

**Slide 1**

# Making A Difference

## 1 PETER 3:13-17

### Introduction

1. What is your purpose in this world?
2. Is it to go to school so that you can get a good job? Okay, then what?
3. Is it to make lots of money and make a name for yourself? Okay, then what?
4. Is it to find a good husband or wife, marry and raise a family? Okay, then what?
5. Is it to retire well? Okay, then what?
6. Your life is about more than what you acquire in this life.
7. It is also about your eternal impact, your spiritual legacy.

**Slide 2**

8. In his first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul asked them a question, “For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19a, NASB95).
9. He then answered with these words, “Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19b-20, NASB95).
10. Our purpose is to live a life which accomplishes as much good for God as is possible while we live here.
11. In that process, we will encounter opposition and perhaps even persecution, but we must remain faithful.
12. In our text, this morning, Peter writes to Christians who are being falsely accused as evildoers, even insulted because of their faith.
13. He instructs them in a life which . . .
  - a. continues to be zealous for that which is good

- b. is always ready to give an answer for their hope
  - c. strives to maintain a good conscience, in spite of the opposition.
14. His instructions are worthy of our attention.

**Slide 3**

## I. Be Zealous For What Is Good

### A. AS A RULE, GOOD BEHAVIOR IS GENERALLY REWARDED

“Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?” (1 Peter 3:13, NASB95)

1. Another way, we might rephrase Peter’s question is, “Is there really anyone who will harm those who are eager to do good?”
2. Why do we as parents and grandparents model good behavior before our children?
3. Why do we teach them to do that which is right and good?
4. Isn’t it because we know that good behavior makes for a better society?
5. Isn’t it because such actions result in praise from those who see it?
6. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
7. Earlier in this letter, Peter said that one of the reasons God has established the various human authorities in society is for “the praise of those who do right” (1 Peter 2:14).
8. In Romans 13:3, the apostle Paul said that “rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same” (Romans 13:3b, NASB95).
9. Peter’s point is this: It is not normal to expect harm for doing what is right.
10. Normally, such behavior is rewarded, not punished.

**Slide 4**

[However, there are exceptions. So Peter adds . . .]

## **B. IF YOU DO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE, KNOW THAT YOU ARE BLESSED**

“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,” (1 Peter 3:14, NASB95)

1. Though it is abnormal for good behavior to be punished, it does happen that we as Christians may suffer for righteousness’ sake.
2. As a matter of fact, it was happening to some of his readers:
  - a. They were being “slandered (falsely accused) as evildoers” (2:12).
  - b. They were “suffering unjustly” (2:19).
  - c. They were being “insulted” (3:9) and “intimidated, threatened” (3:14).
3. Such mistreatment would naturally disturb us and cause us to be afraid.
4. We might even think about running away from our circumstances and ultimately the faith we profess.
5. Peter, however, encourages us to have a different perspective — “you are blessed.”

### **Slide 5**

6. No doubt, Peter remembered something Jesus had said on this very subject, early in His ministry:

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**(Matthew 5:10–12, NASB95)**

7. And, on the eve of His crucifixion, knowing the unjust suffering and death which awaited Him, Jesus said to His disciples, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a

place for you. “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1–3, NASB95)

8. Know this. If you are a Christian who is suffering unjustly because of your effort to live a faithful life before our Lord, you are not alone. Untold others have walked and are walking the same path.
9. You are blessed in that you have a great reward reserved in heaven for you and one day our Lord will come to take you home.
10. So don't be intimidated or troubled by those who mistreat you in your Christian walk.

### Slide 6

## II. Be Prepared To Defend Your Hope

### A. SET APART CHRIST AS LORD IN YOUR HEART

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts . . .” (1 Peter 3:15a, NASB95)

1. Instead of running away from such treatment, we need a new allegiance.
2. When Peter wrote “do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,” (v. 14), he was quoting from the prophet Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 8:12, who, 700 years earlier, was telling King Ahaz not to be afraid of a potential attack upon his kingdom from three kingdoms to the north and east.

### 6a

3. Instead, Isaiah said, “It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.” (Isaiah 8:13, NASB95)
4. Just as with King Ahaz, the alternative to living in fear of those who intimidate us is to focus on someone else — to “sanctify” or “set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts” (v. 15a).
5. What does it mean to “set apart Christ as Lord?”
6. It means that we recognize Him alone as the reigning Lord of the universe.

