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Life, Love and Good Days

1 PETER 3:8-12

Introduction

1. If you were to write down three things that you truly want, that you truly desire, what would those three things be?
2. I can honestly tell you the things I wanted in my youth are a good bit different from what I desire now.
3. There are three things which Peter brings out in our reading this morning that I think all of us desire:
 - a. We all want life, abundant, fulfilling, and ultimately, eternal life.
 - b. We all want to love someone dearly and be loved by that person.
 - c. We all want “good days,” to look back at the end of our lives and say, “My life has been filled with good days.”
4. Earlier, in 2:21, Peter wrote that you and I as Christians have been called by God to patiently endure unjust suffering, just as our Lord suffered and left us an example of how we are to do so.
5. Here, in 3:9, he tells us that we are called to be a blessing to the world, by gradually changing the evil that is in the world.
6. How is all of this possible? Peter tells us in this summation of all that he has been saying since 2:11.
7. As we daily live our lives . . .
 - a. before those who are not Christians
 - b. under proper human authorities
 - c. under those who are over us in our places of work
 - d. as wives in marriages with unbelieving husbands
 - e. as husbands, seeking to honor our wives as fellow heirs of the grace of life,

. . . we are to live them in such a way that we bring glory to God.

8. Now, at the beginning of our text, Peter writes “to sum up” or “finally”.
 - a. He is taking everything that he has said and summing it up.
 - b. He is bringing it all together.
9. Notice, he adds something else after this — “all of you.”
 - a. Who does this include?
 - b. Every single one of us who wear the name of Christ.
 - c. None of us are excluded.

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I. Becoming A Person Who Seeks Peace

A. BE HARMONIOUS

1. Other translations have “be of one mind” (KJV), “have unity of mind” (ESV), “live in harmony with one another” (NIV84).
2. Peter is describing the way in which you and I should relate to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.
3. In Romans 12:16, Paul wrote, “be of the same mind toward one another.”
4. Perhaps the best illustration of such harmony is an orchestra:
 - a. An orchestra is composed of a number of musicians with a wide variety of instruments.
 - b. Sometimes musicians with the same instrument are playing different parts.
 - c. However, they are all playing the same song, and they all follow the same conductor.
5. Each of us as Christians . . .
 - a. Are at different points in our lives
 - b. Have been blessed by God with different gifts.
 - c. Are engaged in different ministries.

. . . but we have all obeyed the same gospel and are following the same Savior.

2a**B. BE SYMPATHETIC**

1. Literally, this word means to “suffer with” someone.
2. Satan, however, tempts us to be so concerned with our own situation in life that we neglect looking out for anyone else and their needs.
3. If anything, he would rather we ignore them and isolate ourselves.
4. When we are sympathetic, we seek to understand what those around us are feeling, and respond to them in a supportive way.
5. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:15, we “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”
6. We suffer with another member when he or she suffers (1 Corinthians 12:26).
7. Because Jesus, was . . .
 - a. “despised and forsaken of men”
 - b. “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3),

He can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15).
8. When we sympathize with one of our brothers or sisters in Christ, we not only enter into their needs and concerns in an effort to understand, we also try to make them feel accepted and loved.

2b**C. BE BROTHERLY**

1. We “love as brothers” and sisters (NKJV), we show “brotherly love” (ESV).
2. Paul said that we are to be “devoted to one another in brotherly love” (Romans 12:10).
3. Brotherly love begins with the knowledge that you and I have been born into a new family — the family of God.
4. Many of you have physical brothers and sisters.

- a. Have you ever been angry at them?
- b. If they were to call you today and say, I need your help, would you go?
5. The devotion that God calls us to have toward one another is called “brotherly love.”
6. Are we that devoted to one another? Can others beyond this building tell it?

2c**D. BE KINDHEARTED**

1. To be kindhearted means that we are “tenderhearted” (NKJV), “compassionate” (NIV84, HCSB) toward one another.
2. Have you ever heard someone say about another person, “he or she is a kindhearted soul”?
3. What does it mean to say that another person is “kindhearted”?
4. It means that person has a genuine concern for others.
5. Throughout His ministry, this word was used time and again to describe Jesus (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34).

