**Sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 3:13-18**

**Wednesday Evening**

**March 15, 2023**

**1 Peter 3:13-18**

13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 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. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

In the original text, the verb rendered “sanctify” (a form of hagiazō in Greek) means “to dedicate, to set apart, to make holy, treat or regard with reverence and honor.”

“Lord God” in the New Testament refers to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Peter says we are to “sanctify,” or set apart, the Lord in our hearts—we are to give Him a special place of honor.

Saints, Peter positions this exhortation within the context of persecution for “doing what is right” and suffering because of our faith in Christ:

“But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life.

And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it” Rather than react with worry and fear, believers are to respond to persecution with worship and a renewed dedication to sharing the faith.

**13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."**

Saints, Peter referred to the advice he had given servants in, suggesting that if Christians were to suffer, it should never be for doing wrong.

**Matthew 5:10-12**

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**James 1:12**

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him”

**James 5:10-12**

10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

Saints, if they had to suffer at all, they should suffer only for doing good. Their example is Christ. He never sinned, yet he suffered, died. Christ’s suffering resulted in his death for sins.

Although he seemed to have been defeated, he was raised to life in the Spirit. Christ’s death was once for all time. His sacrifice was sufficient.

No one else will have to die for people’s sins; Christ will not have to die again.

**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;**

Saints, instead of being afraid of people, believers are to focus on Christ himself. By acknowledging Christ as Lord and Savior, they would recognize his holiness and be able to rest in him.

**Colossians 4:5-6**

5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

**2 Timothy 2:25-26**

25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Saints, there would be no room in their hearts for fear. Instead, they can always be ready to explain the reason for their Christian hope.

While Peter may have been thinking about believers speaking in a court, he seems also to have had in mind the everyday informal inquiries that might be directed at the believers—from either hostile or friendly neighbors.

Unbelievers can see that Christians have something different; only “hope” gives us strength and joy in hardships and persecutions. Unbelievers will ask about it; believers must be ready to tell them. All Christians must be ready and able to give a reasonable defense of their faith.

**Romans 1:16-17**

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

They need not be apologists or theologians, but every Christian ought to be able to clearly explain his or her own reasons for being a Christian.

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.**

Saints, Believers must not be obnoxious, but share their faith in a gentle and respectful way.

To keep one’s conscience clear refers to one’s personal integrity before God alone, as he or she lives consistently with their knowledge of God.

Unbelievers also have consciences that ought to guard their morality and actions, but a Christian’s conscience has been transformed by God.

**Romans 2:14-15**

14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them..

**Hebrews 13:18**

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably.

The Holy Spirit helps each believer know and understand God’s will, and sensitizes his or her conscience to God’s desires. All believers should keep clear consciences.

To do that, believers can avoid willful disobedience. If we do disobey, we should stay in constant communication with God, repenting and asking forgiveness.

**1 Peter 2:11-12**

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Each time we deliberately ignore our conscience, we harden our heart. Over a period of time our capacity to tell right from wrong will diminish.

As we walk with God, he will speak to us through our conscience, letting us know the difference between right and wrong. Just by being Christians, these believers could find themselves facing persecution;

they ought not supply their enemies with ammunition by also breaking laws or acting and speaking in an evil way. If the Christians’ lives were above reproach,

unbelievers would end up ashamed when they speak evil against them. They would realize that they had done nothing more than slander someone’s good life.

**17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,**

Saints, Peter referred to the advice he had given servants, suggesting that if Christians were to suffer, it should never be for doing wrong.

If they had to suffer at all, they should suffer only for doing good. Their example is Christ. He never sinned, yet he suffered, died. Christ’s suffering resulted in his death for sins.

**2 Corinthians 13:4-6**

4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

**Ephesians 3:12**

in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

**Colossians 1:22-23**

22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Saints, although he seemed to have been defeated, he was raised to life in the Spirit. Christ’s death was once for all time. His sacrifice was sufficient.

**Hebrews 9:14-15**

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

**Romans 5:1-5**

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Saints, no one else will have to die for people’s sins; Christ will not have to die again.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**