

TITLE: READY TO SUFFER

TEXT: 1 PETER 3:8-22

INTRO: **Ch. 1** – Peter focused our attention on the finish line (the reward of Heaven), then gave general exhortations (be prepared, be holy, remembering that you’ve been born again of incorruptible things...Christ and the Word).
Ch. 2 – 1st he reminded us of our ‘chosen’ status as God’s people (v. 9), then gave specific instructions regarding our influence & reputation among non-Christians (government & superiors), even indicating we might have to suffer for well doing (w/ Christ as an example).
Ch. 3 – Christian’s responsibilities continued (wives & husbands), and now (v. 8-12) attitudes toward each other. Notice that *none* of these relationships are new (non-Christians are amenable to the laws; have superiors, wives/husbands, etc.), but Christians have greater responsibilities in these relationships, and in a sense, have to relearn them (for the influence & reputation of Christianity).

I. BEING PREPARED TO SUFFER (v. 8-12):

- A. This is a transitional passage – from the duties of a Christian towards non-Christians, to suffering as a Christian (**3:13–4:19**). He’s already discussed our influence on those outside the church. Now he stresses the necessity of a Christ-like attitude *in* the church. This attitude is going to be **crucial** in facing the coming persecutions from outside the church.
- B. (**v. 8**) Be ye all of one mind (imperative)! Unity! Surely Peter knew this was a ridiculous command! Surely he knew it was impossible for us all to believe and teach *the same thing*! Apparently, this is **not** impossible.
 - 1. Paul made this point even clearer in **1 Cor 1:10** – speak the same thing; no divisions among you; perfectly joined together in the same mind & same judgment! HOW DO WE DO THIS??
 - 2. Peter answers this in **4:1** (same mind as Christ) & **4:11** (speak as the oracles (utterances; words) of God). God is perfectly consistent. If we speak **ONLY** what He has given us, then we will all be speaking the same thing! (also **1 John 1:7**)
 - 3. This means we have to understand the Bible alike...so we then have to study the Bible openly together (w/all believers). *“Having compassion one of another”* (lit. ‘to feel or suffer with’); *lovers of the brethren, full of pity* (compassionate), *courteous*.
- C. (**v. 9**) *not rendering* (give back) *evil for evil or railing for railing* (slander) – i.e., the “he started it” excuse won’t work! Remember Christ’s example (**2:23**–“*reviled not again; threatened not*”)...*return blessing! This is your calling! You’ll be blessed back* (definitely by God, & maybe even by the person that was slandering you) – if you “bless them that curse you” (**Mt 5:44**).
- D. (**v. 10**) *He that wants to love life and see good days* (in other words, *all of us!*), *let him refrain* (imperative) *his tongue from evil*. “*Evil*” here is Greek “*kakos*” -bad (general use). Don’t speak ‘bad,’ (‘if you can’t say something nice...’). **Eph 4:29** - let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth, but that which is useful for edifying.
- E. (**v. 11**) *Let him eschew* (avoid) *evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it* (quoting from **Psalms 34:12-17**). Why?
- F. (**v. 12**) *Because the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous...* God takes care of His own. But his face is against evil doers.

II. OUR ATTITUDE IN SUFFERING (v. 13-17):

- A. (**v. 13**) Who will harm you, if you’re doing what’s right? Peter doesn’t say nobody will harm you (**v. 14**). He asks who it is. The answer is...not God! If God is on our side, who can be against us? Anyone can and will be against us, but they will not prevail.
- B. (**v. 14**) *But even if you do suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy (blessed) are ye*. Why? God’s eyes are on you (**v. 12**). This attitude really takes hard work to achieve & hold, depending on the level of suffering! (**Mt 13:21** – persecution causes apostasy; no roots)
- C. (**v. 15**) The Christian is to be submissive to authority & endure suffering, but this doesn’t mean we *are not* to stand up for the truth!
 - 1. *Sanctify* (hallow, make holy) *God in your heart*. God IS holy, but not in every heart! Honor Him in your own heart first!
 - 2. *Be ready always to give an answer* (defense) *for the hope in you*. **Defend your Christianity!!** (but do it meekly & fearfully.)
 - 3. Remember, Peter wasn’t prepared with an answer when the rooster crowed! You think Peter wanted another opportunity? You think he wants anyone to deny Christ again the way he did?
- D. (**v. 16**) *Having a good conscience...* this is further explanation of **how** to give the defense of your Christianity.
 - 1. Do it with a good conscience (trained by God...knowing God is watching and is pleased!)
 - 2. And do it, knowing that the person you’re answering might *say* something bad about you, but can’t substantiate it!
- E. (**v. 17**) It’s better to suffer for doing right, than for doing wrong. One way you *may* suffer; the other way suffering is guaranteed!

III. CHRIST’S PURPOSE IN SUFFERING (v. 18-22):

- A. (**v. 18**) Reconciliation offered
 - 1. Remember, Christ also suffered: **1)** Much more than we ever suffer; **2)** for us; **3)** Undeserved - the just for the unjust
 - 2. Purpose – to bring us to God...to reconcile a broken relation (broken because of our sins)
- B. (**v. 19-20**) Reconciliation rejected
 - 1. (**v. 19**) By the same spirit that resurrected him, he preached to the spirits in prison (when, where, & how did he preach?)
 - 2. (**v. 20**) Answer: By Noah (**2 Pet 2:5** – *a preacher of righteousness*). The Spirit was in Noah. Christ preached through Noah to the spirits *now* in prison, who were disobedient in the days of Noah. *They rejected Christ’s offer of reconciliation (by Noah)!
 - 3. Why this example? To show the patience of God – he gave them 120 years (**Gen 6:3**)!
- C. (**v. 21-22**) Reconciliation accepted
 - 1. Baptism is the antitype (something coming from a pattern; resembling something). It resembles the flood. It now saves us!!!
 - 2. The parenthetical has to be given because of the probable incorrect assumptions they’d make (that *ceremonial* baptisms save).
 - a. *NOT* the putting away of the spiritual filth of the flesh (ceremonial baptisms)...these were *not* commanded by God.
 - b. *BUT*, the answer (inquiry) of a good conscience. A person with a good conscience asks what must I do? Then he does it!
 - 3. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Noah was saved *by/through* water. But it took both parts...man’s (the ark), & God’s (the water). Now baptism saves us, but again it takes both parts...man’s (baptism-total obedience), & God’s (resurrection of J.C.).

CONCLUSION: Christ (our example) suffered in order to reconcile God and man. Have you been reconciled? Belief, repentance, confession, & baptism (the last step to become a Christian) save us (**Ac 22:16**)! Let this water save you today...rising to walk in newness of life (**Rom 6:4**)!