



## BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus & Thompsons Roads, LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107  
03 9850 9633 / www.bulleenbaptist.org.au

**SERIES : Studies in 1 Peter ~ "A Living Hope"**

**August 5, 2007. Study 8**

**"A RADICAL REACTION 2 : Explaining Gently" 1Ptr 3:13 -17**

### THE STUDY SERIES

Peter sums up what God has done for us in Christ : "You have been born anew into a living hope." **1:3**

Recent Studies have been about our RESPONSE to God's grace:

Be holy in all you do **1:16** ... from Study 4 - "A New Lifestyle"

"You are a chosen people ... that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **2:9** ... from Study 5 - "A New Community"

These two themes, living commendable lives, and, giving witness to God's grace, continue through Peter's letter. Last Study, we saw that Peter called for the first of two "radical reactions" to persecution - to work for the good of the persecutor! This week we discover the second "radical reaction" : Peter's 8th principle -

that suffering unjustly calls for a 2nd " RADICAL REACTION - Explaining Gently"

### INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 8

Verses 14b to 16 (see the end of this page) are the focus of our Study today. But first let's look at two statements that precede them :

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. **1Ptr3:13-14a**

The first sentence is not Peter's plan for avoiding suffering. He has already clearly stated that Jesus suffered even though he had done no wrong:

... Christ suffered ... he committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth ... **1Ptr2:21-22**

What function, then, does this statement have?

**a.** It stands as a GENERAL principle that should be embraced ... particularly by those who are called for the specific purpose of "doing good."

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. **Eph2:10** (also Ti2:14)

(Note : Peter characterises the Christian as one who is eager to do good. The word used here is "zealous" ... as in "single-minded determination" - the cast of one's life rather than an occasional dabble!)

**b.** Peter has used similar statements already (2:11-12,14-15, 3:1-2, 9, 10-12) Our lives are a TESTIMONY to our faith, so he takes the opportunity to reinforce the concept.

As the second sentence indicates, Peter is not naive. Undeserved suffering happens. As we have already mentioned in these Studies, persecution for the fact of simply being a Christian is becoming more likely. Peter is writing to prepare his readers' should it happen to them.

... insulted because of the name of Christ ... if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. **1Ptr4:14-16**

Note the words underlined. "Harm" and "suffering" to Peter's readers are more than the minor annoyances of life. They indicate the real, acute consequences that may come to a Christian because of their faithful witness to Christ.

In the remainder of today's passage, Peter suggests a strategy to be put into action should that ever happen to us.

Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

**1Ptr3:14b-16**

This Strategy, "Explaining Gently" has 3 steps. They are:

## STEP 1 : BELIEVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE!

Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

**1. DO NOT** : fear what they fear; be frightened.

Peter, saturated in the Old Testament, has this verse in mind:

The LORD spoke to me ... warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said: "... do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread." **Is8:11-13**

What were people fearing in Isaiah's time? Invasion by Assyria and the destruction of their city and nation. (Is7:1-4) .... the loss of everything that gave life its PURPOSE and SHAPE

Those who were the potential persecutors of Peter's readers would also fear the loss of everything, in this life, that they held dear.

**2. DO** : But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

This is Peter's equivalent of the underlined section (above) of the verses from Isaiah. The sense of Isaiah's "fear" and "dread" of God is the same as Peter's "setting apart" of Christ ... the ideas of REVERENCE, RESPECT, RELY. (see 1Ptr1:17, 2Cor5:12)

If Christ is truly set apart as Lord, then we recognise that he is in CHARGE and can be TRUSTED, irrespective of the circumstances of our lives.

## STEP 2 : VERBALISE YOUR HOPE

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

**Why doesn't the Christian "fear what they fear" ?? Because:**

In his great mercy (God) has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you. **1Ptr1:3-4**

Our "hopes" are not LIMITED to the span of time or restricted to the circumstances of life! but are stretched across the span of ETERNITY .... with a known outcome.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed ... persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed ... because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus ...

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

**from 2Cor4:7-5:1**

Peter is not expecting us to have a COMPLETE answer to EVERY question that can be asked about the Christian Faith - just a PERSONAL explanation of why we believe and why we act the way we do.

## STEP 3 : KEEP YOUR LIFE CONSISTENT

keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

What observers SEE in us must match what they HEAR from us.

Peter has already emphasised this point again and again. Eg

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. **1Ptr2:12**

And with this, we come full-circle to the introduction to today's Study. And just in case we have missed this point, we meet it again in the last verse of today's passage from 1 Peter :

It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil **1Ptr3:17**