

Sunday September 5th 2010

Petros

Part Twelve

1). 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain 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 prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*

a). We have in previous weeks seen the Lord's instructions to servants with respect to how they are to relate to their masters and wives and how they are to relate to their husbands and husbands with respect to their relationship with their wives.

b). In all of these the example has been, which is then applicable to us, that our focus needs to be on the commands of scripture and our faithful obedience to those commands irrespective of the circumstances we should find ourselves in. This then becomes a personal issue between us and the Lord as it is to the Lord that we will give an account of our actions.

c). Php 2:12b *.....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

d). Mt 16:27 *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

e). Our faithful obedience is not negotiable, nor will there be mitigating circumstances to be taken into account even if what we have had to face is particularly difficult, because the heart of the matter is our faith – do we believe? Do we trust God or not?

f). And of course within the historical context of our 1 Peter letter, given the impending Roman persecution, Peter's readers would need to trust God even though it might cost them their lives. This is a tremendously powerful picture.

g). Ps 34:22 *The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.*

h). Ps 56:11 *In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

i). Mt 10:28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna*

2). V8 then brings us to the word, ‘finally’ – this does not mark the end of the letter but rather the conclusion of the instructions given to the specific groups that have been addressed earlier – servants, wives, husbands. And of course by extension all other Christians including ourselves.

a). 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind,*

The literal idea here is being like minded, to be thinking the same, and within our context this would be for us all to have the same mindset with regards to the tension between our faithful obedience and our circumstances and relationships.

b). We must all align our thinking with God’s plans and purposes, to be settled and assured of His faithfulness and to trust Him even if we must ‘endure grief, suffering wrongfully’, because we understand and embrace that which is out ahead of us.

c). The perfect example of this is of course the Lord Himself and the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul exhorts us to follow His pattern - Php 2:5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

d). We can see clearly here that Christ’s ‘mind’ was not focused on His present suffering, but rather on the outcome of that suffering, His exultation and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords. This same ‘mind’ is to be in us and this is exactly what is meant in 1 Peter 3:8.

e). Php 1:27 ¶ *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

3). And so our verse from 1 Peter continues - 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;*

a). 'Having compassion for one another' literally means 'to have a fellow feeling', in other words to share with others their experiences. And this would not be limited to sharing in their sufferings only, but also to share in their joy – Ro 12:15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

b). The idea here in the original language is not in the sharing of these things in some kind of organized forum, but rather in the spontaneity that comes through living through the various seasons of our lives together.

c). And this idea leads us into the next thought, 'love as brothers' – now this is a translation of an adjective not a verb, and so it is describing those who are brothers – 'brothers be loving'. And the kind of love we are dealing with here takes us back to the love that was first introduced in Chapter 1 - 1Pe 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren,*

d). The word translated 'love' in v22 is the Greek, 'phileo' – it is that love of liking and personal affection that we had seen in the account of Peter's restoration at the end of John's gospel. So we are therefore to relate to one another with unfeigned personal affection as we like what and who our brothers and sisters in Christ are; we want to have as our company those who are engaged with us in like manner in the race of faith. We take delight in them and rejoice over them. This is what the description 'loving brothers' means.

e). And in order to be 'loving brothers' we need to be 'tenderhearted'. The word 'tenderhearted' seems to be an excellent translation of the Greek word used here. There is no harshness in this, no bitterness, no contention, but rather compassion, grace and mercy.

f). And in doing this we would need to be 'courteous'.

g). Courteous = Greek – 'philophon' = humble minded

h). We are then to have a modest opinion of ourselves and not to exalt ourselves in our own eyes above our brethren. There is to be no spiritual arrogance.

i). This is the same as we find if we go back and add some more verses to the scripture we had from Romans Chapter 12 earlier - Ro 12:14 *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

j). That which we find in Romans 12:7ff is exactly how 1 Peter 3:9 continues.

