



Session 5: 1 Peter 3:8–22

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what we want to walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, & doing.

Main Idea: As the people of God, Christians display the good news of the gospel through unity in the church, blessing their enemies, and remaining faithful in suffering.

Head Change: To understand that our actions demonstrate our beliefs, which are brought to surface when we experience suffering.

Heart Change: To rejoice in suffering for righteousness rather than to run from it, because we realize that we are blessed by God as we experience it.

Life Change: To identify ways in which we are not pursuing unity within the Church and make whatever changes necessary to become the unified body of Christ that God desires.

OPEN

Describe a time when you've seen teamwork at its best—maybe it was watching a particular sports team, reading about a rescue operation, or witnessing a community rally to provide for a loss. **How was unity on display?**

Throughout the New Testament, unity is consistently called for in the church—and 1 Peter is no exception. In this week's passage, he identifies it as one of the ways in which we demonstrate the gospel to the world.

READ

Read 1 Peter 3:8–22.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Kyle's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to the following questions.

How did Kyle define the term "belief"?

How did he define the term "conviction"?

Should we expect kindness from the world in response to our obedience to Christ?

Show Session 5: 1 Peter 3:8–22 (13 minutes)

DISCUSS

We started off this series by making a simple statement about identity: Who you are determines what you will do. Our actions flow out of us as a result of our identity and, as we look to wrap up chapter three, Peter is going to turn his attention to that very topic—actions. To put it simply, he calls his readers to live out their convictions.

Someone read 1 Peter 3:8–22.

What do you consider some of your core convictions? How do you demonstrate them in your day-to-day life?

Peter challenges his readers to live out their convictions in a culture largely hostile to their faith. As we saw previously, beginning in 2:11 he listed a number of ways Christians ought to resist their “sinful desires,” including instructions related to civil obedience, slave and master relationships, and marriage. He concludes this instruction in 3:8–9 by listing a number of characteristics beginning with unity.

Why do you think Scripture emphasizes unity among Christians? What does disunity communicate to those outside of the Church?

How well does your life reflect the remaining qualities on the list (sympathy, mutual love, compassion, and humility)? Where can you improve?

Kyle said that we find out whether something is a belief or a conviction when we are in the minority and it is costly to embrace. **What are some ways that you’ve found yourself in the minority? How were your convictions demonstrated?**

Peter concludes the thought he began in 2:11 with a final command in verse 9—bless others, even those who pay you evil and insult.

PEEK AT THE GREEK

When we think about the idea of “blessing” someone today, it has a more diluted meaning than of the biblical text. We say, “Bless you,” following a sneeze or sometimes politely insult others with the phrase “bless your heart.” But Peter has something much deeper in mind when he says to bless our enemies in verse 9. He uses the term *eulogeo*, which means to ask for God’s special favor upon another. This isn’t something we can do begrudgingly, but out of the knowledge of who we are in Christ. By faith, we have been remade and experience the blessings of God on a daily basis. Out of that identity, we ought to bless those who intend us harm because it is evidence of our new life in Christ.

How do you tend to react to those who treat you poorly? Have you been able to consistently bless them? If not, what does your reaction reveal about your motivations?

Based on your past experiences, what practically could you do in future situations to bless those who treat you poorly?

Blessing those who mean to hurt us is no easy task. It runs contrary to our natural sense of justice, which is why it is only something we can do through faith. Our example is none other than Christ himself, as Peter makes clear in verse 18. In particular, Kyle focused on Christ’s compassion, which He displayed consistently throughout his earthly ministry.

Who in your life would you consider an example of a compassionate Christian? What impact has that person's compassion had on you? What impact has it had on others?

Kyle said, "When people begin to witness our compassion they will begin to care about our convictions." **How have you seen this to be true? What could you do to better demonstrate compassion in the way you interact with those around you?**

Peter calls his readers to a distinct Christian lifestyle—one that pursues unity and extends blessing to its enemies all for the sake of modeling Christ to the world. We might expect to receive kindness from the world as a result. After all, who would disapprove of being treated with blessing, right? Beginning in verse 13, Peter affirms that this could be the treatment we receive, but we could also become the targets of unjustified suffering, which is why our motivations for doing good are crucial.

What is the common motivation listed in verses 9 and 14? (Blessing from God)

Whether the world thanks us or blames us for our faithfulness to Christ, Peter says that we are blessed. **How have you experienced suffering or opposition for your faith?**

Ultimately, what Peter is arguing in this passage is that when we oppose unity in the Church or seek to avoid suffering at any cost, we reveal that our hope lies in our personal comfort more than the sufficiency of Christ. And our behaviors always reveal our convictions. **What are some of the ways you're tempted toward pursuing personal comfort over Christ's call on your life?**

Verses 15–16 go even further in clarifying this point. Often, verse 15 is used to encourage apologetic styles of evangelism, which aim to respond to intellectual arguments against the faith. While there's nothing wrong with that style of evangelism it is not what Peter has in mind when we consider the context. The previous verse encourages readers against fearing the prospect of suffering for their faith. Instead, Peter tells them to revere Christ in their suffering and to be prepared at all times to give an answer for their hope. In other words, Christian faithfulness amidst suffering speaks to those who witness it. People will ask why we are hopeful in suffering because that hope reveals our convictions. And when they ask, we will have an opportunity to share the good news of Jesus.

What does your response to suffering communicate to those around you? How could you more clearly demonstrate your hope in Christ in future situations?

When people witness our compassion toward pain, our blessing toward insult, and our hope in suffering they will wonder about our life. But it requires a commitment on our part to live according to our faith in every way possible.

What is a practical way that you can apply Peter's words in the coming week? Who could you serve? What about your life needs to change so that your behavior matches your convictions?

LAST WORD

As Christians, suffering provides us with an incredible opportunity to demonstrate the grace and mercy of our God. Suffering is never pleasant, but it is temporary and we have a hope beyond this world that has been confirmed for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Whether you find yourself facing difficulty or comfort today, rejoice in where God has you. He has not abandoned you and will remain faithful to you no matter the circumstance you face in the days ahead.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Ask God to continue transforming your heart so that you are able to respond with genuine joy in times of suffering, as you recognize the opportunity it provides.

Write: On a piece of paper, write out 1 Peter 3:15 and place it where you'll see it each day this week. Every time you read it, ask the Lord to prepare you to give an answer for your faith when He prompts those around you to ask.

Resolve: Whether or not you are currently experiencing suffering, resolve to face it with joy acknowledging that God allows it for the purpose of refining your faith and confirming the presence of the Holy Spirit within you.