

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 9TH - 10TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

HUSBANDS & WIVES (1 PETER 3:1-7)

In the culture of the ancient world, it was almost unthinkable for a wife to adopt a different religion than her husband.

- How should **Christian women married to unbelievers** conduct themselves in the home?
- What if their **husband doesn't share in or is opposed** to their faith?
- Peter's instruction is similar ("likewise," vs. 1) to what **he spoke in the previous chapter.**

"SUBMIT YOURSELVES..."

Christians are to submit ourselves to **governing authorities** (2:13-14), to **employers** (2:18), and we're to **submit ourselves in marriage.**

- The word "**likewise**" doesn't mean women should **submit like their husband is the Emperor or their employer.**
- It also doesn't mean women are to submit to **all men in a general sense.**

To be submissive to a husband means to **willingly honor a husband's authority** and follow his leadership within the marriage.

- By no means does this **mean a wife is inferior** to her husband, it just means that God has given men and women **different roles within the home.**
- The husband lays down his life in **loving, sacrificial leadership, and the wife displays her trust** in her husband's leadership by following him. But what if **the husband is a bad leader?**

Submission in marriage follows the same principles as submission in other spheres—we submit to **God-appointed authority out of reverence for God**, unless that authority directs us to sin (Acts 4:19-20).

- A wife's submission is a **powerful expression of her trust in God.**
- Her obedience to God and faith can accomplish great things, **even without a word** (vs. 1b).

When an unbelieving spouse observes a "**pure, reverent**" life—it has a powerful effect on them (vs. 2).

- True **goodness and beauty aren't external**—those things fade away over time (vs. 3).
- What's **inside of our hearts is what God sees as valuable** and what's proven to be the most beautiful over time (vs. 4).
- A "**gentle and quiet spirit**" describes a woman with a strong inner peace—not someone who is **harsh, abrasive, or conceited.**

THIS KIND OF "HOLY WOMAN" PUTS HER HOPE IN GOD.

She adorns herself by this kind of trust and demonstrates it by **choosing willingly to submit to her husband**, even as Sarah did to Abraham (vs. 5-6).

- Sarah followed Abraham even when it was difficult, and **he was wrong** (Gen. 12:10-20).
- Sarah honored Abraham by **giving him respect** ("**calling him Lord**").

Husbands are to "**live with their wives in an understanding way**"—a godly husband is respectful, gracious, loving, and **sensitive to his wife's needs** (vs. 7).

- He's also **aware of her femininity and honors her differences** ("as with a weaker partner") instead of making her feel shame because she doesn't think, talk, process emotions, or make decisions **like him or other men.**

A husband is to **recognize and honor his wife's equality**—she is a "**coheir of the grace of life.**"

- Her differences as a woman by no **means signify inferiority.** The failure to live as a godly husband has spiritual consequences—**it can and will hinder prayer!**
- A husband's spiritual health depends, in significant measure, on the way **he treats his wife.**

DO GOOD (1 PETER 3:8-12)

Peter now sums up what he's been saying ("finally," vs 8) about how we're to live as Christian **citizens, employees, and spouses in spaces** that may not share our values.

- First, we're to be "**like-minded**" with other Christians.
- That means we're to **agree on the essentials of the Christian faith**, and we're to show grace and charity on the doctrinal minors. Disunity is **confusing for unbelievers!**

The culture of every group of believers is to be characterized by us being "**sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble**" people (vs. 8b).

- Unfortunately, there are times when we can instead display a kind of **self-righteous, angry, unmerciful, cold-hearted pride** within the church.
- The test is to see if we're really people marked by Christ's love comes when we're **insulted and wronged** (vs. 9).

We are called to never "**pay back evil for evil,**" but instead to "**bles**" those who wrong us, since this is what we were called to by Jesus Himself (Matt. 5:44-47).

- When we respond to evil with blessing, **we ourselves will be blessed** (vs. 9).
- This is quite a teaching from a man who **chopped off a person's ear in retaliation at one point in his life!** Peter has found a better way.

Only the **radical love and goodness of Jesus displayed in the lives of His followers** can break the Satanic cycle of hateful retaliation in our world.

- Vs. 10-12 quotes Ps. 34:12-16 to demonstrate the blessing that comes from those who **turn away from evil** and choose goodness instead.
- God sees and honors those who choose good, but God **sets His face against** those who do evil.

SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (1 PETER 3:13-17)

If we're devoted to good, and **we're sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble people who don't retaliate**, and the eyes of the Lord are on us, and His ears are open to our prayers—**who then will harm us** (vs. 13)?

- Even if we do suffer for righteousness, **God blesses us in that**, so even our persecutors can't truly harm us (vs. 14). So, we don't need to live in **fear or intimidation.**

"DO NOT FEAR THEM OR BE INTIMIDATED."