4). 1Pe 3:9 *not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

a). Our scripture should be taken very literally here. We are not to give back evil for an evil we have received; we are not to give back reviling for a reviling we have received. And there are no exclusions to this, because we again we come back to an issue of trusting God.

b). We have seen what Jesus did when reviled - 1Pe 2:23 *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

c). And what have we just read from Romans? - 19 *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

d). This really is a trust issue between us and God isn't it? To return evil or to return reviling couched in the phrase, 'I need to be honest with you...' is no more than deception. There are no passes.

e). In fact our scripture gives us a poignant contrast – 'but on the contrary blessing'. Instead of returning evil or reviling we are to bless. Blessing is not a noun but a participle in the Greek which makes the understanding, 'be constantly blessing'.

f). Blessing = Greek – 'eulogeo' = to speak well of, i.e. (religiously) to bless (thank or invoke a benediction upon, prosper):--bless, praise.

g). And so instead of reviling, instead of speaking reproachfully and spitefully to the person who has done so to us we are to speak well of that person, or offer a benediction on their behalf - Pr 15:1 ¶ *A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.*

h). And we are to do this, according to the scripture, because we know that for this very reason we have been called – that we may inherit a blessing. And the word inheritance would take us immediately to the Judgment Seat where all inheritance will be received. In that Day God will 'speak well of' us, if we have applied this scripture, resulting in the salvation of our soul and a position with Christ as His Bride – Once more we have an issue of trusting God.

i). 1Pe 1:7 *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

j). Mt 25:21 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

5). The theme of what is to come out of our mouth is then continued in the next verse in Peter where the Holy Spirit draws from Psalm 34 – 1Pe 3:10 *For "He who*

would love life And see good days, Let him refrain 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 prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

a). Psalm 34 we had gone to earlier today and is a Psalm that deals with David's deliverance from Abimelech -Ps 34:11 ¶ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. 22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

b). And as we see here in our Psalm the focus is the salvation of the soul which we saw in v22 earlier, which is where the words, 'For he who would love life and see good days' would take us. The 'life' would be life in the age to come and the 'good days' would be the days of the Millennial Kingdom.

c). So from our scripture we see that those who would love life and see good days in the Kingdom will refrain their tongue from evil and their lips from speaking deceit in the present.

d). The word translated 'evil' means to do harm to and so again this would take us to not reviling either as the perpetrator or retaliating as the recipient. And the word translated 'deceit' refers to setting a trap in order to bring someone into captivity to our agenda. And do let's please remember that we are not dealing with humanity in general here, but with the eternally saved in pursuit of the Kingdom. Those who are in serious pursuit of the Kingdom will on a consistent basis make the choice to refrain, to stop, from speaking evil and will choose to stop using their lips to trap another brother or sister in the furtherance of their own agenda. In fact no one in pursuit of the Kingdom should have an agenda outside of their own faithful obedience to the word of God.

e). We can find an example of speaking deceit in - 2Pe 2:18 *For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.*

Pr 10:19 ¶ *In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*

f). Those who will love life and see good days will also turn away from evil and do good. We all have a natural tendency towards evil and therefore we will need to make a deliberate choice to turn away from it. In the immediate context this would be the choice not to return evil for evil and reviling for reviling even though this would be our natural tendency. And then in a broader context this would take us to - 1Pe 2:1 ¶ *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,*

g). And - 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

h). And doing good would encompass, ‘servants be submissive to your masters’, ‘wives be submissive to your own husbands’, ‘Husbands dwell with your wives with understanding, giving them honor’.

6). Our Peter scripture continues - *11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.*

a). And so for those who will love life and see good days they will also ‘seek peace and pursue it’. And what we see here is a consistent endeavor towards that end. In one sense the ‘peace’ we are to seek and pursue would be the coming of the Kingdom when the Prince of Peace will rule and reign. But, as we have seen so many times, this future fulfillment has a present application.

b). Now we are not seeking peace with God as we already have that through receiving the free gift of eternal salvation as a result of Christ’s sacrifice for us. So the peace we need to be seeking and pursuing must be the peace of God.

c). Php 4:5 *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

d). Anxiety I imagine is something we all struggle with – so could the servant with the harsh master have cause to be anxious? Yes. Could the wife with a disobedient husband have cause to be anxious? Yes. Could the husband with a contentious wife have cause to be anxious? Yes. Yet in all of these circumstances we have seen one repeated theme – trust God - Pr 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

e). And isn’t this trust issue at the very heart of our anxiety – we are really not sure if we can trust God.

f). However, the good news for us in this, according to our scripture from Peter, is that this ‘peace’ is something we are to seek and having discovered what it is we are then to pursue it. So it is not the case that we either have the peace of God or we don’t, but rather that we are constantly in the process of attaining it. And given our human nature, pursuing the peace that comes from trusting God in every moment of every circumstance will be a lifetime’s endeavor.

g). Now according to Philippians 4:6 we are by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests, the cause of our anxiety, known to God, but we saw last week that the husband who does not live with his wife with understanding, giving her honor would have his prayers hindered. This being the case what would it mean for his pursuit of the peace of God?

