



A BETTER RESISTANCE | BLESS THOSE WHO BRUISE YOU (10)

March 21, 2021

1 Peter 2:19-24; 3:8-12

¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For

*“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

BACKGROUND

“God’s calling of the Christian appears in a marvellous contrariness. Opposition and hatred cannot thwart the life of blessing. Even when Christians are cursed, they bless. This is how Christians ‘get even’. They pay back evil with good, insults with blessing. This, of course, was the teaching of Jesus, as well as his example (1 Peter 2:23). ‘But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.’ Christians are free from vindictiveness because they trust God’s justice; but they are free for blessing because they know God’s goodness. Again, this was standard apostolic instruction. It is not only in the world that Christians must repay evil with good; they must do it in the church, too. Certainly this attitude of loving humility will provide the strongest rebuke to the conscience of a fellow-Christian.” (Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter*)

PURPOSE

To see how Christians are to respond to wrongdoing done against them by looking to Jesus’ forgiveness and mercy towards them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Looking at 1 Peter 2:19-24, what do these verses show us about Jesus’ response to those who wronged him? What specific reasons do these verses give us for showing mercy and forgiveness to those who wrong us?
2. How can living in this way (especially 1 Peter 3:9) serve as a sign of God’s kingdom? How can it be attractive to those around us who don’t believe in Jesus?

**3. Looking at the list of virtues in 1 Peter 3:8, what do these qualities bring to mind?
How does this list help show us a picture of a community that reflects God's heart?**

LEADER'S NOTES

Question 1: Jesus' response to unjust suffering was mercy and forgiveness, that through it, he brings healing into the world.. He did not vindicate himself or use his power to (rightly) retaliate against those who wronged him. Instead, he laid down his life, and absorbed the evil and wrong done against him, in order to bring God's forgiveness and healing into the world to all those who would receive it.

Verse 19 indicates that enduring sorrows while suffering unjustly can even be 'a gracious thing.' There are many reasons for this. 1) Suffering for doing what is right in God's sight is honoring to him because it upholds what is good and true even when it is costly. 2) The life of a Christ should produce good, not evil—no matter what the circumstances may be. Doing evil and harm to others has no place in the life of a Christ. 3) Jesus is the example par excellence of suffering unjustly. Those who follow in Jesus' footsteps should expect to be treated in some of the ways that Jesus was treated, because our broken and sinful world is opposed to him. Jesus tells his disciples, "A servant is not above his master." 4) Jesus entrusted himself to the Him who judges justly (verse 23). Final judgment belongs to God and he will ultimately right every wrong. No evil or wrong will go unpunished—not even one. 5) Forgiveness can break the endless cycle of retribution and retaliation.

Question 2: Those forgive at great costs to themselves for the sake of Christ demonstrate the power of the gospel. It shows how God's mercy begets our mercy towards others. It can also show God's divine power in a Christian's life as God enables them to love others as Jesus has loved them. God's Kingdom is one of healing and restoration. Forgiveness of wrongs done against you is one of the steps towards that healing. It's one of the most surprising ways that Christians can respond to evil and insult—by speaking words of truth and doing deeds of sacrificial love.

Question 3: These five virtues describe the heart of God. 1) "Unity of mind" means "like-mindedness" which reflects a common attitude of humility and love as opposed to pride and indifference. Such an attitude enables Christians to live in harmony with one another—which reflects the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 2) "Sympathy" means Christians share in one another's joys and sorrows. In the apostle Paul's vivid image of a body, he reminds us that when one member suffers, the other members suffer with it. Love means we enter into one another's needs and concerns. 3) "Brotherly love" means that Christians have a deep sense of family and connection. They are brothers and sister in Christ as they have one Father in heaven. 4) "A tender heart" is a heart like the Samaritan in Jesus' parable who has compassion on the critically wounded man. The priest and the Levite would surely be considered "neighbors" to the victim. The Samaritan would not. Yet he nursed the wounded Jew to health at his own expense. A tender heart loves mercy. 5) "A humble mind" is one that is constantly thinking of others first. It's the mind of Christ.