

Good for Evil
1 Peter 3:9-12

Intro: Peter is writing to exiles; people who have fled Israel under Roman persecution. They are, much like us today, isolated from one another and seeking guidelines for living as a religious minority in a foreign and hostile world.

Peter is encouraging them to represent Jesus well.

Last week he encouraged us to have:

- a) Unity of mind
 - b) Sympathy
 - c) Brotherly love
 - d) A tender heart
 - e) A humble mind
- These are things to 'have' and not to 'do.' It is a matter of what we are, not what we do.
 - This is also the way we are to behave toward one another. How do we behave toward unbelievers?

TEXT: *Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep 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 prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

ILL – It's usually the child who responds or the athlete who responds, who gets caught. God is concerned about how unbelievers live but, in this passage, Peter is concerned about how believers respond.

First: Blessing Those Against Us

We can do one of three things -

- a) Return evil for good which is satanic
- b) Return good for good and evil for evil which is human
- c) Return good for evil which is divine

The basis of Peter's encouragement is four-fold:

- a) Romans 5:10 - *...while we were enemies we were reconciled to God*
- b) Romans 5:10 - *by the death of his Son...*

c) 1 Peter 3:9 – “for to this you were called...”

- Paul - God to Ananias about Paul – Acts 9:16 – *For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.*”

d) “that you may obtain a blessing.”

- Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3 - And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Paul mentions this prophecy in

Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made.

He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." It is evident from the genealogies in both Matthew 1 (Joseph's) and Luke 3 (Mary's) that both legally and naturally Jesus is a descendant of Abraham.

Jesus is Abraham’s real and ultimate inheritance/blessing.

Jesus is also our blessing. He, not earth or heaven, is our blessing.

- a) God blessed his enemies
- b) We are called to bless those who demonstrate evil to us
- c) Blessing our enemies is the means to God’s blessing

Second: Let’s Look at the life of Jesus

Acts 2:22-24 - Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

The Father subjected Paul to suffering, just as his Son had suffered. The same is true of us.

And Jesus did so without retaliating

1 Peter 2:18-24 - *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures*

sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

- a) The Command – Suffer unjustly
- b) The Model – Jesus also suffered & 22
- c) The Purpose – that you might follow in his steps
- d) The Power – He bore our sins that we might die to sin and live to righteousness

Let's witness Jesus's non-retaliation -

John 18:10-11 - *Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)* ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Luke 23:33-34 - *And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.* ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

How did Jesus accomplish this?

Acts 2:25-28 - For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; ²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. ²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

In order to do this, we must focus on God and his word while following Jesus as our model and depending on the Holy Spirit to enable us to do both

God is the source of our justification and sanctification. He gives faith and fitness. God is the fountain from which flow all Christian blessings. He is the root and our efforts are the fruit.

Third: Let's Look at Peter's Support

To support his encouragement Peter quotes

Psalm 34:12-16 (let's read through verse 22) – *Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.* ¹² What man is there 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 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. ¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. ²⁰ He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. ²¹ Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. ²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

The question becomes, “Do we trust the intent of evildoers more than we trust God’s intent?” or “Do we trust the power of evil doers more than we trust God’s power?”

Peter is writing to Jews who have converted to Christianity. How many times have they witnessed the demise of their persecutors? Innumerable.

Application:

We live in a shame and cancel culture. We practice neither. Because Jesus has canceled our shame. We do not shame or cancel others.

Philippians 1:27-30 – *Only let your manner of life be worthy^[h] of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

