

I. The Evangelistic Power of Eternal Security – Part 2

1 Peter 3:13-17 - NCBC, August 19, 2018

Main Point: **Your satisfaction in Christ will fuel a willingness to suffer and witness for Him.**

REVIEW: God's blessings to you fuel a willingness to suffer for Christ (9, 13-14a, 17)

- God's gracious care & favor (3:12; 2:20)
- A purified faith & eternal joy (1:7)
- An opportunity to glorify God (4:14, 16)
- God's total heavenly renewal (5:10)
- A far better eternal reward (3:17; Mt 5:11-12)

II.

- God's enthronement in you fuels a witness for Christ (14b-16)
 - Fearing God most (14b)
 - Treasuring God most (15a)
 - Desiring to proclaim your hope (15b)
 - Modeling your security in Christ (15c)
 - Keeping a clear conscience (16)

Application: **Always be ready to fearlessly share God's saving grace.**

Opening Announcements:

- AI McElheron Missionary Update
- Special \$50K Need to replace NCBC Septic System
- New Sunday AM Service Times start NEXT WEEK!
1st Service: 8am – 9:15a / 2nd Service: 10:45a – 12p

<<Because He Lives>>



Jesus lives, and offers eternal life to all who believe on His Name. What a privilege to know God personally and rest in the secure and living hope of Jesus Christ.

I invite you to open your Bible to **1 Peter chapter 3** this morning as we continue our worship.



If you don't have a Bible today, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. **1 Peter chapter 3** is on page 1205 in the giveaway Bibles today.

This week I was struck with all the significant changes we are living through as a church family this fall, and all the ministry that is gearing up again.



In just a couple weeks our Wednesday night programming starts with our AWANA Scripture Memory ministry to children and our *Rooted* Student Ministries for Jr. High through High School.

Our Life Group ministry and mid-week Ladies Bible Studies are two very significant adult ministries starting up again.

All of this is happening at a time when we are actively recruiting a new Associate Pastor of Music and Worship, and settling into the changes that come from Pastor Somers' retirement and Pastor Denny assuming many of his responsibilities.

God has been so faithful to recently supply new roofing on our property through an insurance settlement, but this week it became clear that our growth has exceeded the capacity of our septic system – and the replacement cost will be significant.

Add to this financial cost, several significant health and relational concerns among our membership, and our need for more prayerful dependence upon our all-sufficient God is self-evident.



And so this week, as all our elders prepare to spend next Saturday together at an all-day planning retreat, I'm asking that you would join me in giving extra time and priority to praying for God's grace to supply all of our needs, and increase our likeness to Christ, as we continue in this busy season together.

I can't imagine a better week for our church family to pursue prayerful dependence together for God's greater glory than this week before all our elders spend an entire day unifying around a strategic vision for our church.

Clearly – in everything that I’ve mentioned – we need God to work. We desperately depend on God’s Spirit to provide. And prayer is how we celebrate our dependence, and unify our hearts together in His will.



So here’s how we want to encourage greater prayerful dependence together this week. When you leave worship today, the ushers will be giving each person a simple prayer guide for the next 6 days.

Each day offers two significant prayer requests for you to focus on, along with a corresponding Psalm to help guide your prayers. You are welcome to pray anytime of course – with or without others – but for those who are interested, our pastors will be live-streaming an hour of prayer during the lunch hour on our church website this Monday through Friday. So as your schedule permits this week – you are invited to listen live to our prayer time anytime between noon and 1pm each day. If you are available during that time to physically join our pastors at the church and pray with us in person, please do so!

So will you pray with us this week? Our elders covet your prayers for Saturday’s retreat. Our ministries and our finances and our pastoral search is all in God’s hands. Let’s prioritize prayer together this week, and wait eagerly for God’s answer! It will be exciting to see how God may work through each of us as He is pleased to answer our prayers.

Now if you remember from last Sunday, I started something I couldn’t finish in our study of **1 Peter 3:13-17**. So today we pick up where we left off by focusing our attention primarily on **verses 14-16**, where we discover “The Evangelistic Power of Eternal Security.”



