

1ST & 2ND PETER
STUDY GUIDE
LESSON SIX – 1 PETER 3:13-22

Linda Pringle

To review from the last study, 1 Peter 3:8-12 sums up the discussion on specific aspects of submission with an exhortation for all of Peter’s readers to be:

Harmonious – Of One Mind	We should not be argumentative, needing to prove ourselves right.
Sympathetic – Compassionate	We should pray that God would help us to see the other person’s deeper feelings.
Brotherly Love	The Greek word indicates an active friendliness and fondness. As members of the body of Christ, we shouldn’t just ignore people we don’t particularly like. We should be committed to each other just like we are committed to family members.
Kindhearted	We should treat others gently.
Humble – Courteous	A humble person is one who doesn’t need to be seen as important. Because they don’t need to be important, they are courteous, putting others before themselves.

Three main thoughts flow through 1 Peter 3:8-22. Verses 8-12 encourage us to have loving attitudes that result in loving actions. Now, this week we turn to verses 13-17 which show us how our loving actions affect our witness to a very confused world. Finally, verses 18-22 confirm Christ’s love, righteous judgment, and authority.

Our world is very confused. Every time we turn on our television or computer to catch some news, we almost have to brace ourselves for an onslaught of ungodliness. As story after story unfolds, whether they are about government policies, horrific crimes, or the latest fad in pop culture, we as Christians often cringe inside. We can start to feel hopeless, like a lone fish swimming upstream against a strong current. Yet we are not alone. Christ is with us, lifting us above the flood and then using us, as weak as we are, to encourage others to be saved, one heart at a time.

Read 1 Peter 3:13-16

- 1) When Christians are harmonious, sympathetic, loving, kindhearted, and humble we are generally treated well by unbelievers. However, when we stand up for righteous convictions that contradict the favorite sins of the world, even when we are respectful, we are made out to be “extreme.” From verse 14, what does Peter say that we are when we suffer for righteousness sake?

- 2) The word “blessed” in the Greek means “happy.” Read Luke 6:22-23. Why should we be happy when we are suffering for the sake of righteousness?

- 3) Read Acts 4:19-20 and then Matthew 10:32-39. The mark of a true believer is that he or she cannot stop speaking about the Lord. When someone is saved, unbelieving family and friends will know it by their changed life. Unfortunately, this can cause broken relationships because unbelievers' sins are exposed by the light of Christ through a Christian's changed life. In context with the rest of the Matthew passage, what do you think verse 39 means?
- 4) 1 Peter 3:14 encourages us to not be afraid of unbelievers' threats or intimidation. We've seen in the past couple of weeks examples of godly people who were in tough situations with unbelievers and yet they courageously trusted God for the outcome. Daniel stood by his convictions and respectfully refused to eat the king's food (Daniel 1). Abigail respectfully refused to follow her husband's commands (1 Samuel 25). Finally, Peter respectfully refused to stop preaching about Christ (Acts 4). They all bravely took a stand for God and trusted Him for the outcome. Read Matthew 10:26-28. Why shouldn't we fear man? Who should we fear and why?

Note: In verse 14, Peter quoted Isaiah 8:12-13. Warren Wiersbe writes, "The setting of the Isaiah quotation is significant. Ahaz, King of Judah, faced a crisis because of an impending invasion by the Assyrian army. The kings of Israel and Syria wanted Ahaz to join them in an alliance, but Ahaz refused; so Israel and Syria threatened to invade Judah! Behind the scenes, Ahaz confederated himself with Assyria! The Prophet Isaiah warned him against ungodly alliances and urged him to trust God for deliverance. 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts [armies] Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread' (Isa 8:13)." (from The Bible Exposition Commentary. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

- 5) Verse 15 says to "sanctify the Lord in your hearts." This means to set Him apart in your heart, above all the other things you love. Let Him be your family and friend. Let Him give you the companionship and love you desire. When He is more important than anyone else, it gives us the courage to trust Him when people hurt us. What should we always be ready to do? What should our attitude be?
- a) When we are suffering for any reason we can have hope. Remember that the word "hope" in the Bible means a firm confidence. When people see that you have confidence in God's love, they are amazed. Think back to the last disagreement you had with someone. Did you insert your confidence in God in the conversation? Did you encourage the other person to pray and trust God? Were you more concerned with your rights or God's glory?

- 6) In verse 16 we are encouraged to keep a good conscience. Both saved and unsaved people struggle with their conscience on a regular basis. When an unbeliever struggles with their conscience they often suffer loss as their soul is filled with guilt. Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-10. What is the result of sorrow that comes from God? What is the result of sorrow of the world?

