

Series: 1 Peter

Title: For Righteousness Sake

Text: 1 Peter 3: 14-17

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

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1 Peter 3: 14: But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

I. AS BELIEVERS WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, “BUT AND IF” WE SUFFER IN THIS WORLD FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE

For righteousness sake includes 3 things: for Christ sake himself, for the gospel of righteousness, for our walking in God's righteousness.

1. The Lord Jesus said this word “For righteousness sake” means “for my sake”—Christ himself.

Matthew 5: 10: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:...11: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake...10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles....39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it....

- Our text has to do with suffering for Christ himself: 1 Peter 2: 7-8; 4: 14—for the name of Christ.

The righteousness of God is manifest in Christ Jesus.

2. The Lord Jesus said that “for righteousness sake” means for “for the gospels sake”

Mark 10:29: And Jesus answered...[he spoke of believers leaving—repenting from serving] house, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, lands, for my sake, and the gospel's...

Our text has to do with the righteousness we speak of—1 Peter 3: 15. The believer's doctrine—our doctrine—is the righteousness of God manifest in Christ our Righteousness. THE gospel—the good news by which every believer is saved—proclaims the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Note: Believers believe and speak that which is right, according to God's word, not because we are trying to be different, or contentious, or mean but because God is OUR Savior, our Father, Christ is our Master, we have been made one with him. We speak that which honors God. Because we owe all to him, love him.

God alone is righteous—all men are unrighteous, dead in trespasses and in sins in Adam and by birth—this is a rejoicing to the believer so we tell others

God is right to choose whom he will and pass by whom he will, for no man deserves any favor from God—we rejoice in the GRACE of God, so we speak of this our hope

It is God who justifies his elect in righteousness—God did not pass by our sins but laid them on Christ and paid the wages of sin—death—he accomplished our justification. We cannot speak enough of Christ's finished work—or strongly enough

It is God who reconciled us to himself, making us the righteousness of God in Christ—Christ is our perfect robe of Righteousness—that is why we speak so highly of him.

It is God who gives life, faith, repentance and receives all the glory for calling us to life—he did that in us—that is why we speak the truth in love.

Our righteous God, Christ the Son of God and our gospel is hated by natural man—we hated God when we were dead. The gospel is offensive because the gospel declares man dead and the righteousness of man to be nothing; the gospel declares salvation is opposite to man's carnal reasoning; the gospel excludes all boasting of men. God's doctrine is considered licentious doctrine by the self-righteous men of this world. Therefore, believers can expect persecution from men for the sake of righteousness--the gospel of God's righteousness—for the sake of Christ in whom we rest. We will suffer because our gospel gives all glory to the triune God, in the God-Man Christ Jesus, none to man.

3. "For righteousness sake" means our manner of life. The new life, new motive, new conduct, is because of Christ our Righteousness—Christ dwells in by the Holy Spirit of God. I Peter 3: 17.

Saints have been sanctified—set apart in regeneration by the Spirit of God--from this world—from both the irreligious and the religious of this world. But the chief endeavor of the unregenerate man is to silence his convicting conscience. He may use religion: try to hide among the Trees of God's planting in his fig leaves, trying to silence his conscience by speaking highly and often of his will and his works, of his humility or his holiness. Or he may try to silence his conscience with distractions of pleasure, or business, always running from scene-to-scene, keeping constantly occupied—avoiding everything that reminds him of God or his responsibility to submit to God.

Whichever the case, when he meets one truly sanctified by God, one who by God's grace rests robed in the righteousness of Christ, one who speaks only of the righteousness of God, one whose one delight it is to walk and worship in God's righteousness alone, it awakes his conscience and it condemns him. So he persecutes—pushes away—tries to silence the one who is making his conscience scream.