Fear or intimidation towards Christians in some parts of the world looks like **threats of bodily harm, imprisonment, and/or death.**

- For us, it often just means threats of **social ridicule**, insulting words, or getting "**canceled.**"
- The presence or possibility of suffering for **doing good, speaking truth, or living for Christ shouldn't make us shrink back in fear.**

In the center of our hearts, **there should be one holy and sovereign Lord** that we live to honor and serve—**Jesus Christ** (vs. 15a).

- If we're living to **please people**, be comfortable, or to be accepted by the culture at large; we're going to shrink back in **fear and compromise.**
- **As we settle in our hearts** who it is we regard as holy and who it is we want to please in our lives, we also prepare ourselves to **defend our faith.**

We're to be ready at any time to give a "**defense**" (*apologia*, "**an intelligent reasoning in a court of law**") to anyone who asks us a reason for the hope that we have in us (vs. 15b).

- We should be prepared to **give an answer when we're asked**—"**Why are you a Christian?**" "**Why do you believe the Bible?**" "**What makes your religion different from others?**" "**Why do you believe in God?**" "**Aren't all religions the same?**"

Those of us with **naturally combative and argumentative personalities** love this verse, but we usually forget to read vs. 16 & 17.

- Do this with "**gentleness,**" "**reverence,**" and a "**clear conscience,**" making sure our good conduct in Christ speaks for itself.
- If our "**apologia**" ever resorts to us being snarky, abrasive, rude, unkind, and disrespectful—**we've lost.**

CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED (1 PETER 3:18-22)

How can **good things and blessings come about from someone choosing** to willingly suffer for good?

- Through His godly suffering, **Jesus brought us to God** (vs. 18).
- As the only one who **was ever truly righteous, Jesus suffered for us, the unrighteous.**
- He died a real physical death, but **the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead.**

Then Peter gives us two vivid illustrations that reassure us of **Christ's victory and our security.**

- There are at least **eighteen major theological theories** to explain what Peter is saying in vs. 19.
- This verse seems to describe the **period** after Jesus' resurrection and before His ascension into heaven. One theory is that Peter is saying that Jesus went to the place where **disobedient supernatural powers are imprisoned.**

These were the spirits who were **disobedient in the days of Noah** (vs. 20).

- We have evidence that this was a time of great evil for both demons and humans, as there was an **ungodly mingling of humans and the demonic** (Gen. 6:1-2).
- Jesus went to this place where these **disobedient spirits were imprisoned** and proclaimed to them his victory over death, sin, and Satan.

SPEAKING OF NOAH...

In the days of Noah, there was **great evil which led God to judge the world by a great flood.**

- But God provided a **way of salvation for His people** through the ark.
- Even as Noah and his family's salvation from the judgment of God was **connected with water**, so the Christian's salvation is connected with water—**the water of baptism** (vs. 21).

The **water of the flood washed away sin and wickedness** and brought a new world with a fresh start before God. The water of baptism **signifies the exact same thing**, and points to the transformation of the old to the new.

- Peter is quick to point out that it isn't **the actual water** washing of baptism that saves us, but the **spiritual reality** behind the immersion in water.

What **really saves us** is the, "pledge of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"—this is, a **conscience made good through the completed work of Jesus.**

- Baptism demonstrates this, but it doesn't accomplish it: **only Christ can do that.** After Jesus suffered for doing good; **He had the ultimate triumph** (vs. 22). God will honor us as we **follow Christ's example.**

HONOR THE LORD IN YOUR MARRIAGE (VS. 1-7)

- To **husbands**—are we being respectful, gracious, loving, and sensitive to our wives' needs? Are we **recognizing her equality** and treating her with respect?
- To **wives**—are you showing respect, honor, and submission to your husbands? Are you letting your **inner beauty and goodness** win him over as you obey and follow God?

PURSUE GOODNESS (VS. 8-12)

- Would others describe you as a **sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble person?**
- Are you pursuing unity within the body of Christ, or do you **take potshots at other Christians over minor disagreements?**
- How do you respond when **you're wronged or insulted?** With retaliation? Or with grace?

DON'T LIVE IN FEAR, AND ALWAYS BE READY TO DEFEND YOUR FAITH (VS. 13-17)

- In the center of our hearts, there should **one holy and sovereign Lord that we live to honor and serve**—Jesus Christ.
- If we're living to **please people, be comfortable, or to be accepted by the culture at large**, we're going to shrink back in fear and compromise.
- Do you know how to **defend your faith?** Do you know how to defend your faith with gentleness & respect?

FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (VS. 18-22)

- In our marriages, **we follow the example of Christ & His Bride, the Church** (Eph. 5:25).
- In our character, we follow the example of Christ by pursuing **grace, mercy, goodness, and love** (Matt. 15:32).
- In our witness, we follow the example of Christ by **boldly speaking truth in love** (Mark 10:21).