Please stand in honor of the public reading of God’s Word, as I now read **verses 13-17** of **1 Peter 3**. I am reading from the **English Standard Translation**.

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.

This is the word of our Lord. You may be seated.

Let's Pray.

Yesterday morning I had the joy of attending my daughter's first cross-country meet. I watched as the students ran a little over 2 miles, while their parents and coaches raced from one point of the race to the next to cheer their runners on! It was a great experience to watch every runner get encouraged and cheered on by the watching crowd.

The entire experience reminded me of those great verses in **Hebrews 12**, which say,

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,** ² **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,** who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder

and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

You see, running 2 miles across all kinds of terrain is not easy. It requires endurance that pushes through pain, refuses to be ashamed, and yearns for the finish line joy!

Just like the Christian life. Following Jesus is not for wimps. Following Jesus requires carrying the cross of self-denial.¹ Following Jesus requires a lifestyle of repentance.² Following Jesus most often brings persecution, and requires suffering for righteousness' sake.³

So what motivates Christians to keep enduring shame and pain? What compels the Christ-follower to keep joyfully following Jesus while it costs so much?

Peter wants to teach us that it is your love for Jesus that will keep you running when everything inside you wants to give up and quit.

¹ Luke 9:23-24

² Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 13:12; 1 Peter 4:2

³ 2 Timothy 3:12

Main Point



**Your satisfaction in Christ
will fuel a willingness
to suffer and witness for Him.**

It is your satisfaction in Christ that fuels a willingness to suffer and witness for Him.

This is so important for all of us to understand. True godliness cannot be achieved or sustained by following rules. The true Christian is not a legalist. The true Christian is a sincere lover of Jesus. To experience saving faith in Christ is to genuinely love Christ.⁴

Living consistent with our new identity in Christ requires that we keep our gaze fixed on Jesus as dependent children who are profoundly aware of our need for His grace⁵ ...and are deeply satisfied in His all-sufficient beauty and ministry to us.

But perhaps this morning you enter the church-house tired, hurting, and honestly – not real satisfied. You're starting to wonder if following Christ is really worth it. Dear weary Christian – turn your eyes to the life-giving Word this morning in **1 Peter chapter 3!** And let your soul swell with hope again as you remember Peter's

⁴ 1 Peter 1:8

⁵ Colossians 3:1-3

assurance from **verses 13, 14, and 17.**

Verse 13 taught: although you are suffering discomfort, pain, and persecution now – who can ultimately harm you forever when God Himself is for you? Your passion for righteousness is evidence that you have been born again!⁶ Then **verse 14** taught that even the pain you experience now due to your perseverance in righteousness will result in God's blessings to you.

Fuel your willingness to suffer and witness for Christ now by remembering some of the Divine blessings that we considered last time:

God's blessings **True Grace**
to you fuel a willingness **Firm Hope** 
to suffer for Christ (9, 13-14a, 17)

- God's gracious care & favor (2:20; 3:12)
- A purified faith & eternal joy (1:7)
- An opportunity to glorify God (4:14, 16)
- God's total heavenly renewal (5:10)
- A far better eternal reward (3:17; Mt 5)

God's gracious care and favor constantly rests upon you, dear Christian. His eyes see you, and His ears hear you,⁷ and He's promised to never leave you alone – no matter how you feel.⁸ Nothing – let me say that again – nothing

⁶ 1 John 2:29, 3:7-10, 5:1-2

⁷ 1 Peter 3:12, 5:6

⁸ Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Hebrews 13:5

can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!⁹

Some of the pain you are experiencing may in fact be the productive blessing of God's loving discipline to you,¹⁰ so don't be weary or fainthearted. The Spirit of Glory Himself is resting upon you,¹¹ and God desires to bless you with **a purified faith which gives you the capacity for a greater eternal joy.**

Fuel your willingness to endure your momentary light affliction with greater delight in the eternal glory that God says is on the other end of the line.¹² Feed your eternal perspective with God's promises, and recognize this fiery trial is **an opportunity to glorify God.**

Can you imagine a greater blessing than that? I thought about this for a long time yesterday. What greater joy could I imagine than being absolutely certain that God was able to use me somehow to bring greater glory and praise to Himself?

