

I Peter 3:13-17

If You Are Going To Suffer, Let It Be For Doing Good Rather Than Evil

I. Introduction:

A. Finding true justice in this world has long been a problem (**Isaiah 1:21-23** and **Micah 3:11**).

1. Corruption is not by God's design (**Deuteronomy 16:19**).
2. God is just and right (**Deuteronomy 32:4**).

B. There is also the fact that there have long been those that think afflicting the just is a good work because they are misguided (**John 16:1-3**).

1. There are those that hate the truth so much that they will lie about the faithful to bring charges against us (**Acts 6:8-14** and **Acts 7:51-60**).
2. Those that will do so in a cruel manner (**Psalms 27:12**).

II. Body: *"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (I Peter 3:13-17).*

A. In principal, generally speaking, who is going to harm someone who is good (**Proverbs 16:7** and **Romans 13:1-3**)?

1. I said in general, because such is not always the case (**Psalms 35:11-12**, **Psalms 38:20**, and **Matthew 5:10-12**).
2. The fact that such is not a guarantee should not even be something you have to think about (**Acts 3:13-15**).

B. To be happy to suffer for righteousness sake (**Acts 5:40-42**).

1. It's a mindset (**II Corinthians 12:1-10**).
2. Knowing the immediate and eternal benefits of suffering for Christ in the flesh (**James 1:2-3** and **James 1:12**).

C. Don't fear (**Psalms 56:1-13**).

1. Think about what Jesus told the twelve (**Matthew 10:22-28**).
2. In the end, it's all good (**Romans 8:28-39**).

D. Sanctify [Hallow; **Matthew 6:9**] the Lord God in your hearts (**Isaiah 8:13**).

1. You're facing persecution, how does the Lord in your heart help you (**Psalms 56:3**)?
2. Not afraid (**Psalms 112:7**).

E. Ready to give an answer of the hope that is in you (**Psalms 119:46**, **Daniel 3:14-18**, **Colossians 1:5**, **Colossians 4:5-6**, and **I Peter 4:11**).

1. Giving an answer with meekness (**James 3:13**).

2. Giving an answer with fear (**II Corinthians 5:11**).

F. Having a good conscience (**I Timothy 1:5** and **I Peter 2:19**).

1. A good conscience doesn't necessarily, on it's own, mean good actions (**Acts 24:16** and **Galatians 1:13**).

2. As we have discussed earlier in this letter, live with good conduct that can outshine false accusations (**I Peter 2:12**; cf. **Titus 2:7-8**).

G. If you are suffering for well-doing that is in accordance with the will of God, that is better (**I Peter 4:15-19**).

1. This does not mean the faithful will not suffer "as an evil doer" because of the Gospel (**II Timothy 2:8-12**).

2. Don't do evil for the punishment you will receive of men is nothing to rejoice in as you deserve it (**Romans 13:4**).

III. Conclusion: Our Next Study; *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (I Peter 3:18-20).*