

# Ready Faith | 1 Peter 3:13-16, 4:1-2 | 8/3/14

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- We are blessed when we suffer for Christ | 1 Peter 3:13-14
  - **Read 1 Peter 3:13-14**
  - If we are committed to do good people should treat us better because of this, but this is not always the case.
    - Peter makes in initial statement that hey if we are doing what is good then the world shouldn't treat us poorly because of the good that we are doing.
    - Peter isn't saying that if we do good we never will of course, but that it is still better to do good as no one can blame us for doing what is right.
    - We WILL suffer at some point for being a Christian.
      - This is a common misconception with people when it comes to God.
      - They feel that if God exists and he is truly a loving God then nothing bad will ever happen
      - However we know that this is not a true statement, because bad things do happen because Jesus and the apostles told us that they would, it wasn't a secret.
      - Jesus made it clear that we would have suffering.
        - John 16:33
          - "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. **You will have suffering in this world.** Be courageous! I have conquered the world"
          - He ends his statement with hope.
        - Jesus made it clear that this world is far from perfect, but because of Christ we do have hope.
        - Without Christ there is no hope if we just rely on the world.
  - Peter tells his fellow Christians that if they do in fact suffer because of their beliefs that they are actually blessed.
  - We may not normally take an act of suffering to be a good thing especially when it wasn't something that we deserved.
  - But to suffer in some way for Christ shows us that we are in fact a Christian and we are doing something for God.
  - Because if a Christian is going to be obedient and set out to do the things that God has called us do we will endure some suffering because of this.
    - 2 Timothy 3:12
      - "In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted."
    - At face value we may think oh great, so if I'm obedient to God and live the life that God has called me to then I will be persecuted. So sign me up!
    - However we also know that our persecution comes from the devil, as it is not of God.
    - Satan does not want us to be obedient to God so he will attack us for doing so and he will do it through the world.
    - This suffering is not limited to just persecution of Christians in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries.
      - When we think of the word suffering we have a hard time really thinking that we are being persecuted today.
      - However persecution is not limited to just extreme religious persecutions but also what happens to us from Satan when we choose to live a godly life.
      - **If you live for God and stand up for biblical values you can be assured that the world will not agree with you.**

- **What are some biblical values that if we stand up for in a public setting that we will be ridiculed for?**
      - Traditional marriage
      - Abstinence
      - Prayer
      - Belief in Jesus Christ as a public figure (politician, teacher, board member)
  - If you are doing God's work and if you strive to live a Godly life there will be troubles, but we can take care knowing that we will be rewarded for our suffering.
  - It does not go unnoticed by God.
    - Matthew 5:10
      - "Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."
  - Jesus knew that if Christians strived to be righteous that they will be persecuted.
  - Jesus is well aware that in our world today if we take a stand for God's truth that he has given us in the Bible that the world will hate us for it.
  - While it may be hard we can take comfort knowing that we are Christians and that we have a reward waiting for us in the kingdom of heaven.
- We do not need to fear, but instead honor God in our hearts
  - Instead of having fear during our suffering we should instead honor Christ as Lord in our hearts.
    - We must always honor the Messiah as Lord in our hearts.
      - No matter the persecution or if we are ridiculed in public because of our Christian beliefs we must always honor God.
      - If we let fear of the world cause us to dishonor God because we fear what the world may say, then we are displeasing and offending God.
      - No matter what we go through or what we may have to endure for Christ we must always honor him in our hearts.
  - Peter speaks of Old Testament Scripture from Isaiah.
    - Isaiah 8:12-13
      - "Do not call everything an alliance these people say in an alliance. Do not fear what they fear; do not be terrified. You are to regard only the LORD of Hosts as holy. Only He should be feared; only He should be held in awe."
    - The Lord spoke to Isaiah against the fear of the invading armies of Syria and the Samaritans.
    - The king of Judah was afraid and was looking at a possible alliance with Syria because of his fear of their armies.
    - But God told Isaiah that instead of fearing man that they should fear God.
    - So in their predicament they needed to trust God instead of the reasoning's of man.
    - **Do we find that our fear of man causes us to "keep quiet" instead of proclaiming the truth and honoring God the way that we are supposed to? Perhaps in a public setting?**
  - Fear is used by Satan to keep us from wanting to stand in the truth.
    - If he can scare us with influence from the world than he can keep Christians quite.
    - Because we fear that if we open our mouths and proclaim Christ and stand for biblical values that the world will ridicule us.