Since God's greatest passion is His own glory,¹³ I'm convinced there's no greater human joy – there's no greater satisfaction possible to us – than being able to glorify God.¹⁴ To know beyond a doubt that our holy God was mercifully able to work through me to help others better know the supreme beauty of His Name is a far

⁹ Romans 8:35-39

¹⁰ Hebrews 12:3-17

¹¹ 1 Peter 4:14

¹² 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

¹³ Isaiah 43:7, 49:3; Habakkuk 2:14; John 12:27-28, 17:4; Romans 3:25-26, 6:4; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:4-6; Philippians 2:11; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 21:23

¹⁴ C.f. Psalm 16:11

greater satisfaction than the thrill of any deal, or the most joyful marriage bed,¹⁵ or a lifetime of watching your children succeed.

Church - no blessing is greater than any opportunity to publicly or privately exalt God as most glorious. God Himself is the source of all joy,¹⁶ and the fullness of His glory always leads to unspeakable joy for the redeemed.¹⁷

Consider this – God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.¹⁸ The painful disillusionment we experience in this sin-cursed world is a welcome reminder that we are most satisfied in life when we are satisfied in God, and we are most satisfied in God when He is most glorified in us!

So there is nothing more satisfying – no greater blessing to the human soul – than being able to glorify God. But more on that later.

Verse 17 reminds us the end outcome for the righteous is **far better** than the end outcome of the wicked. So fuel your willingness to suffer in the short-term by remembering **God's total heavenly reward.**

Remembering your eternal security in Christ – all the

¹⁵ In fact I believe this truth explains John's thought in 3 John 1:4 – for when our children are walking in the truth, it thereby brings glory to God, and most deeply satisfies our soul.

¹⁶ Galatians 5:22-23

¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:8

¹⁸ Pastor John Piper has committed his lifetime ministry to biblically defending this thesis, for which I'm very thankful.

blessings which God has given to you – will fuel a willingness to keep suffering for Christ as you rejoice for such an opportunity to glorify God!¹⁹

That’s all review. Now today, **verses 14-16** focus on the responsibility that these rewards should produce in us.

Once you properly understand the Christian’s eternal assurance in Christ, you will place Christ as ruling Lord on the figurative throne of your heart. And when you enthrone God – or grant Him the highest ruling authority in your life, it changes your relationship with the watching world.



You see, God's enthronement in you fuels a greater witness for Christ around you.

Let’s read the verses again, starting in the middle of **verse 14**, noting how your personal relationship with God is what enables you to respond rightly to the world around you.

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.

Since you are eternally secure and no one can ultimately harm you in Christ, Peter gives a strong admonition:

Have no fear of them – literally, “the fear of them do not fear.” You don’t have to fear the threats or intimidation of your opponents.

But you answer back – “pastor, those bullies at school are really scary! The eyes of my persecutor are filled with such a hate it literally makes me shake with fear when they start to slice and dice me with their tongue.”

Do you see the word “troubled” at the end of **verse 14**? It literally means to become so shaken and agitated that your thoughts are running in all kinds of different directions at the same time. It’s the opposite of a satisfied heart at rest in the security of Christ. The troubled heart is anxious, confused – seeking to find assurance all over the place in constant dread.

Christian – when you are insulted or attacked for doing good – you must not fear or become agitated by those who threaten you.

Instead,

¹⁹ Romans 5:2-5; James 1:2-3; Matthew 5:11-12; 1 Peter 4:13

God's enthronement
in you fuels a witness
for Christ (14b-16)

• Fear **God** most (14b)

True Grace
Firm Hope

Fear God most.

You overcome the fear of man with the fear of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,²⁰ the hatred of evil,²¹ and the strong confidence of God's children.²² Therefore we define the fear of the Lord as "a conscious awareness of God's power, promises, and presence that motivates me to obey Him."

