

1 Peter 3

1 Peter 3:1-7 Guidance to Fit the Culture

- v1-2 *Likewise, submit*--relates to what was just discussed--putting others before self
 - Peter takes the same attitude as Paul in **1 Cor 7:13-16**: they both advise the Christian wife to stay with her non-Christian husband & refrain from preaching or arguing
 - They do tell her simply to be a good wife; the silent preaching of a lovely life will break down the barriers of prejudice and hostility, and win her husband for her new Master
 - She must be submissive. It is not a spineless submission that is meant but is the submission which is based on the death of pride and the desire to serve; not of fear but of perfect love
 - v1 *Refuse*: it was unthinkable for a wife to change religion while her husband did not
 - If the husband became a Christian, then he would bring his wife & household with him
 - For a wife to become a Christian by herself was unprecedented & produced acute problems
 - Under Jewish law a woman was owned by her husband as he owned his sheep
 - For Greeks, the duty of the woman was "to remain indoors & to be obedient to her husband"
 - Under Roman law a woman had no rights and remained a child forever
 - v2 *Pure*--the wife must display a lovely chastity & fidelity founded on love
 - *Reverent*--live in the conviction that the whole world is the Temple of God & that all life is lived in the presence of Christ
- v3-6 *Outward*--not condemnation of external adornment but a warning against preoccupation with it
 - v3 Since women had no part in public life, they tended to have a high interest in dress & adornment
 - In Greek & Roman culture, personal adornments were elaborate, decadent & expensive
 - The Old Testament does not view adornment so favorably--**Isaiah 3:18-24** cites the day of judgment: "In that day the Lord will take away the finery:" and lists ~two dozen types of items & replacement woes
 - v4 Peter pleads for the graces which adorn the heart, which are precious in the sight of God
 - God prefers to see beauty of character, which will never fade
 - This concept of beauty is in high contrast with the world's view today
 - v5-6 Holy women are adorned more by their hope in God than by external adornments
 - *Do not give way*--encouragement to those anxious about submitting to an unbelieving husband
 - A Christian wife must live in selfless service, in goodness and in serene trust. That would be the best sermon she could preach to win her husband for Christ.
- v7 *Considerate. . . respect*--the role of women has changed, but these words still stand
 - ***Likewise/same way*--both were to submit to each other despite different roles & functions**
 - *Vessel*--as are we all, shaped by the potter for His purposes
 - *Weaker*--physical, not moral, spiritual or mental strength--designed by God for different tasks
 - In heavily agrarian & warlike cultures, focus on physical labor & combat ability predominated
 - The Christian ethic was new: it was reciprocal & never placed all the responsibility on one side
 - A marriage in which all the privileges are on one side & all the obligations on the other is bound to be imperfect with every chance of failure
 - In the Roman moral code, all the obligation was on the wife & all the privilege with the husband. The Christian ethic never grants a privilege without a corresponding obligation
 - Women did not share in the worship of the Greeks & the Romans
 - A husband must be understanding, considerate and sensitive to the feelings of his wife
 - Chivalry was virtually unknown in the ancient world

- **Matthew Henry:** Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him..

- ⇒ Our relationships with God can never be right if our relationships with others are wrong
- ⇒ Christianity stressed that women have equal spiritual rights as heirs--a revolutionary idea!
- ⇒ In a healthy Christian marriage, the husband and wife should lovingly and sacrificially put each other first before themselves, as fellow members of the body of Christ.
- ⇒ Remember that Jesus submitted: to becoming human; to His earthly parents; to His Father; to His disciples when He washed their feet; to those who unjustly tried Him, scourged Him and crucified Him

1 Peter 3:8-12 The Marks of the Christian Life

- Peter gathers together the great qualities of the Christian life in themes that recur in the NT
- *v8 Like-minded*--Christian unity: a plea and more that rings throughout the New Testament
 - Jesus prayed that we might all be one, as he & his Father were one, as was the early church
 - **John 17:21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
 - **Acts 4:32** All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.
 - Paul often exhorted unity since divisions would degrade the message & effectiveness of Christianity
 - **Ephesians 2:13-14** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
 - *Sympathetic*--showing a sincere & enduring caring for each other
 - **1 Corinthians 12:26** If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.
 - **Barclay:** One thing is clear, sympathy and selfishness cannot coexist. So long as the self is the most important thing in the world, there can be no such thing as sympathy; sympathy depends on the willingness to forget self and to identify oneself with the pains and sorrows of others. Sympathy comes to the heart when Christ reigns there.
 - *Love one another*--the proof of Christianity living in one's heart; love of God & love of others go hand in hand: one cannot exist without the other
 - **John 13:34-35** "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
 - *Compassion*--it is too easy to lose the sense of pity and still easier to be satisfied with a sentimentalism which feels a moment's comfortable sorrow & yet does nothing
 - **Barclay:** Pity is of the very essence of God and compassion of the very being of Jesus Christ; a pity so great that God sent his only Son to die for men, a compassion so intense that it took Christ to the Cross. There can be no Christianity without compassion.
 - *Humble*--Christian humility comes from two things:
 - We must be constantly aware of our utter dependence on God; we can do nothing on our own
 - We have a new standard of comparison--not to others, but to Christ
- *v9 Forgiveness*--as we receive forgiveness from God, we are to forgive others
 - One cannot exist without the other; such forgiveness is the mark of the Christian
 - **Matthew 6:12, 14-15** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- The blessing that a Christian is to give to a reviler includes serving them, praying for their salvation, & desiring their well-being
 - **Matthew 5:44-45** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- ⇒ The fact that we do not try & take vengeance on those who abuse us is what separates us as Christians
- v10-11 Peter summed up how to experience rich joy & fulness of life even in the midst of a hostile environment by quoting **Psalm 34:12-16a**
 - The world's idea of good days & the Christian's view of good days are totally different: the world thinks great wealth at any cost is gives the good life while the Christian stores up treasures in heaven
 - The Christian must actively avoid evil & seek peace since Jesus, our Lord, is King of Peace
- v12 This does not mean that God will not hear a prayer of repentance; though nothing escapes His view, He extends His mercy to those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior
- ⇒ These concepts don't mesh with today's world; you can expect pushback when you show them