- We fear the opinions of others and that perhaps we will be treated negatively because of our beliefs.
  - While this fear is real because in general we WILL be treated negatively especially in the public.
  - While we may not fear much if someone has a job like mine, but if you worked in the public eye say in politics or even a teacher that one slip of supporting a biblical value can get you fired.
- Instead of fearing the world we should instead fear God.
  - Matthew 10:26-28
    - “Therefore, don’t be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won’t be uncovered and nothing hidden that won’t be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops. Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
  - God does not want us to keep quiet and never speak of the truths that he has given us, he wants us to proclaim his name and his truths to others.
  - Instead of fearing man we should fear God.
- We must always be ready to proclaim the hope that we have that allows us to endure our suffering. | 1 Peter 3:15-16
  - **Read 1 Peter 3:15-16**
  - So not only are we to endure the persecutions that we come under because of our faith, but Peter also calls us to be ready to respond to those that question our beliefs.
  - Those that denounce our Christian life.
  - When the world see’s the actions of Christians especially when we are ridiculed or persecuted by the world for standing up for our values, people will question us and ask us why?
    - What is this “Jesus” that you stand for with such determination?
    - Why are these Christian values so important to you that you are willing to lose an elected office?
    - Why do you stand for something that caused you to receive numerous “dislikes” for your comments?
  - How we respond is important so that Christ is portrayed in God pleasing way.
  - This is an opportunity that we can use to share our hope that we have in Christ.
    - It is because of this hope that we have that we can endure the world as we strive to live a life for Christ.
    - We must be ready
      - We must be ready to tell them why this hope we have is so very real and it is **more important to us than the opinions and perspectives of the world.**
        - If someone asks about this hope that we have that allows us to stand firm and our response is “I don’t really know” then how is that going to proclaim Christ?
      - As part of our godly appointed task to witness to others and to be a witness we must always be ready to tell others about the hope that we have in Christ.
      - God desires that we represent Him and that we witness for him and this is one of the ways in which it happens.
      - We MUST always be ready to share our hope.
    - We are to give a defense to those who ask about our hope.

- The Greek word that is translated as defense in our English language is where we get “apologetics” which is the studying or giving a defense of the faith.
- When we think of the word apology it has a different meaning now than it did years ago.
  - It doesn’t seem right if we say that we are going to give an apology as if we did something wrong to explain our faith.
- Instead the meaning is that we are to make a defense and show and tell others how it is true.
- Peter wants the Christians to be sure that when we are questioned that we do not miss this opportunity to share about Christ.
  - This hope that we have in Christ gives us the strength to endure so much and when the world questions this hope (because they will) we can joyfully express why we have this hope.
- This defense is our witness for Christ and it is what we know about him and what he has done for us in our lives.
  - To give us an example of what this can look like, we can look at Paul himself and see the defense that he gave.
    - Acts 22:1
      - “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.”
    - Paul was being persecuted and was suffering for his preaching and teaching of the Gospel.
    - He was brought before a Jerusalem mob and in the verses that followed he gave his testimony as to why he was doing this, why he was preaching and teaching about Jesus.
  - This defense that he gave was his witness for Christ, Paul used the opportunity to speak the name of Jesus.
- **If you are punished and ridiculed by the world for standing up for your Christian values, how can that situation be used to point others to Jesus?**
  - Our strength that comes from Christ will not go unnoticed.
    - For a Christian to endure the world who is against God, requires power and strength that can only come from God.
    - Isaiah 41:10
      - “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand.”
    - The world may not understand our actions and beliefs, but when they see first hand how we are able to endure and how strongly we hold onto the hope that we have in Christ the world cannot ignore this.
  - The character of God is portrayed in our actions.
    - The world usually responds to criticism in a negative way, but a Christian who responds as Peter has stated with gentleness and respect stand apart.
      - This will certainly cause the world to look at the Christian differently, how can they respond with gentleness and respect that is not what they were expecting.
      - Those actions do speak volumes and can cause the world to enquire more about our beliefs.

- We are to respond to our accusers with gentleness and respect, keeping our conscience clear.
    - It makes a difference how a Christian responds to those that persecute or ridicule us for our Christian beliefs and values.
    - If we respond with strife and hate looking to get even then we are no different than the world.
    - Paul's example.
      - Paul would certainly be a great example for how we respond to those that question our beliefs and those that falsely accuse us.
      - Paul was brought on trial on numerous occasions and he was always falsely accused.
      - Paul always strived to have a clear conscience towards God and men.
        - Acts 24:16
          - "I always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and men."
        - This clear conscience is important because it lets us know when we sin by producing guilt and shame
        - If we respond in a way that causes us to sin then we are not being obedient to God.
    - God will speak through us.
      - When we are in the situations we can be comforted in knowing that God through the Holy Spirit that is within us will help guide our speech.
      - Matthew 10:16-20
        - "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves. Because people will hand you over to sanhedrin's and flog you in their synagogues, beware of them. You will even be brought before governors and kings because of Me, to bear witness to them and to the nations. But when they hand you over, **don't worry about how or what you should speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, because you are not speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.**"
      - God will always be with us even when we have to speak to the world, God through the Holy Spirit will guide our words.
      - If we allow the Spirit to do this then we can be sure that we always respond with gentleness and respect.
- We should live the remaining time we have in the will of God. | 1 Peter 4:1-2
  - **Read 1 Peter 4:1-2**
  - As Christ suffered in his flesh so will we.
  - Upon death we will no long be suffering because of sin, but instead we will be living in Glory with God.
  - But for the remainder of our time here, we are called to follow Christ and to live our lives in his will and not in our own.
  - Our time is short and we cannot waste it away in disobedience indulging ourselves in sins of the flesh.
  - God has given us all a job to do to complete, let us be obedient and share Jesus without fear of the persecutions of man.