

"The Believer's Duty"

Part 8

1 Peter 2:11-3:12

Introduction: Over the past several studies we have been looking at how we as believers are to live in three areas of life. We looked at how we are to live in society, in the work place, and in the family. These instructions were found in 1 Peter 2:11-3:7. Now tonight as we come to 1 Peter 3:8 we shall see that Peter will pull these thoughts together as he instructs all believers as to how they are to live their lives to glorify Jesus Christ.

"Basic Christianity"

Notice 1 Peter 3:8

The word "finally" tells us that Peter is wrapping up his thoughts on the believer's duty. He moves on in this verse and he gives 5 exhortations here:

1. Be ye all of one mind

This is a call for unity in the body of Jesus Christ. It is easy for me to be of one mind with others so long as they have the same mind that I do. But the reality is that we all think differently, we all have different views, we all have different ideas about how things should be done. But in the body of Christ we should all be able to agree as to WHAT is to be done and when we are controlled by the Spirit, we can also come to agree about HOW it is to be done.

Philippians 2:1-5

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

² *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

³ *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

⁴ *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

² *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

³ **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

It takes sacrifice and long suffering at times to keep the unity OF THE SPIRIT.

Peter is calling upon believers to be of one mind and when I step back and consider this I understand that our minds are to be in agreement to live in such a way that we glorify Jesus Christ with our conduct in every area of life.

2. Have compassion one of another.

The word "compassion" here means "feeling the like with another, sympathetic". This has the idea of feeling what others feel so that you can be sensitive to the need. It also has the idea of suffering with another person by entering in and sharing their feelings instead of standing off at a distance and not getting in close.

Let us keep in mind how important this would be for the original readers whom Peter was writing to. Some were suffering greatly for their faith and so they truly needed one another. For another believer to step into the suffering of their brother or sister in the Lord and be so sensitive to feel their pain would be comforting to the one who was suffering.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

³ *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

⁴ *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

⁵ *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

I show you these verses so that we can see that God is the God of comfort. But how does He comfort His people today? It is through you and me because we are His body. So we **MUST** be sympathetic with our fellow believers. This means that for us to practice what Peter is exhorting here we are going to need to less consumed with my life and take time to be consumed with what others are going through.

3. Love as brethren.

Believers are family and so we need to love one another as family. This love is far more than feelings, however.

Galatians 5:13-16

*¹³ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, **but by love serve one another.***

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

¹⁵ But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

¹⁶ This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

When we love others, we will serve them when they have a need. There is yet more that love does.

Leviticus 19:17

¹⁷ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

When we love others, we care about them and will not allow them to live in sin, but we will come alongside to help them to get free from sin.

4. Be pitiful

The word "pitiful" means "kindhearted" or maybe a better word would be "tenderhearted". We must understand that in the first century there was a great deal of cold heartedness. Life was very difficult and especially for believers. Therefore, there was a great opportunity to show the tenderhearted of our Lord to the people who were struggling in life, whether they were believers or unbelievers.

Notice the words of Jowett on tenderheartedness:

"Tenderheartedness. That carries one a step further than compassion. Tenderheartedness is more than correspondence; it is gentle ministry. It includes the service of the tender hand; it not only feels the pains of others; it touches the wounds with exquisite delicacy. Even the pitiful man can be clumsy. Six men may have the sympathy, but only one of the six may be able to touch the wound so as to heal it. The Lord will add a gentle hand to our compassion. He will take away all brusqueness, all spiritual clumsiness, so that in the very ministry of pity we may not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

Application:

We too have such an opportunity in the day in which we live to show the tenderheartedness of our Lord through the body of Christ.

Notice what Jesus said about life in the tribulation:

Matthew 24:12

¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

We are seeing this even today as our world moves rapidly toward the tribulation. Then we have the words that Paul wrote to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:1-4

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

We are in these days. There are people that are just beat down from conditions around them and so we have a wonderful opportunity to be tenderhearted to many.

5. Be courteous.

The word "courteous" means "friendly and kind". It has the idea of being humble. Notice how Meyer describes this characteristic:

"Be ready to take the least comfortable seat, or to let others sit while you stand. Let the manners of your Heavenly Father's Court be always evident in your daily life, so that the world may learn that Christianity produces not simply the heroism of a great occasion, but the minute courtesies of daily living."

So, there are five inward characteristics that should be found in our lives every day no matter if we are in the store, at work, or in the home.

Notice 1 Peter 3:9

Here Peter addresses the natural reaction when his readers would suffer persecution. There would be the immediate reaction of wanting to retaliate. Peter tells his readers that

believers are not to retaliate. This is parallel with what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:38-48

³⁸ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

³⁹ *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

⁴⁰ *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

⁴¹ *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

⁴² *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

⁴³ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

⁴⁴ *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

⁴⁵ *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

⁴⁶ *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

⁴⁷ *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

⁴⁸ *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

We are not to seek vengeance, but we are to seek a blessing for those who offend us. This is only possible when we are surrendered over to the Spirit. If we are not surrendered, then there is a danger as seen in Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:14-15

¹⁴ *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

¹⁵ Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

If we are not careful, we can develop a root of bitterness that will steal the joy right out of your life.

Notice 1 Peter 3:9 again.

"knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

We are called to endure the wrongs of others and in so doing we inherit a blessing. What is the blessing?

Notice 1 Peter 3:10-12

Here Peter is quoting from Psalm 34.

Psalm 34:12-16

¹² What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

¹³ Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

What is Peter telling his readers?

Life is just more pleasant and much more enjoyable when we do not live seeking to get even with the people who offend us. It is much better when we refrain our tongue, and we seek peace with our fellow man. Some of the most miserable people in life are those that are always looking to get even or to inflict pain upon their enemies.

Let us not miss that this is the remedy for living a life that is enjoyable in the midst of a sinful world.

Notice 1 Peter 3:12 again.

There is great comfort in this verse for you and me. When we are ill treated by others God is fully aware of what we are going through.

Psalm 38:9

⁹ Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

Conclusion:

We cannot pray a prayer in secret, but He sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to Him at midnight, but He sees us. The eyes of God are upon His people when they are in secret. His eye is a tender eye of love, that opens His ear, His heart, and His hand, for our good.