It's interesting to note that the end of **verse 14** and the beginning of **verse 15** is Peter once again quoting from **Isaiah chapter 8**.²³

You might find it interesting to look at the original text in **Isaiah 8**, which help us understand Peter's commands to suffering Christians today.

²⁰ Proverbs 1:7, 2:5

²¹ Proverbs 8:13

²² Proverbs 14:26-27

²³ In 1 Peter 2:8, Peter had quoted Isaiah 8:14. Again how instructive to see that Peter knew the Holy Scriptures (the Old Testament was all he had access to growing up) well enough to quote and readily incorporate into

Isaiah 8:12-14

¹² "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread.
¹³ **But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.**
¹⁴ And **He will become a sanctuary** and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel...

The prophet Isaiah says to King Ahaz²⁴ in **verse 12**,

Do not fear what [your enemies] fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He will become a sanctuary [to you].

Since the face of the Lord is against those who do evil,²⁵ and His blessings to you are so staggeringly good – fear God most.

Church, what, or who, you do fear most? Suffering Christians must not fear other humans who in their worst moments can only kill the body and bring you spiritual blessing,²⁶ but instead, **verse 15** commands us to *in our*

²⁴ In Isaiah 8, King Ahaz of Judah has put himself in a real pickle. He's being threatened by the kings of Israel and Syria, while he's trying to negotiate a life-preserving alliance with evil Assyria ... all against the prophet Isaiah's counsel. King Ahaz is agitated and desperately trying to work out his own salvation while all the odds continue to stack higher and higher against him.

²⁵ 1 Peter 3:12

²⁶ Matthew 10:28

hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy.

In other words, the main command of these verses is to,

**God's enthronement
in you fuels a witness
for Christ (14b-16)**

**True Grace
Firm Hope**

- Fear God most (14b)
- Treasure God most (15a)

Treasure God most.

Literally the word “honor” means to sanctify. To hallow. To set apart, or worship as most precious.

In your hearts – meaning in your innermost beliefs and affections – in your inner control room where fear demands to rule – in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy. Prize the truth that Jesus rules as Lord over all – so His children never need to fear! Worship Jesus as your highest delight, and live only to please and glorify Him!

You see, a **1 Peter 3:15** heart doesn't just merely know facts about Jesus Christ. This heart is in awe of God! This heart is devoted to praise and wonder for the holy glory of God! This heart knows no greater satisfaction than putting God's glory on display! That's why the enthronement of God in you, fuels a witness for Christ around you. For the joy that comes from tasting the

goodness of God²⁷ is expansive, and reaches its fullest expression only when it is being shared with others.²⁸

As the verse goes on to explain, when you fear God most, and treasure God most, you will always,

**God's enthronement
in you fuels a witness
for Christ (14b-16)**

**True Grace
Firm Hope**

- Fear God most (14b)
- Treasure God most (15a)
- Desire to proclaim your hope (15b)

Desire to proclaim your hope to others.

Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...

Now be careful not to rip this verse out of its context. It is true that the root word for “defense” is the word from which we get “apologetics.” It means to answer objections, or remove misconceptions. To give a reason, is literally to give an accounting for what is asked. But in the context, what is being asked?

The source of the living hope that is in you, right?²⁹ You

²⁷ 1 Peter 2:3

²⁸ I'm indebted to John Piper's article <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/there-is-no-greater-satisfaction> which helped me understand and articulate this truth.

²⁹ 1 Peter 1:3

see, I don't want you to miss the fact that when Christ is the true center of your heart, you suffer in such a way that gives others a visible reason to ask, "How can you keep on doing good after they keep treating you so bad?" How can you still have so much hope?

Treasuring Christ most ends our fear of others, and readies our lips to give a first-person testimony of all that Christ means to us.

So don't rip this verse out of context. **1 Peter 3:15** is about suffering well before it is ever about answering the hardest questions of Christianity. Peter's not urging us here to become effective debaters. There is very little witness in arguing.

Peter is saying: every Christian should be able to give a first-hand report to anyone about what difference the resurrection of Christ has made in their life. As a believer, you should always be prepared to tell anyone why you are absolutely certain of your future with Christ.

