care of a senile relative, simply trying to help a stranger in need, or being used by a person you considered was a friend,

Earlier Peter has set the context with a call to harmony in the body (1 Pet. 3:8-9): (1) Be sympathetic (2) Love the brothers (3) Be compassionate (4) Be humble (5) Do not return evil for evil.

- From the perspective of the Sinful Nature, suffering for doing good appears to be a deficit, but from the perspective of the New Nature in Christ it is altogether right, good & necessary.

Prior to this Peter quoted from Ps. 34:12-16 where the content dealt with fear of the Lord. (1 Pet. 3:10-12)

Now he exhorts them not to fear as others do:

"... Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." (1 Pet. 3:14)

Geneva Bible "do not be afraid of their threats, do not be troubled

NASV "do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,

KJV "and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled"

In Ps 19:9 we are told that, "The fear of the Lord is pure 'clean' enduring forever". That is why Peter teaches in the previous context: No retaliation, no insult for insult, no repayment of evil for evil; for we are not to act out of fear of mankind but rather we are to do them good!

Those speaking falsely about others seek to strike fear in their opponents.

But our Lord word says, "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." (Lk 6:27-28)

B. Suffering for doing good will bring immeasurable blessing.

"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed." (1 Pet. 3:14)

- a. Peter clearly communicates that God has promised His children blessing.
(1 Pet. 3:9, 12, 14 ; 4:14)

This blessing gives comfort to believers in the present and the future.

Peter assures us that God brings forth both our eternal salvation & His ultimate justice. (1 Pet. 3:18)

This is implied in **1 Pet. 3:19-21**, which has historically been given several kinds of interpretation:

1st, consider the meaning of Jesus Christ preaching to the spirits in prison (3:19),
and 2nd, consider the meaning of Noah and the 8 saved through water, symbolizing baptism. (3:20-21)

- Suffering for doing good will ultimately bring shame upon those who slander
“... may be ashamed of their slander.....”(1 Pet. 3:16b)
“For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.”
(1 Pet. 2:15)

- It is a foregone conclusion that Christians will experience some degree of suffering when living a righteous life, (2 Tim 3:12). If and when we do, this will bring praise to God.

In **Mat.5:16** our Lord said “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

The Right Reason For Doing Good:

- b. When we suffer for doing good it must be because of righteousness.

Thus when we suffer for doing good, it is because of Him – the source of all righteousness.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”
(Mat. 5:10-11)

C. Suffering for doing good compels us to entrust ourselves into the hands of God.

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as LORD.” (1 Pet. 3:15)

- a. This requires a right understanding of submission (1 Pet. 3:22 ; 2:15-17 ; 4:19),
with Christ being our example (1 Pet. 3:17-18 ; 2:21),
and having the same attitude of willingness to suffer (1 Pet. 4:1).

As we set apart Christ in our hearts as LORD, then he takes priority above our beloved family, our rigorous work routine, our ambitious dreams for the future, our educational achievement, and our respectable reputation.

If He is LORD, then we follow in his footsteps, willing and ready to suffer for doing good.

That is why Peter begins with the ultimate question:

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?” (1 Pet. 3:13)

- b. Christ Jesus, having complete authority with all in submission to him (1 Pet. 3:22) suffered for doing good in perfect submission to the Father (1 Pet. 3:18)

Peter has previously spoken of Christ that,

“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”
(1 Pet. 2:23)

So too, when we live in right submission to authority in the civil realm, in the work place, and in the family;
then we need not fear the threat of those who seek to harm us, (1 Pet. 3:14)
then we will be prepared to give a reason for our everlasting hope, (1 Pet. 3:15)
and then we will have a clear conscience before all as we do so. (1 Pet. 3:16a, 21)

Peter has told us more than once,

“But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”
(1 Pet. 2:21)

“Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”(3:18)

Christ, “was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.” (1 Pet. 3:18)

And ... Christ, “has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand” (1 Pet. 3:22) Victorious!