

## Review

The apostle Peter is writing to Christians everywhere, encouraging us to rejoice in the fact that we have a heavenly inheritance, in spite of whatever difficulties we might be suffering now.

He's reminded us to live holy lives - lives that are set apart for God's exclusive use. And, if we're having trouble doing that, we need to be reminded that God is a God Who is to be feared.

Then, he began to tell us how absolutely important it is to love other Christians. No more speaking evil about each other. After all, we're all bricks in the same wall, aligned to Jesus, and that's the structure that builds the temple of God.

Once making this point, he directed our attention to the unbelievers who watch us love one another. We need to keep our behavior excellent so that they won't have anything bad to say about us. That good behavior includes submitting to authority, no matter how difficult that might be. Whether it's the government, at work, or in marriage, the proper lines of authority have to be respected. What about when you suffer as a result? Peter reminded us that Jesus suffered the greatest injustice without cause, and that is the example to which we've been called.

### **3:8-9a Harmony, Not Dissonance**

The way all this stuff adds up is this: we need to get along with each other. How? There's a list:

1) Be harmonious. That means "having the same mind." How can all of us individuals have the same mind? Well, since I'm not willing to have your mind, and you certainly don't want mine, then we must all...

**1Cor. 2:16 ...have the mind of Christ.**

2) And we are to be sympathetic. "To suffer together."

**1Cor. 12:25-26 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it...**

**Rom. 12:15 ...weep with those who weep.**

3) Brotherly. Literally, that means "having brotherly love." We're all

in the same family. And families are made up of people that are different, but they realize that they're stuck together, and need to love one another.

**Rom. 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...**

4) Kindhearted means "having a good heart." We can have a heart that is good and open to each other, or we can have bad and closed hearts towards them. John said,

**1John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

5) Humble in spirit. Our thinking must be of putting ourself lower than other people:

**Phil. 2:3 ...with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;**

And yes, these things apply even when we aren't getting the same thing back:

**1Pet. 3:9a not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead;**

### **3:9b-13 Zealous For Good**

Most of us know the "Golden Rule." But we are often guilty of applying a mutation of it. Most times, we "do unto others in the same way they have done unto us." But if someone insults us, we are not to insult back. We are to keep our tongues from evil. If someone does evil to us, we are to return a blessing, not more evil. That's the kind of people God is looking for. His eyes are toward the righteous. Jesus taught,

**Luke 6:27-35 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For**

**even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."**

Don't think that I don't understand how impossibly difficult this teaching seems. As a pastor, I am often the subject of evilspeak. I can't go to the mall, or a restaurant, or drive around town without seeing at least one person who hates my guts and makes sure that everyone they know is aware of all my sins and faults. I have almost daily opportunities to obey these commands or not. But I'm telling you, if I didn't obey and apply them on a regular basis, then I would be a bitter and hateful person by now. I certainly would have left the ministry and left town years ago.

And honestly, the biggest trouble I have is not holding my tongue, It's not keeping myself from lashing out with evil right back. The biggest trouble I have with the whole thing is confusion: "Why are they doing this to me, when all I've done for years is teach the Word? I've never pretended to be someone I'm not. I've never portrayed myself as more righteous than others. I've never given people any reason to expect perfect character from me. I'm just me - a sinner that God saved, who is trying to make the Bible more understandable for people. Isn't that a good thing?"

And Peter gives us the response...

### **3:14-17 Suffering For Righteousness**

Dear saint, if you have tried to do your best, but people are hating you for it, if you have been busy doing good and people are speaking evil of you anyway, then heed this: don't be afraid, and don't be troubled.

This is what has happened to every person who has done good for

God. They beheaded John the Baptist, they crucified Jesus, they killed off the apostles. Don't expect anything different. As a matter of fact, Jesus said,

**Luke 6:26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."**

Instead, you stay busy about the Lord's business. You keep living the best Christian life that you are able, and don't let other people's hatred of you make you bitter. Yes, defend the Christian faith, but always with gentleness and reverence.

And as for the people who slander you? I got some great advice years ago: "Outlive your critics."

**1Pet. 3:16 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.**