The best defense is a good offense – so joyfully take every opportunity to proclaim the gospel – declaring the reality of Christ's death and resurrection and His soon-coming future return. For whenever you share your inner joy, you expand it – even while you are glorifying God and making Him known!

Church, I'm convinced the reason we are so horrible at evangelism is because the ruling center of our hearts is compromised, and we do not fear God most, nor treasure God most. New Castle Bible Church will fall short of the glory of God as long as our lack of delight in Christ

remains content to keep our hope safely internalized.

This week will you pray that God will be more enthroned as Lord in our hearts – for His greater glory and our greater joy?

Now the end of **verse 15** describes the God-honoring manner of our witness:

Yet do it with gentleness and respect.

The word "respect" is literally the word "fear" which is referring to our fear of the Lord. And "gentleness" is the same word used in **verse 4** for wives who model the quiet inward attitude of trust and confidence in God for all situations.

So the manner of all witness is first Godward, and must

God's enthronement
in you fuels a witness
for Christ (14b-16)

True Grace
Firm Hope

- Fear **God** most (14b)
- **Treasure** God most (15a)
- Desire to **proclaim** your hope (15b)
- Model your **security** in Christ (15c)

Model your security in Christ.

The believer's witness is one of humble boldness. Not trying to win an argument, or become a prosecuting attorney. Rather just humbly modeling the message that

you proclaim – that Christ is Lord of all, and able to make sinners live in peace with Him.

Church – never employ an evangelistic manner or style that is arrogant, proud, self-righteous, haughty, or ugly in its defensiveness. We live to glorify God with our life and our lips – not force people to believe.

Finally **verse 16** underscores this point by urging all suffering Christians to,

God's enthronement
in you fuels a witness
for Christ (14b-16)

True Grace
Firm Hope 

- Fear **God** most (14b)
- **Treasure** God most (15a)
- Desire to **proclaim** your hope (15b)
- Model your **security** in Christ (15c)
- Keep a clear **conscience** (16)

Keep a clear conscience (16)

Having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Our conscience is an inner judge that either accuses us of sin or excuses us as righteous.³⁰ Contrary to Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* production, our conscience is not a chirpy cricket on our shoulder. Rather, I appreciate how Warren Wiersbe describes our conscience like a window

which lets the light of God's truth into our judgments.³¹ If we ignore our conscience and persist in sin, the window gets dirtier and dirtier until the light of God's truth can no longer impact our internal judgments.³²

So a good conscience in this text, is like a clear window – it is the gift of a soul whose inner judgments are well informed by God's truth. Having a good conscience means living without guilt or condemnation. Not because you are perfect, but because your good behavior is "in Christ." Repentance and faith has washed away all guilt and shame and left you welcomed and accepted to God!

Church, don't miss Peter's point in **verse 16**. A good conscience in you has the power to affect the conscience of those who wish to slander you! So you must continue your active fight against your own personal sins.

The gift of a good conscience will fuel your witness for Christ – but great is the sabotage to your witness when your soul is encumbered with personal guilt and shame.

My point of this study has simply been this,

³⁰ Romans 2:15

³¹ 1 Peter Commentary, Warren Wiersbe

³² C.f. Titus 1:15; 1 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 10:22

Main Point



**Your satisfaction in Christ
will fuel a willingness
to suffer and witness for Him.**

Your satisfaction in Christ will fuel a willingness to suffer and witness for Him.

You will gladly make sacrifices for what you truly love.
You will talk freely about what you truly love.

It's convicting isn't it? As elders we have prayed many times that God would bring a revival to our hearts – that we'd be a people who were freed from the love of money, and the love of earthly pleasures and comforts. That we would become a people who truly treasured Christ most in our hearts, for then we would,

Application



**Always be ready to fearlessly
share God's saving grace.**

Always be ready to fearlessly share God's saving grace.

My desire this morning has not been to shame or guilt you into evangelism. Rather my desire this morning has been to lift high the name of Jesus! My desire has been to fuel your hunger and thirst for knowing Christ more – and finding greater satisfaction in His glory and all that glorifies Him!

