

THEME: Spiritual HOLINESS is better than Earthly HAPPINESS

1 Peter 3:13-17

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, *always being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

**I. Blessed While SUFFERING - (v.13-14; 16-17)**

- A. (v.13) - "Who is there to harm you" - people aren't usually persecuted for being helpful
- B. (v.13) - "prove zealous" - intense desire that leads to consistent action
- C. (v.13) - "what is good" - kind behavior; generosity, unselfishness
- D. (v.14) - "even if you should suffer" - persecution due to godly living
- E. (v.14) - "sake of righteousness" - (c.f. Matthew 10:16-20)
- F. (v.14) - "you are blessed" - not because of circumstances but the heavenly reward
  - c.f. Matthew 5:10-12
- G. (v.14) - "do not fear" - this is a command; literally: *do not fear their fear*
- H. (v.14) - "do not be troubled" - a command; not shaken or stirred up  
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- I. (v.16) - "keep a good conscience" - don't assume you've done something wrong just because you're being persecuted; maintain the assurance of your salvation
- J. (v.16) - "slandered" - to drag your name/reputation through the mud; speaking evil
- K. (v.16) - "revile your good behavior in Christ" - threaten, insult, mistreat
- L. (v.16) - "will be put to shame" - (c.f. Romans 12:17-20)
- M. (v.17) - "it is better" - as opposed to experiencing no persecution at all
- N. (v.17) - "if God should will it so" - God is ultimately sovereign - (c.f. 1 Peter 4:19)

O. (v.17) - "suffer for doing what is right" - good behavior based on loving others

P. (v.17) - "Rather than for doing what is wrong" - do not sin

## II. **Blessed While SHARING - (v.15)**

Q. (v.15) - "Sanctify Christ as Lord" - to set apart or make holy; consecrate

R. (v.15) - "in your hearts" - seat of understanding; where thoughts are processed

S. (v.15) - "always being ready to make a defense" - never taken off guard

T. (v.15) - "asks you to give an account" - an opportunity to confess Christ publicly

U. (v.15) - "the hope that is in you" - your unwavering faith in Jesus Christ

V. (v.15) - "gentleness and reverence" - rather than rebuke; speak the truth in love

YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Life BEFORE Salvation
2. SALVATION Story
3. Life AFTER Salvation - (with Gospel Presentation)

READ: Acts 26:1-29 - (Paul before Festus, King Agrippa, and Bernice)

Acts 26:1-11 - "Life BEFORE Salvation"

Acts 26:12-18 - "SALVATION Story"

Acts 26:19-23 - "Life AFTER Salvation"

Acts 26:24-29 - Conversing after giving Personal Testimony

CONCLUSION: Question —> Are you more interested in being Holy or being Happy?

The Pursuit of HOLINESS - (c.f. Matthew 16:24-27)

The Promise of FUTURE REWARD - (c.f. Matthew 19:27-29)

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### Discussion Questions & Topics:

1. Discuss a time when you were persecuted for being a Christian. How did you feel?
2. Why does God allow the persecution of Christians to take place around the world?
3. How are Christians "blessed" if we're persecuted for living a godly lifestyle?
4. Share your Personal Testimony with one another in less than one minute each.
5. Discuss how your life is different now that you're saved, compared to before salvation.