

Sermon Notes for 1 Peter 3:8-22

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For,

“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.

¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats¹; do not be frightened.”¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— ²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him

Notes

Peter is coming into land with his final words to the churches. As he has been throughout this letter, he urges them to be different and make a difference in the world they find themselves in. He is exalting them to not act like the world around them, for they have been called to be a blessing and inherit a blessing. Despite the persecution they were facing, threats of violence and slander, they were not to be afraid but endure the suffering for doing good to all people. For Jesus suffered, righteous for the unrighteous to bring people to God, so we are called to suffer in the same way, that we may help point the way to Jesus.

We point the way not by words alone but through the good deeds we do, living a remarkable life, which is counter-cultural to the world’s way. He charges his listeners ‘to always be ready to answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have and do it with gentleness and respect.’ (v15) The hope that Peter is talking about is a ‘living hope’ (chap 1:3) being born again through the power of the resurrection of Jesus. Living means that this hope is active and is actively being lived out by choosing to be all Christ has called us to be, a blessing to others. We have been made brand new human beings with the ability to choose the right thing. We are called to no longer be controlled by our sinful nature, be set free to live a life that is different, self-sacrificing, a life of love to all. Living stones are holy and set apart to do good works. This new life on display for all to see should provoke people to ask why we are so different, welcoming, and selfless. We are to point them to Jesus, the source of our life, answering them with gentleness (listening with kindness), and respect (accepting them for whom they are).

1. How would you answer someone for the reason of hope in your life?
2. How does this letter challenge us to live in a counter-cultural way? What does it mean to be counter-cultural?
3. Read James 2:14-25, reflect on ‘faith without deeds is dead.’
4. Even in the face of slander (v16) we are to have a clear conscience about the good deeds we have done in Christ; what does this mean for you?
5. How does this letter shape the way we should do evangelism (sharing the good news) as a church?