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6. In Matthew 9:35, we are given a brief overview of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee:

“Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.” (Matthew 9:35, NASB95)

“Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36, NASB95)
7. On another occasion, after Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist, He sought to get away to a secluded place, but when He got out of the boat at Bethsaida, Matthew tells us “He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.” (Matthew 14:14, NASB95)
8. We find that same genuine concern prior to His feeding of the 4,000

(Matthew 15:32).

“And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, “I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.”” (Matthew 15:32, NASB95)

9. Finally, as He was leaving Jericho on His way to Jerusalem, two blind men begged Him to open their eyes.
10. Matthew again records, “Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.” (Matthew 20:34, NASB95)

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E. BE HUMBLE IN SPIRIT

1. Humility grows out of our sense of dependence upon God.
2. As Christians, you and I are not self-sufficient; our sufficiency is in Christ.
3. In 1 Corinthians 3:5, the apostle Paul spoke of his own ministry and said, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (1 Corinthians 3:5, NKJV).
2. Two chapters from here, in 1 Peter 5:5, Peter wrote, “all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5b, NASB95).
3. Jesus, again, is our example.
4. In Matthew 11:28, we find Him saying to His listeners, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NASB95).
5. He then adds, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29, NASB95).

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6. In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul helps us to see what humility looks like in our lives:

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

(Philippians 2:3-4, NASB95)

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II. Becoming A Person Who Pursues Peace

A. TURN AWAY FROM EVIL, DO GOOD

“. . . not returning evil for evil” (1 Peter 3:9a).

1. In his first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, 5:15, the apostle Paul wrote, “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people” (1 Thessalonians 5:15, NASB95).
2. Our natural inclination, however, is to “get even,” to do to someone else what they have done to us.
3. If we are going to be people who pursue peace, we must heed the admonition of Paul in Romans 12:17, “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.”

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4. As a matter of fact, if we keep reading to the end of Romans 12, this is what we find:

¹⁸“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

²⁰“But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

(Romans 12:18–21, NASB95)

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B. KEEP YOUR TONGUE FROM EVIL AND YOUR LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT

“not returning . . . insult for insult” (1 Peter 3:9b).

1. If we have been insulted, our sinful nature tries to convince us to return the insult, to give just as good as we got.
2. As a teenager, I can remember those times in school when a person would verbally attack another with a “put down” and the one who was attacked would seek to respond with a better put down.
3. Name calling was no different. One was trying to outdo the other.
4. Peter, however, says, “Stop! Don’t do it!”
5. Maybe, you were guilty of “bending the facts to suit your side of the story” or leaving out certain facts so that someone only received a partial picture of what really happened.
6. Again, Peter said, “Stop!” “Keep your lips from speaking deceit.”
7. Why? Because insults and deceit destroys relationships.

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C. GIVE A BLESSING INSTEAD

“. . . but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9c, NASB95).

1. God’s will is that you and I speak well of others and to others.

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2. To the believers in Ephesus, Paul wrote, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”
(Ephesians 4:29, NASB95)
3. To those in Rome, he said, “let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19, NASB).
4. Why should we respond this way toward those who mistreat us?

5. Two reasons:

- a. First, “you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9b, NASB95).
 - 1) God has called us to an eternal blessing, an inheritance which He has reserved in heaven for us.
 - 2) If we are to live consistently with our calling, then we should live lives which bless others.
- b. Second, “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer” (1 Peter 3:12; cf. Psalm 34:15, ESV).
 - 1) God sees the righteous lives we are striving to live.
 - 2) He is looking after us for our good.

Conclusion

1. What Peter has been saying to us in these verses is that there is a connection between righteous living and God’s present blessing in this life.
2. You and I must be careful that we do not live out our faith in a careless, half-hearted manner.
3. As Christians, we have been called to live holy lives which bring blessings not only to ourselves but to those we encounter.
4. Do you want a full, abundant life, filled with good days? Do you want to love and be loved as God intended?
5. If your answer is yes, will you devote your life to faithfully following Jesus Christ?