Note: Condemnation and conviction both bring bad feelings but are very different. Condemnation from Satan will always lead you away from the cross into the darkness of guilt. Conviction from the Holy Spirit will lead you to the cross where you will realize the forgiveness of Christ bringing humility and joy.

- a) Going back to verse 16 in 1 Peter 3, when unbelievers insult us and then see our good behavior, what result do we hope this brings in them?

Read 1 Peter 3:17-18

- 1) From verse 17, does God ever will that we suffer for doing right? As you think about that, have you ever served the Lord or witnessed to someone and suffered for it? Did Satan attack you with thoughts that you were a failure or that somehow God was displeased with you? If so, write a brief description of the situation and your emotional response. Take a moment to praise God that you were allowed to share in His sufferings in a small way.
- 2) Who is our ultimate example of suffering for doing right from verse 18? For what purpose did He die?
- a) Jesus died once for all of us. The One that is just (innocent) died for the unjust. Read Romans 5:6-8. How did God demonstrate His love for us? Because of Christ's sacrifice we are now made just. This realization should give us the desire to bring others to God. We may not literally die for others but we can make sacrifices to minister to unbelievers. How can you demonstrate the love of Christ to an unbeliever this week?

Read 1 Peter 3:19-20

Note: The end of 1 Peter 3:18 through the end of the chapter is a portion of scripture that has caused a lot of debate among theologians. The phrase, “*put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison*” raises questions. If Christ’s spirit was made alive, does that mean that it died at some point? Who were the spirits in prison to whom Christ proclaimed? I’ve addressed the first question here. For a commentary on 1 Peter 3:19-20, I’ve included the study notes from the ESV Bible on a separate sheet.

Warren Wiersbe writes, “The phrase ‘made alive by the Spirit’ (KJV) creates a problem for us. In the Greek manuscripts, there were no capital letters; so we have no authority to write ‘Spirit’ rather than ‘spirit.’ Greek scholars tell us that the end of 1 Peter 3:18 should read: ‘Being put to death with reference to the flesh, but made alive with reference to the spirit.’ The contrast is between flesh and spirit, as in Matt 26:41 and Rom 1:3-4, and not between Christ’s flesh and the Holy Spirit.” (from *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

I didn’t read this in a commentary but my thought (especially after seeing the Greek) is that Peter may have been drawing from Paul’s letter to the Romans which was probably written before 1 Peter. According to historian’s timelines, Peter was in Rome when Paul sent his letter. Furthermore, Peter mentions Paul’s letters in 2 Peter 3:15 so it is obvious that Peter was aware of Paul’s writings. The book of Romans (e.g. Romans 8) is full of discussions about the dying to the flesh (our sinful lusts that condemn us by the law) and living in the Spirit (living righteously because of Christ’s love). Christ was put to death in the flesh not because He sinned, but because He took on our sins. When you continue Peter’s thought from 3:13-18 to 4:1-2 which says, “*Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God,*” we see that the simple context is that we are to suffer in the flesh (i.e. set aside our own lusts) so that we can bring others to God (verse 18).

- 1) In context, Peter is telling us that we may have to suffer as we share our faith with unbelievers. Jesus gives the same idea in Luke 6:27-36. From that passage, make a list of key phrases that instruct us in how to treat enemies. I’ve done verse 27 as an example:

Love your enemies

Do good to those who hate you

- 2) The story of Noah is one of redemption for those who put their trust in God, and judgment for those who rejected God and just lived their life as they pleased. Read Matthew 24:36-39. What future judgment is the flood compared to?

- 3) From 1 Peter 3:20, what attribute of God is mentioned that kept waiting during the construction of the ark (the construction took 120 years)?

- 4) Today we see a world of iniquity just like in the days of Noah. Read Romans 1:18-22, 28-32 for a good description of ungodliness and unrighteousness. From verses 21 and 28, what are the attitudes of people who will be judged?

Read 1 Peter 3:21-22

- 1) God preserving Noah and his family in the ark as He sent the flood to judge a wicked world is a picture (symbol or type) of Jesus Christ carrying believers above the floods of judgment. Baptism is a picture of Christ being resurrected from the dead. When we are baptized, we go under the water symbolizing the death and burial of our old life and then we are raised from the water to symbolize our resurrection to a new life in Christ. Baptism symbolizes the ark because Noah and his family believed God and were raised through the water to a new life. Verse 21 says that we are saved by baptism, but not by the act of getting into the water, but by an appeal or pledge to God for a good what?
- 2) At the end of verse 21, we get a good conscience through what? Read Romans 6:3-6. Connecting these verses, a good conscience helps us to no longer be slaves to what?
- a) Describe in your own words what it feels like to be convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, but then realize that you have been forgiven because of the cross.
- 3) In verse 22, Christ is at the right hand of God. What three things have been subjected to Him?

