

1 Peter 3

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"Suffering with the Saviour: Part II"

[For those online, there is the text of Scripture at the end]

INTRODUCTION

L'shana tova to you and yours today. For Rip Van Winkle and everyone else who has missed it, today is Rosh Hashanah 5764. And it's a day to ponder the King of Kings, the majesty on high, the ruler of the universe, Adon Olam, the royal who was royal before Princes William and Andrew. It's a day to beat your breast and repent of your sins. It's a day to wonder when peace will reign in the Middle East and to pray for such. It's a day to renew our minds in the Scriptures as we are wont to do, and so we will talk today from the words just read from 1 Peter 3. Now this is not an ordinary reading for today's holiday. But we are reading in a pattern here, from the Hebrew in the book of Exodus and in the English from 1 Peter, so we will stay on course.

But you might find it fortuitous to read and learn today this chapter of the Bible. Here we see Peter the Jewish apostle and the one who walked closest to the Messiah throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus' right hand man, you could say. And Peter tells us some rules and regulations, continuing last week's lesson, but highlights some deeper meaning which is especially important for us who want to be Rosh Hashanah people.

Peter sums his message in the words, "let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead;"

Who can balk against such words? What well meaning or evil meaning person thinks this is a bad prescription for social rest? Respect and ultimate vindication...these are the themes in today's reading. Let's consider them.

SUBMISSION WITHIN FAMILIES

Last week we talked about submission to masters. Slaves were a disregarded class of people until recent times, yet Peter makes sure that they are highlighted first in his list of persons who need to learn from the Messiah. In nature, the sun shines through bare trees to the ground and causes the low grass to grow. Then the scrubs take bud and finally the trees grow their leaves. In the same way that God takes a look at nature and regards the grass before the tallest of trees, so in God's economy, He regards the lowly first. Thus the servants, and now the wives. This is not meant to defame women, rather to uplift them.

Peter calls women to honor, to live honorable lives, with the 'hidden person' of the heart the most central. In this, he picks up a Psalms like theme. And it's almost a Rosh Hashanah theme.

In King David's penitential psalm of confession and forgiveness, we read, (Psa. 51.6) Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.

Psa. 69.5 ¶ O God, it is Thou who dost know my folly, And my wrongs are not hidden from Thee." People want to know if they can find God in the church or do they have to attend the synagogue on the Holidays. Nothing is hidden from the Almighty, David relates, and thus Peter says that is the most relevant place to deal with God. It's in the heart God looks. Dress your heart, not your body for meeting the Lord. That's why Peter says in verse three, "not external adornment, braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on dresses". He is not saying "Ladies, don't get dressed or look good." It is a typical biblical hyperbole or outer vs inner. Also the word adornment is the Greek word "kosmos" meaning world. Let your world be inner, not outer. Do you know what's going on in the lives of the sitcoms and the soaps and the movies' stars more than in the life of your husband or your neighbours or your children? If so, your outlook is worldly and not inner.

Peter spends more time on the ladies than the gents. I'm not sure why that is, nor will I aver a reason. But it's clear he is saying that believing women should stay in relationship with their as yet unbelieving husbands, and win them over to the Messianic life.

Of note is the 'up to a point' implication. In Roman times, a wife was expected to adjust to the husband, and thus to his religion. Peter makes no such action permissible for the believer. Thus, there is a limitation to the submission, and each family has to sort that one out with counsel of course.

And he tells husbands how to care for and love their wives.

That seems the point in the next couple verses as Peter moves his attention to the husbands in the audience. Husbands have responsibilities about which we

should speak at length another time. We are told to love and honor our wife, and to treat her with respect. We should deem them as equals in the matters of eternal things, not weaker as the world sees them, but as a fellow heir (v. 7) of the grace of God. If we do not, Peter warns, our prayers will be hindered. This means we won't pray with them, and it means when we do pray that the sounds might just bounce off the ceiling.

Let me tell you of a one-lane road across the rail tracks. Driving down a country road, I came to a very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: "YIELD." Seeing no oncoming cars, I continued across the bridge and to my destination. On my way back, I came to the same one-lane bridge, now from the other direction. To my surprise, I saw another YIELD sign posted. Curious, I thought, "I'm sure there was one posted on the other side." When I reached the other side of the bridge I looked back. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge. Drivers from both directions were requested to give right of way. It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision. When the Bible commands Christians to "be subject to one another" (Ephesians 5:21) it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right of way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.

SUBMISSION ITSELF BRINGS GOD HONOR

Let's move to the next section about living godly in this present world and it seems to move us out of family relationships into all social structures. Let's see if Adam Clarke can help us in his rendering of this sentiment.

Perhaps we should understand
Peter's words thus: Entertain just notions of God; of his nature, power,
will, justice, goodness, and truth. Do not conceive of him as being
actuated

by such passions as men; separate him in your hearts from every thing earthly, human, fickle, rigidly severe, or capriciously merciful. Consider that he can neither be like man, feel like man, nor act like man. Ascribe no human passions to him, for this would desecrate not sanctify him. Do not confine him in your conceptions to place, space, vacuity, heaven, or earth; endeavor to think worthily of the immensity and eternity of his nature, of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Avoid the error of the heathens, who bound even their Dii Majores, their greatest gods, by fate, as many well-meaning Christians do the true God by decrees; conceive of him as infinitely free to act or not act, as he pleases.