1 Peter 3:13-22 Suffering for Righteousness

- v13 *Eager (zelotes)--zealot*: love goodness passionately, as the most fanatical patriot loves country
 - Only when one falls in love with goodness do the wrong things lose their fascination & power
 - *Harm*--no spiritual harm can come to one who stands firm in believing in Jesus; salvation is sure!
 - **Isaiah 50:9** It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who will condemn me?
- v14-17 Not only must believers endure persecution, but they also have a holy obligation to live honorably in the midst of their suffering
 - v14 *Blessed*--privileged or honored; enduring trials makes one stronger, as iron passed thru the fire
 - Suffering is sometimes used by God to shape or refine us, while our endurance is a testimony to our faith
 - **1 Peter 5:10** And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.
 - **Matthew 5:10** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - We must keep in mind that all earthly things are transitory but our salvation inheritance is imperishable
 - **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
 - We must pray for the ~200 million Christians worldwide that face harassment, torture, & even death
 - More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in the previous 19 combined & it continues--last Sunday in the Congo, 49 Christians were slaughtered in their church by Islamic terrorists
 - Yet, as in the early church, the church grows most during the worst persecutions
 - **Mark 13:13** Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.
 - v15a *Sanctify Christ*--set Jesus apart in your hearts as Lord, where He prefers to be worshiped
 - When one's heart is committed to Christ it will not be set on earthly things; when you live in submissive communion with the Lord Jesus, loving & obeying Him, you have nothing to fear
 - *Defense*--Greek *apologia* from which we get *apologetics*; every Christian **must** know & be ready to articulate what & especially *in whom* they believe and why; this requires knowledge of Scripture
 - **Matthew 10:18-20** On My account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to respond or what

to say. In that hour you will be given what to say. ²⁰For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

- *v15b-16 Gentleness & respect*--the case for Christianity must be presented with winsomeness & love, and with that wise tolerance which realizes that it is not given to any person to possess the whole truth
 - The most compelling argument is that presented by a truly Christian life--one beyond reproach
 - *Good conscience*--a life free of ongoing & unconfessed sin void of any sense of guilt
 - Continuing to speak absolute truth in love will drive those who have been speaking evil of us feel guilty
 - **Warren Wiersbe:** Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy.
- *v17 Suffer for doing good*--if we suffer for Christ, great will be our reward in heaven
 - **Philippians 3:8** More than that, I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ
 - **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
 - **Matthew 7:14** But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- *v18 Also suffered*--even Christ suffered unjustly; His faithful perseverance is an example for us all
 - Sin broke the relationship between God & people; Christ's death restored the lost relationship
 - The Temple sacrifices had to be repeated daily because they only foreshadowed Jesus dying just once
 - The Christian made to suffer unjustly for his/her faith is walking the way Jesus walked
 - *To bring* (Jewish)--used in OT of bringing to God those who are to be priests; (Greek)--derived from the giver of access to a king => Jesus gives us access to God, spiritually in this life, fully in the next
 - **Exodus 29:4** Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water.
- *v19-20 Imprisoned spirits*--potentially "Hades" (*Sheol*), rather than "hell"
 - Hell is the place of the punishment of the wicked; Hades was the place where all the dead went
 - The Jews had a very shadowy conception of life beyond the grave; initially, Hades/Sheol was where all who died went where they were separated from life and light and God
 - Later emerged the idea of stages & divisions; for some it was to last forever; for others it was a prison in which they were held until the final judgment of God's wrath (Isa 24:21-22; 2 Pet 2:4; Rev 20:1-7)
 - Differing approaches have been taken to this text, including eliminating it, limiting it, etc; yet:
 - **Barclay:** Many in repeating the creed have found the phrase "He descended into hell" either meaningless or bewildering, and have tacitly agreed to set it on one side and forget it. But it contains these three great truths--that Jesus Christ not only tasted death but drained the cup of death, that the triumph of Christ is universal and that there is no corner of the universe into which the grace of God has not reached.
 - Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD; God saved Noah & his wife, his three sons, & their wives
- *v21 Symbolizes*--an earthly expression of a spiritual reality; hence Noah's ark (with his family aboard, riding to safety) is analogous to Christians who are saved by being in "the ark of Christ"
 - *Baptism*--not by water but by being brought into union with Christ through the Holy Spirit
 - Not merely a physical cleansing, but a spiritual cleansing of the whole heart, soul & life
 - *Pledge*--every contract required an answer to: "Do you accept the terms of this contract, and bind yourself to observe them?" God is asking: "Do you accept the terms of my service?"
 - Our baptism symbolizes our resurrection from a watery grave to new life in Jesus
 - The whole idea and effectiveness of baptism is dependent on the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- *v22 The work of Christ has been fully completed, yielding complete triumph*
 - ⇒ Suffering can be the context for one's greatest triumph, as seen in the example of the Lord Jesus