

Women's Bible Study

1Peter 3:15-16, November 9th, 2022

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Continuing on from our previous study, let's finish up 1Peter 3:14.

1Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, [you are] blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,

So how do we **not** succumb to fear and intimidation?

In order to answer the question above, we need to understand **why** we are intimidated. I think we can easily be caught off-guard; we forget that we are to *expect* those who do not know Christ to think we are different and perhaps a bit weird. We sometimes allow ourselves to be surprised that others may not think the same. We become intimidated when we think others speak wrongly of us, when we are misunderstood, or when others have the power to make our life miserable.

We need to be reminded consistently of who we are in Christ and remember our mission in Him is to share His gospel to those who are unsaved, and to encourage those who are like-minded. We need to fight the temptation of wanting to be accepted by everyone. We should not be intimidated by those who disagree with God's word. We should also not be intimidated by those who do claim to be Christians yet disagree with us. The reality is that we are all different; we see circumstances differently, and we think differently. God is the one whom we serve and follow. God shall be our fear; God shall be our dread.

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 12:4 "I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Pray for a heart of humility – remembering we are saved only because of God's grace, nothing we have done or deserve;

Pray for true compassion for those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior – their end is eternal suffering;

Pray for gentleness and boldness in sharing the truth of God's love for all mankind and His coming judgement of all who refuse Him.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Let's read our text again. 1Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, [you are] blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,

Troubled means to be stirred-up, or agitated. Most of us know others who are easily angered; perhaps even you struggle with this. These are the individuals we typically avoid because they are ready to explode at any moment. We tip-toe around them for fear that something will set them off!

Think! **What often causes an individual to become agitated?** Perhaps things don't work the way they think they should, or people don't respond the way they want them to. People can become anxious when they realize they are not in control, or they have made an error, or caused a problem – maybe the right words were not used to convey your thoughts. Also, anxiety ensues when there doesn't seem to be enough time to accomplish what is expected. You can probably pinpoint several situations where you lose the ability to remain calm and peaceful in your soul. 1Peter 3:14 is clear, it says we are not to be troubled. Remember, this was specifically written to those Christians who were being persecuted because of their faith. Most of us will never experience a direct threat to our physical body as a result of our faith. It seems then, our concerns are but a mere trifle in comparison, and the test to remain at peace and trust God in all things should be easy. But we are weak, and our sin nature produces a challenge for us. God is gracious to give us the solution to our negative responses.

“... the Gospel gives the believer a heart assured of God's favor, and therefore unruffled, amidst all adversities. Not only be not afraid, but be not even agitated”, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary.

“If we are true Christians, we have really no reason to be alarmed in view of anything that can happen to us. God is our protector, and he is abundantly able to vanquish all our foes; to uphold us in all our trials; to conduct us through the valley of death, and to bring us to heaven”, Albert Barnes' NT Commentary.

“A most certain counsel in afflictions, be they never so terrible, to be of a steady mind and to stand fast. But how shall we attain to it? If we sanctify God in our minds and hearts, that is to say, if we rest upon him as one that is almighty that loves mankind, that is good and true indeed”, 1599 Geneva Bible Notes.

Consider **Isaiah 8:13** again, **“It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread”**. If we are truly God's children, then we know He is mightier than any foe, He is supreme above all forces from without and within, He is our perfect peace and protection, He is holy and righteous in all His ways, He is merciful and extends forgiveness to those who love Him. There is absolutely no fear in any difficulty **if we fear Him**. God always knows better, always acts in pure holiness, He is stronger than any foe, sees every situation perfectly clear, understands each heart motivation, and holds all in His hands for His glory.

We are unable to always see things clearly, which means quite often we do not fully understand. **We do not need to understand** everything in order to function with a heart set on eternity. **We do need to trust** in God's strength, His plan, and His faithfulness. In those areas where you feel anxious or stifled, take the 5th!

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? – No one!

If you do suffer for the sake of righteousness, consider it a blessing.

There is no reason to fear intimidation; nor are you to become agitated.

How can you apply the above truths?

Now, we'll look at verses 15 and 16 which offer a solution to how we are to respond to those who are against us.

1Peter 3:15-16 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

Being fearful or angry requires energy! Concerns and bitterness can eat up our time and thoughts. Instead of being fearful or angry, spend your time and thoughts in ways which are pleasing to God.

- **Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.**

We are to always be ready to share the hope of the Gospel with an attitude of humility.

What does it look like to sanctify Christ in our hearts? How do we do this? What does it look like to be ready to share our hope?

How do we respond to others in humility?

How does showing reverence relate to gentleness?

Are you able to explain your hope?

“Such a sanctifying of the Lord in our hearts will save us from fear. We dread danger, we dread sickness, we dread death, we dread the eternal world. We are alarmed when our affairs are tending to bankruptcy; we are alarmed when a friend is sick and ready to die; we are alarmed if our country is invaded by a foe, and the enemy already approaches our dwelling. The sentiment in the passage before us is, that if we sanctify the Lord God with proper affections, we shall be delivered from these alarms, and the mind will be calm”, Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary.

- **Keep a good conscience.**

It is God who has saved us. We are to be certain we are above reproach, remembering we are witnesses of Jesus. The reality is we cannot take care of everyone else. we are only messengers, witnesses for Jesus. We are not the ones who effect change in someone. God is the One who changes hearts and lives. So we are to be

focused on living for Him. We are to pray for others to be enlightened. We are to be an example of God's grace, looking for opportunities to share the truth of the Gospel.

Think! There is no room or purpose for argument or insult when speaking of our hope. We can only be thankful that God has, in His great mercy and grace, saved us, and share the reasons for our hope, and evidence of our faith.

Does your life speak of Jesus? Are you a defender of the Truth? We can lose our focus and spend our time and energy defending ourselves, but this is not what we are to defend. We are to make a defense of our hope.

Psalm 119:46 I will also speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and shall not be ashamed.

2Timothy 2:24-26 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses [and escape] from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

“Ever remember that he has wisdom without error, power, without limits, truth without falsity, love without hatred, holiness without evil, and justice without rigour or severity on the one hand, or capricious tenderness on the other. In a word, that he neither can be, say, purpose, or do, any thing that is not infinitely just, holy, wise, true, and gracious; that he hates nothing that he has made; and has so loved the world, the whole human race, as to give his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. Thus sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and you will ever be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you to every serious and candid inquirer after truth.” Adam Clarke's Commentary

We are to offer our praise to God alone who is deserving, our prayers to God alone who is able, our service to God alone who is the embodiment of love, and our gratitude to God alone who has saved us through His Son.

We have hope because of Him. Our thoughts, actions, and words should esteem God as holy.

“No man ought to entertain opinions for which a good reason cannot be given; and every man ought to be willing to state the grounds of his hope on all proper occasions. A Christian should have such intelligent views of the truth of his religion, and such constant evidence in his own heart and life that he is a child of God, as to be able at any time to satisfy a candid inquirer that the Bible is a revelation from heaven, and that it is proper for him to cherish the hope of salvation”, Albert Barnes NT Commentary.