### Slide 7

7. In his letter to the church at Colosse, the apostle Paul said of our Lord

## Jesus Christ,

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” (Colossians 1:16–18, NASB95)

8. To “set apart Christ as Lord” means that we treat Him as holy, we revere Him, we set Him upon the throne of our hearts.

### Slide 8

9. How do you set Christ upon the throne of your heart? You do so through . . .

- a. Loving one another (John 13:34)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34, NASB95)

- b. Imitating Him in your life.

- 1) Jesus calls us to “come to Me” and “learn from Me” (Matthew 11:28, 29) — by coming to Him and learning from Him, we become imitators of Him

- 2) The apostle Paul instructed the believers in Corinth, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

- c. Pointing others to Him

“Jesus said to him [Thomas], “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6, NASB95)

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12, NASB95)

### Slide 9

## **B. KNOW THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU**

“ . . . always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you . . . ” (1 Peter 3:15b, NASB95).

1. In addition to setting Christ upon the throne of your heart, Peter says that you should always be ready to “make a defense” to anyone who might ask you, “a reason for the hope that is in you” (v. 15).
2. What “hope” do you have in you?
3. If you are a Christian, you have a hope that is . . .
  - a. “A living hope” (1 Peter 1:3) that focused upon your own bodily resurrection on the last day.
  - b. “The hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2), based upon a promise which God made ages ago.
  - c. The anchor of your soul (Hebrews 6:19), which sustains you through this life.
  - d. The hope of sharing in the glory of God and Christ (1 John 3:2).

“We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2b, NASB95).

4. This inward hope which you have as a Christian results in a life so real and distinctive that non-Christians are prompted to ask you about it.

[When they do ask you about our hope, Peter says that you should . . .]

### Slide 10

## **C. MAKE YOUR DEFENSE WITH GENTLENESS AND REVERENCE**

“ . . . yet with gentleness and reverence ” (1 Peter 3:15c, NASB95)

1. We do not attempt to overpower those who ask us about our hope with the force of our personality or in an aggressive way.
2. We don't speak to them in a critical or aggressive way.
3. We don't try to argue, because, though we may win the argument (at least in our own minds) we may ultimately lose the person.
4. The apostle Paul once told Timothy that “the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with

gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25, NASB95).

5. Instead, we should calmly present the truth in a calm and clear manner allowing the Holy Spirit to work as He sees fit in the person's life.

#### Slide 11

### III. Maintain A Good Conscience

"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." (1 Peter 3:16, NASB95)

#### A. HOW DO YOU KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE?

1. You may remember that in the early morning hours prior to our Lord's crucifixion, three people questioned Peter about being a disciple of Jesus. Each time, he denied an affiliation with Jesus.
2. Just as Peter denied Jesus for the third time, a rooster crowed, and our Lord turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61).
3. Peter suddenly remembered what Jesus had said.
4. The guilt was so overpowering that Luke records for us "he went out and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62).
5. Peter struggled with a guilty conscience until his conversation with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee that morning some days later.
6. How do we keep a good conscience in the thing in which we are slandered?
7. Most importantly, we do not deny our Lord.
8. Having a good conscience does not mean that any of us are morally perfect.
9. No. Each of us, no matter how mature we are as Christians will continue to struggle with sin.

#### 11a

10. Instead, we work to avoid any conscious or willful disobedience before God

each day.

**11b**

11. Secondly, we continue to acknowledge any sin in our lives, repent of them and pray for God's forgiveness.

**Slide 12****B. WHY KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE?**

1. Peter says it is "so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame" (v. 16).
2. Ultimately, the goal is for those who falsely accuse you to stop because they realize they are wrong about you and believe the gospel.
3. As Peter says, "it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong" because your patient suffering becomes a powerful tool to bring others to salvation.

## Conclusion

1. How are you doing at living out your faith?
2. Are there those who intimidate you and perhaps even insult you because you are a Christian?
3. Keep doing what is right.
4. "Hold fast the confession of [your] hope without wavering," (Hebrews 10:23), because God is faithful — He will see you through to the end.
5. Be ready to share the reason for your hope with those who will ask you.
6. Imitate Christ and point others to Him.
7. Leave this world a better place than you found it because of your Christian influence.
8. If you are not a Christian, make the decision today to give your life to Christ in obedient faith and follow Him all your days.
9. There is no greater purpose to which you may give yourself.