I'm praying that you would rest joyfully in God's eternity security for those in Christ. And that you and I would both learn to see our suffering as God's grace-gift which may very well be our relational passport that would open a door for us to proclaim our eternal hope to another.

May God graciously bring us more opportunities to glorify Him – for there is no greater satisfaction than being spent for His glory!

**The Evangelistic Power
of Eternal Security**

1 Peter 3:13-17 (Part 2)

**True Grace
Firm Hope**

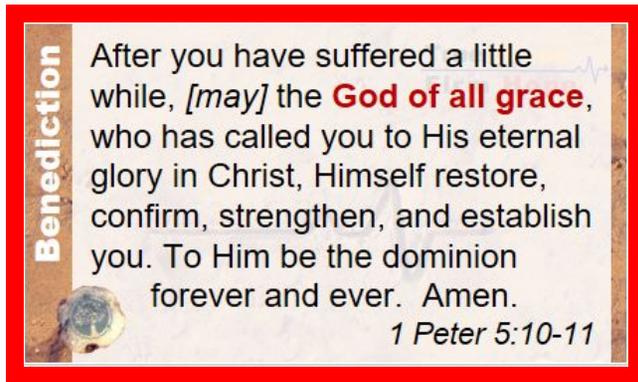


Let's pray.

<<Turn Your Eyes >>

Remember to pick up your Prayer Guide as you leave this morning, and plan to pray together with us – either in person or online or in private this week! Our church waits desperately for God’s Spirit to act in us for His greater glory and praise.

Let’s pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Recommended Resources on *The Evangelistic Power of Eternal Security*:

- Psalm 56:4; 91:7-10; 118:6
- Isaiah 8:12-15; 50:9
- Matthew 5:11-12; 10:26-33
- Luke 6:22-23, 28; 12:2-12; 21:14-19
- John 14:1, 27
- Romans 8:31-39
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 12:10
- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5
- 2 Thessalonians 1:4
- 2 Timothy 3:11-12

III.

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/if-god-is-with-me-why-did-this-happen>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/would-a-sovereign-god-ever-harm-us>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/how-does-god-bless-the-hurting>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/does-anyone-ever-ask-about-your-hope>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/treasure-jesus-more-than-safety>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/cleanse-your-conscience-of-guilt>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/does-god-will-sin-done-against-us>

IV.

- *Trusting God Even When Life Hurts*, Jerry Bridges
- *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, John Piper & Justin Taylor
- *How Long O Lord?*, D.A. Carson
- *God’s Grace in Your Suffering*, David Powlison

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

V.

1. Compare 1 Peter 3:13, 17 with 2:20 and 4:19. Is it ever God's will for you to suffer? Specifically, does God ever will for you to suffer because of the sin of others? Using the persecuted believers' prayer from Acts 4:24-31 as a case study (esp. v. 28), discuss how the truth of God's sovereignty affects your view of God's goodness and your suffering?

VI.

2. Compare 1 Peter 3:14 with 4:14 and Matthew 5:11-12. What kind of blessing does God promise you in suffering? Consider further how 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:16, and 5:10 help you understand God's purposes and provisions for your suffering.
3. Read 1 Peter 3:14-15. In the context, what would cause someone to ask about your hope? When's the last time someone asked you about your counter-intuitive yet obvious hope in Christ? What does it mean to "honor Christ the Lord as holy" in your hearts? How might you answer someone who asked you for your reason for hope?

VII.

4. Compare Isaiah 8:12-15 and 1 Peter 3:14-15. What is something that you are prone to fear more than Christ? Since our fears expose our deepest treasures, what is the competing treasure beneath that fear?

VIII.

5. Read 1 Peter 3:14-16. Why does Peter emphasize having a good conscience in this context? What effect does inner guilt and shame have on your outward witness? Confess to one another any guilt over personal sin that has been hindering your boldness for Christ, and pray for Christ's cleansing for one another (C.f. 3:18).

6. Read 1 Peter 1:8. How does the glory of God connect with our joy? Is there anything more satisfying to you than glorifying God? Why or why not?