Galatians 4: 29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

1 Peter 4:4: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:

So "for righteousness sake" means

1. For the sake of Christ our Righteousness
2. For the sake of the gospel of God—the righteousness of God revealed in Christ
3. For the sake of doing that which is right—we no longer walk with the religion of this world nor the ungodly

II. IF YOU SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE—BE HAPPY—FOR YOUR BLESSED OF GOD.

1. The Kingdom of God is yours

Matthew 5: 10: Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11: Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

2. The Spirit of God rests on you--1 Peter 4: 14—Peter was told by what death he should glorify God
3. It is a high honor to suffer for his sake—Ac 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.
4. Through suffering God will grow in grace.

Romans 5: 3 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

III. THE HOLY SPIRITS DIRECT INSTRUCTION TO US.

These are not just the words of Peter. This is not just a list of commands. These are the sweet reminders that the Holy Spirit speaks into our hearts, comforting us and guiding us into all truth, in the midst of persecution.

1. We saw that “for righteousness sake: is 1. God in Christ—God our Savior, Christ our Righteousness himself so behold the Lord God for whom you suffer—Christ himself.

1 Peter 3: 14: Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts

Do not be fearful or troubled *by* your persecutors.

Philippians 1: 28: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;” (Php 1:28-29 AV)

But in our text, it also means, be not afraid of that which your persecutors are afraid of, nor troubled as they are troubled. Instead, fear God. This is a reference to Isaiah 8:12-13.

Isaiah 8: 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. 14: And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The LORD is the ALMIGHTY God over all--he is indeed the LORD of hosts--in all things all glory belongs to him. The Lord shall be for a refuge, a hiding place, a place of safety and protection to you who fear him.

2 Corinthians 1:5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

No suffering is pleasant at the time. But *the source of the believer’s happiness is beyond the fear of change*. God reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ—perfect, complete, unchangeable acceptance in Christ. Remember the Lord’s description of the Irresistible Holy Spirit—the wind blows where it will. So the Holy Spirit our Comforter cannot be stopped from comforting our hearts in the midst of suffering. This world is full of change--if our happiness depended on us, or something in this life we would be miserable. But because our happiness is from God’s eternal purpose and love—in Christ—we have security and peace which settles the heart though we suffer. Our God is the never-ending, unchangeable source and object of our happiness, blessing and comfort.

2. Secondly, we saw that “for righteousness sake” means “for our gospel”. The Spirit of God emboldens us in the heart to speak his word.

1 Peter 3:15: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Be ready to answer with the gospel of Christ. Do so in meekness and fear toward God that is, be not afraid of man or of his terror but fear God. If we speak with meekness and fear before God then we will speak the truth in love. What is the hope that is in you? Christ Jesus the hope of glory.

Colossians 1: 27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Illustration: Soldiers in Transvaal, South Africa-1860's—4-9-4; 6 further on.

3. Thirdly, we saw “for righteousness sake” is doing—because Christ dwells in us, the Spirit having purged our conscience from dead works, now we worship and walk in God’s righteousness—not after this world whether it be the religion of this world or the irreligious.

1 Peter 3: 16: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

When will they be ashamed? (1 Peter 2: 12)—in the day of visitation is either in the day God’s invincible grace in this life or in the day of judgment, but either way they shall behold your good works. What will they behold?

- THEY WILL BEHOLD CHRIST HIMSELF, not you, not Christ in you, but Christ himself
- THEY WILL BEHOLD THAT EVERYTHING YOU SAID OF CHRIST WAS TRUE, your gospel was true.
- THEY BEHOLD THAT ALL YOUR WORKS WERE TO SIMPLY KEEP YOU OUT OF THE WAY THAT THEY MIGHT SEE CHRIST

So though you suffer:

1. For Christ your Righteousness
2. For the gospel of Christ your Righteousness
3. For walking after Christ in that which he says is right

Still,

1. Sanctify the Lord in your hearts—He is our Sanctuary and Righteousness and Comforter
2. Be ready to answer any man with the gospel of Christ your righteousness
3. Keep worshipping and walking in Christ your Righteousness—for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil doing.

AMEN!

