



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God
Special Study

THE BLESSEDNESS OF LIVING AND SUFFERING FOR CHRIST 1 Peter 3:13-17

This practical Epistle teaches on christian character in a hostile and threatening world. In a world of suffering, the Christian is shown the path of holiness and hope. Our life on earth, a time of probation is a time of testing and trials, a time of persecution and suffering, a time of patient endurance and unceasing labour, a time of refining and preparation for a glorious future. Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, exhorts us not to count our troubles and trials a strange thing. Suffering is real in the world. Even Christ, the perfect Son of God had His share of suffering (a great share it was) when He was here on earth. Every follower of Christ will have his share of some suffering on earth.

Yet, our suffering or persecution does not necessarily hinder our happiness, usefulness and fulfilment in life. John Bunyan suffered imprisonment for his faith; yet, he wrote the Pilgrim's Progress in the prison. George Handel was paralysed and had creditors threatening him with imprisonment while he composed '*the Messiah*'. John Milton who wrote the book 'Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained' was blind. History is full of people who were mightily used of God in the midst of their suffering. "***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose***" (Romans 8:28).

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF SUFFERING SAINTS

1 Peter 3:13,14; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 3 John 11; 1 Peter 4:13-16; Matthew 5:10; Philippians 1:27-30; Isaiah 51:12; John 14:1,27.

Our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, went about doing good, and every true follower of Christ will be passionate in doing good. When a Christian is passionate for goodness, wrong things lose their fascination. He is passionate in doing what Jesus would do, desirous to reproduce the life of Christ in goodness. Such a Christian will be protected from harm by God; he may have some difficulties but there will be no damage to his soul.

Jesus was good, perfectly good; yet, He was persecuted by wicked men. The Apostles spent their lives wholly in doing good and they did not escape suffering and persecution. A Christian of a holy and pure life will be under God's protection; yet, his holy character and conduct cannot totally shield him from persecution. Satan and the world hate Christ and His followers. "***Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled***". The true Christian has nothing to fear; his heavenly Father is watching over him and will turn every event in life to his eternal advantage.

THE CONSECRATION AND CONFESSION OF SUFFERING SAINTS

1 Peter 3:15; Isaiah 5:16; 29:23,24; Psalm 119:46-48; Matthew 10:18-20; Acts 4:7-12; 5:29-32; Colossians 4:6.

"***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts***". What is meant by sanctifying the Lord? We cannot make Him holy, for He is perfectly holy whatever we do or think of Him. In our hearts and attitude, in our affections and thoughts of Him, we are to regard the Lord God as holy, and act towards Him with reverence and confidence. Knowing that the Lord God is holy and that there can be no unrighteousness in Him will keep our minds calm in trials. We sanctify the Lord in our hearts, we regard Him as perfectly holy and so do not murmur nor charge Him foolishly in our hearts during the time of our suffering. This will also allay all our fears and preserve us from all dread.

"***And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the HOPE that is in you***". In our persecution and suffering, we have hope, a lively hope. God's Word and His unfailing promises give us hope. Our suffering is not in vain. We should be so sure of God's power and promise of reward that we are willing, able and ready to answer any enquirer. Our

answers should be so convincing and Spirit-directed that we are able to win some of our persecutors to our Lord. The answer is to be given "**with meekness and fear**", that is, with gentleness and godly fear or reverence.

THE CONSCIENCE AND CONFIDENCE OF SUFFERING SAINTS

1 Peter 3:16,17; Acts 24:16; Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 2:12; Titus 2:8; 1 Peter 4:19.

"Having a good conscience ..." What the Christian suffers, and whatever be the accusations of his persecutors, he must see to it that he does not suffer the pangs inflicted by a guilty conscience. By godly actions, springing from pure and righteous motives, he must maintain a good conscience at all times. A Christian with "**a good conscience**" is a Christian who has been enlightened to know what is right and wrong and who is not doing anything in violation of the Divine law. He has been consistently obedient to God to the limit of the light he has received from the teaching of His Word.

If a so-called Christian is not sufficiently enlightened, he may do wrong and be guilty before God without his conscience pricking him. Paul thought he "**ought**" to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (Acts 26:9). Our Lord said that the time would come when whosoever should kill His disciples would think that they were doing God service (John 16:2). When a man is not well-taught and scripturally enlightened, "**there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death**" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). In all our persecution and suffering, we must not do anything against our persecutors that will make us lose "**a good conscience**".

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we'd like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@dclm-liverpool.org.uk with your comments