This may be a good way to envision this teaching of verse 15. 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.' This cardio image is now repeated as we saw in verses four and eight. And isn't that key in our Rosh Hashanah understanding? It's not the outward man, so says God to Samuel in relation to the choice of the King Saul, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Sam 16.7)

And Peter quotes the passage we sang earlier this morning, from Psalm 34 of seeking peace and pursuing it. How we long for peace in our times. How we ache when we hear of bombings even again today and threats in so many places. But no matter what others do, Peter says, we should do the right thing. By the way you should all go along to the Valhalla cinema this week and see Bonhoeffer, the story of the murdered pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who stood with our people in the midst of the Holocaust, because it was right. You will understand Peter's words in this text today.

Verse 15 teaches us to make a defense. Here Peter uses the word [apologia](#), which we translate answer, signifies a defense; from this we have our word apology, which did not originally signify an excuse for an act, but a defense of that act. The defense of the faith by the primitive fathers are called apologies.

Quoting Clarke again, he gives us an insight into the attitude which should join our action of evangelism.

answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, BUT with meekness and fear. Do not permit your readiness to answer, nor the confidence you have in the goodness of your cause, to lead you to answer pertly or superciliously to any person; defend the truth with all possible gentleness and fear, lest while you are doing it you should forget his presence whose cause you support, or say any thing unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the religion which you have espoused, or inconsistent with that heavenly temper which the Spirit of your indwelling Lord must infallibly produce.

We each need to learn how to make a case for Messiah. Argue well from the biblical text. I'm not saying "Bible bash" but I'm saying have a method to your argument and invite opposition, but also allege and affirm. You must know how to do this. If you don't, let's discuss this in question time.

SUBMIT AS TO THE LORD MESSIAH OUR GREAT EXAMPLE (.18-22)

Peter's summary of this section teaches us that we should suffer when we are right, not when we are wrong. That is, you will suffer for wrongdoing. You will get ticketed. You will spend time in jail. You will be punished. But Peter is saying, when you have done nothing wrong and you suffer, you will do well if you submit to it. BECAUSE he says, someone set you an example. Maybe you know the more famous story of the ship in the night. The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message "Alter your course 10 degrees south." Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north."

The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am the captain!" Soon

another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am seaman third class Jones." Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am a battleship." Then the reply came "Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am a lighthouse."

In the midst of our dark and foggy times, all sorts of voices are shouting orders into the night, telling us what to do, how to adjust our lives. Out of the darkness, one voice signals something quite opposite to the rest--something almost absurd. But the voice happens to be the Light of the World, and we ignore it at our own peril.

So Peter tells us that all this submission stuff is related to the One who came and submitted to the Roman soldiers and to mockery and shame on the cross. He died for our sins and accomplished what no man could do before. For centuries our Jewish people had longed for newness of life. Each year at Passover we moved our redemption diaries ahead a year. Each year at Rosh Hashanah we moved our civil calendars ahead to remind us of the time since creation. But in Y'shua, now, Peter says, we have eternal life. In verse 18 we read "For Messiah also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"

Some will want to know this section at the end of the 8 souls and that Y'shua went to preach somewhere after he died. There is no small controversey about this in the commentaries, but I am of the following opinion. Y'shua died, then He went to sheol and declared (better the Greek rendering than preached) that He had won the victory. The Older Testament saints (without us they are incomplete Heb. 11) were awaiting this victorious announcement and came forth

from the waiting area. (Sheol plus or Abraham's bosom Luke 16). Y'shua rose and so did many of the saints (Matt. 28). That section of the netherworld is no more. Since the resurrection of Y'shua, people go to only one of two places, heaven or hell, and there is no waiting room. (Phil. 1.19ff) But you may want to share some questions about this in question time as well.

Summary

Here are some things I see as we conclude, and you can add your thoughts to your own list.

- 1) All our lives spring from our hearts, so guard them with all diligence
- 2) Having a good conscience is worth a ton of silver and gold
- 3) Messiah in his death is our greatest teacher. He submitted to inhumanity and cruelty for the best in us who follow Him. What a saviour!
- 4) A holy attitude always precedes true biblical action
- 5) New years begin with new lives and a new heart especially.

Invitation

Dear friends, God wants us all to be born again to a living hope. If you are without that hope, despairing for your soul or for the disrepair of the world, or of your family or friends, God wants you to have true hope. This hope will not disappoint; it's alive and supportive. And that hope is found in Y'shua. He is the anchor of our souls, and the evidence in is. He rose from the dead, just when all hope was apparently lost. That resurrection powered him from the grave and into the seat of authority in heaven. He is there for you, risen over our circumstances and risen to

new meaning and life. Open your heart to him today. Receive Y'shua as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world for you.

If you have never experienced this eternal and new life about which we are speaking, if you are yet outside this relationship with God, then pray with me. I'll say a few words in prayer and if these words are your words, that is, if you agree with this prayer, then say it with me. In this prayer I will ask God to forgive us of our sins, whatever they might be and to make us born again. If that's what you want, then pray this prayer with me. Lord forgive me in the name of the Messiah Y'shua. Forgive me for all my sins, and make me clean again. I believe you died and rose again. Give me eternal life in the name of Y'shua, and make me born again. I trust you. Amen.

Actual Text

1Pet. 3.1 ¶ In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

1Pet. 3.2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

1Pet. 3.3 And let not your adornment be merely external — braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;

1Pet. 3.4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

1Pet. 3.5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.

1Pet. 3.6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

1Pet. 3.7 ¶ You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1Pet. 3.8 ¶ To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

1Pet. 3.9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

1Pet. 3.10 For, "Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile.

1Pet. 3.11 "And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

1Pet. 3.12 "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

1Pet. 3.13 And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?

1Pet. 3.14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,

1Pet. 3.15 but sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

1Pet. 3.16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Messiah may be put to shame.

1Pet. 3.17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

1Pet. 3.18 For Messiah also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

1Pet. 3.19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,

1Pet. 3.20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

1Pet. 3.21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah,

1Pet. 3.22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.