

Cornerstone Church

March 5, 2017

**Sermon Series: Practicing Our Readiness Drills for
Christ's Return - Seeking God's Guidance from 1st and
2nd Peter**

Today's Sermon: Are You Suffering for Doing Good? It
Could Be (Is) God's Will

Today's Passage: 1 Peter 3:13-17

[13] Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? [14] But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, [15] but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, [16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (ESV)

Introduction:

Main Point: Generally Christians should have no fear of harm by Christ-hating non-believers because Christians live such gracious, kind and giving lives. But, when it does happen the Lord is over-qualified to handle the situation and bring about a victory and blessing for the innocently oppressed Christ-honoring Christian.

Review

1 Peter 2:12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)

- In a normal world, (not a world controlled by Muslim fanatics, or Hindu extremists) Christians should live their lives without any fear because everyone loves people

who are kind, forgiving and giving, who feed the poor, heal diseases, and care for the widows and orphans. **[13]**

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

- Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (ESV)
- If a person seems to have lots of enemies, they need to be asking if they are zealous for good.
- Peter uses the word zealous to describe the fervor of action. This means that Christians must exceed whatever is the norm for the world.

- Yet, even in a normal world (the kind Peter lived in and ours today in America) there will be the occasional unprovoked attack against a godly believer for no reason at all. **[14] But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,**

- The word "suffer" is in the optative mood in Greek and is normally translated "might suffer". In other words the possibility is rare, but it could happen.
- When it does happen, i.e. when a Christian loses his job for righteous reasons, or goes to prison for his faith, or has his life savings and business confiscated, they should consider themselves blessed!

- Peter instructs us to have no fear of them, literally, "the fear of the fear of them." That fear would be whatever it is they are using to intimidate you into silence or disobedience. Loss of job, jail time, loss of home and savings, these are all the tools persecutors will use to get Christians to remain silent. Even death is a tool of fear.

- Matthew 10:26-33

- Peter tells us how not to be afraid, he says **but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy**
 - "In your hearts" means at the very core of your beliefs, that part of you that determines your decisions and

behavior, that part of you that is so convinced in the veracity of what you believe that nothing on earth can change your mind. What is it you are to believe?

- We are to “honor Christ the Lord as holy”. First of all we will dishonor Him by saying He is unreliable and won’t keep His promises. So instead we will do the opposite which is believe him when he says he will protect us, that is honoring Him.
 - Honoring Him as holy means he must protect his children. He can do no other. Holiness means doing what is right (righteousness) and never doing evil, (abandoning His children and violating his promises and becoming untruthful).
- The persecution we fear usually involves legal proceedings and being brought up on charges. Peter tells us to get ready for that possibility by **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,**
- “Prepared to make a defense” implies a legal defense in front of a judge.
 - What we are defending is the hope that is within us, in other words we are defending why we obeyed Jesus despite the possible costs and why we are so sure he will come through for us now, and then.
 - We will get some help in that moment but it pays to know ahead of time what you will say to the judge. Here is what Jesus says about that moment: **Matthew 10:19-20 [19] When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. [20] For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (ESV)**
- And, when sued, we are to be sure to be perfectly honest with the judge and reveal any and all wrongdoing on our part that may have led to our arrest, or lawsuit, or imprisonment: **[16] having a good conscience, so that, when**

you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (ESV)

- And heaven forbid that anyone accusing us would be proven correct instead of being put to shame. Wouldn’t that be awkward? No, we need to be sure we are suffering for doing good rather than evil just as our Savior suffered for us.