

LIVING SECURE AMIDST HOSTILITY

Sunday, January 25, 2026 -- 1 PETER series -- msg 26 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

1 PETER 3:13-17

English Standard Version (ESV)

13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. **17** For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

REVIEW & CONTEXT:

Peter's overarching theme is **HOLY LIVING** amid suffering and persecution.

This letter answers the question: HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

Ch. 1:1–2:12: Christians are a chosen people, set apart to declare God's excellencies even while living as *sojourners and exiles* in a hostile culture.

Ch. 2:13-3:12: Christians are to live a **holy life** in regards to government, employment, marriage and relating to the body of Christ.

Ch. 3:13-4:11 Christians can respond to suffering in a godly way.

CENTRAL THEME:

Living secure amidst hostility is possible because true Christians belong to Christ and are destined for glory. So, they are called to suffer well, have no fear of persecutors and bear hopeful witness in a world that misunderstands them.

Peter is teaching Christians how to live faithfully when obedience to Christ brings FRICTION rather than FAVOR.

HOW TO LIVE SECURELY AMIDST HOSTILITY:

I. THE NORMAL EXPECTATION: Living for Christ Sometimes **Brings Suffering**. vs 13-14a

vs 13 "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?"

vs 14a But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed."

1. Peter acknowledges that people *usually* do not persecute noble behavior. vs 13
2. Then Peter recognizes that *sometimes* you will suffer for doing good. vs 14a.
3. And Peter reminds that GOD SEES and REWARDS. vs 14a
(Matthew 5:10-12 — Don't forget Jesus's explicit promise!)

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II. THE CENTRAL COMMAND: Fear God, Not Your Opponents vs 14b-15a

vs 14b *"Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,*

vs 15a *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy."*

1. Peter once again echoes back to the Old Testament— God's Word.

ISAIAH 8:12-13

12 "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. 13 But the Lord of hosts, HIM you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

Ancient Israel feared conspiracies and threats. We can too if we are not careful.

2. Notice that Peter applies this directly to CHRIST. vs 15a

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy

This is what you call high Christology.

What Isaiah said about Yahweh, Peter applies to Jesus!

3. Notice that the FEAR is not eliminated but REDIRECTED.

Proverbs 29:25; Luke 12:4-5; 1 Peter 1:17

Pressure will reveal what you fear/respect/value the most.

III. The Missional Calling: A Hope-Filled, Gentle, Clear Witness vs 15b

"Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

1. Christian hope should be evident enough to provoke questions.
 - Hope is not merely internal. It can be seen when under pressure.
2. When someone asks, "Why/How do you have hope!??"
 - Be Ready.
 - Be Gentle.
 - Be Humble/Respectful.

The MANNER in which we respond matters as much as the MESSAGE!

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IV. THE MORAL SAFEGUARD: A Clear Conscience Before God vs 16

"Having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."

1. Christians will be slandered. Not if but when.

1 Peter 2:12; 4:4

2. The goal is **not** vindication—but faithfulness. vs 16

God knows how to manage your reputation.

A clear conscience before God is greater than public approval.

3. This anticipates divine reversal.

ROMANS 12:19

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

V. THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE: It is Better to Suffer for Doing Good vs 17

"For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."

1. Notice that God is sovereign over your situation and your suffering.

Sometimes suffering is His will. You can fight it, but it is better to accept it.

2. Not all Suffering is equal:

Deserved suffering — discipline/consequence.

Undeserved suffering — discipleship.

3. This points us to Christ's example (which we will see in vs 18 next week)

Christ suffered for us, once and for all, righteously, redemptively.

We learn to walk in His steps. 1 Peter 2:21

APPLICATION/REFLECTION:

- 1) Have you come to the place of HONORING CHRIST AS HOLY in your heart? Is He LORD?
- 2) Who does your behavior indicate you fear more, GOD or PEOPLE?
- 3) Are you willing to suffer well for the name of Christ? For His purposes?
- 4) How can you be ready to explain your hope if/when you are asked?