7). And let’s remember how our Peter scripture continues - 1Pe 3:12 *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*

a). What an incredible promise and a truly scary warning are contained in this verse.

b). And so within the context of our Peter letter, who would the ‘righteous’ be? Well, the servant who is submissive to his master, the wife who is submissive to her own husband, the husband who lives with his wife with understanding, giving her honor, those who lay aside all malice..., those who abstain from fleshly lusts, those who refrain the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, those who turn away from evil and do good – in other words those who are consistent and serious about their faithful obedience as they look to the salvation of their soul - Ps 37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever. 30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, And his tongue talks of justice. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide. 32 The wicked watches the righteous, And seeks to slay him. 33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged. 34 ¶ Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.*

c). Look at the incredible promise in Peter, ‘for the eyes of the Lord are on [literally – are over] the righteous’ – the eyes of the Lord are directed favorably towards, for the good of those who are righteous.

d). ‘And His ears are open [literally - into] to their prayers’ – we might picture the prayers of the righteous ascending from the earth and God then bending into those prayers, desiring to answer them in a way that perhaps we have never imagined.

e). All of this is extremely encouraging and inspiring, but there is another side to the coin – ‘But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil’ – the Holy

Spirit again drawing from Psalm 34 [Ps 34:16 *The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*]

f). The face of the Lord being against those who do evil should in no way be considered as passive, but an active and deliberate opposition from God Himself. A most chilling example of what this would look like can be found in – Jer 21:5 *"I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath.*

g). So who would those who do evil be? Well those who are eternally saved who should be in pursuit of the Kingdom but deliberately choose to refuse to put into practice the instructions we have looked at here in 1 Peter.

8). 1Pe 3:13 *And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*

a). The idea contained in this verse is, ‘seeing as God takes such good care of the righteous, who is it that will harm you if you desire earnestly what is good?’

b). Now not only does this suggest the idea of Divine deliverance, a theme that we see throughout Psalm 34, but if that deliverance is not forthcoming, then consistently and faithfully ‘doing good’ still provides Divine protection. There is no harm that anyone can do to us with respect to our entrance into the Kingdom if we remain faithfully obedient. And here will be a huge shift in our perspective if we can see this. And in order to try to understand this let’s draw again from the historical context for our letter.

c). Let’s remember that there was an impending Roman persecution of Christians that would result in many being martyred. Now some may have been Divinely protected from that end, just as Daniel in the lion’s den, but for those who would be martyred, who were faithfully obedient, the promise is that even in their death they were not harmed as their righteousness would guarantee the salvation of their soul

d). Perhaps we can call to mind here two scriptures that we had at the beginning of today’s message - Ps 56:11 *In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

e). Mt 10:28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.*

f). I think sometimes we believe that our physical death if it should come by sickness or disease, or accident, or God forbid the violent action of another, is to our harm. But really it isn’t. If we have been consistent in our faithful obedience to the commands of scripture and thereby producing our wedding garment, then no harm with regards to the salvation of our soul has been done. Our body maybe dead in the present, but that cannot take from us the life of our soul in the age to come.

g). And this is just what we see as our Peter scripture continues –
8). 1Pe 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."*

a). What is an encouragement to us here is that the phrase ‘if you should suffer’ speaks of something that is possible but not probable. But if it should come to the point that we suffer because of our faithful obedience to the scriptures, then we are blessed - Mt 5:11 *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."*

b). The word translated, ‘blessed’ here means to be ‘well off’ in the sense of being prosperous. In other words then if the improbable becomes actual then our suffering for righteousness sake is spiritually prosperous for us.

c). And the exhortation at the end of our verse is taken from Isaiah Chapter 8 which deals with the impending Assyrian captivity within the context of God’s purpose for His people Israel - Isa 8:10 *Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; Speak the word, but it will not stand, For God is with us." 11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying: 12 "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. 13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread.*

d). The word translated ‘threats’ is a little unfortunate as it implies overt threatening behavior which is not the meaning here. Literally we are not to be fearful of the fear they want us to have and we are not to be agitated, instead we are to trust God and, *Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread.*

9). 1Pe 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 ¶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*