

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

I PET. 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

3:13 And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 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:

16 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.

17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even* so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

NOTES

Be Vigilant

Lesson Text: I Peter 2:11-12; 3:13-17; 4:7-11; 5:8-10

Related Scriptures: Psalm 37:21-31; Matthew 10:24-33;
Romans 7:12-25; 12:3-12; II Timothy 2:22-25

TIME: A.D. 63

PLACE: from "Babylon" (possibly Rome)

GOLDEN TEXT—"Having your conversation honest . . . that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God" (I Peter 2:12).

Lesson Exposition

Christ left us "an example, that [we] should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). The more we grow in Christ, the more we become like Him.

THE EXAMPLE OF GOOD CONDUCT—I Pet. 2:11-12

Abstaining from lusts (I Pet. 2:11). Peter exhorted us as pilgrims and foreigners. God's people are only passing through this world; it is not our home.

Christians must "abstain from fleshly lusts." Lust leads to even greater sin, leading to spiritual death.

Pursuing good works (I Pet. 2:12). "Conversation" means "conduct." Those outside the body of Christ must see good conduct if they are to be impacted by the gospel. Unsaved people are to be given no justification for labeling Christians as evildoers. While good works do not earn salvation, they are evidence of it (Eph. 2:8-10).

THE EXAMPLE OF DEFENDING THE FAITH—I Pet. 3:13-17

Righteous suffering (I Pet. 3:13-14). Peter's readers were persecuted for their faith in Christ. Sometimes do-

ing the right thing results in misunderstanding, persecution, or abuse.

Even if a person suffers for righteousness' sake, Peter saw that as an occasion for joy and evidence of blessing (cf. Matt. 5:10-12). No one enjoys suffering, but it can become a means of witnessing to lost sinners (Acts 16:25-34). Peter's advice was simple: "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (I Pet. 3:14). Even suffering can result in blessing and God's glory (Rom. 8:28).

Readiness to answer (I Pet. 3:15). To "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" means that the Lord must be first in our hearts. Otherwise, our faith may waver when tested by troubles and trials.

Since Peter envisioned formal charges being brought against his readers in a Roman court, they had to be prepared to give an answer to their accusers. We also must be ready and willing to defend our Christian faith against its opponents.

When defending our Christian faith, we must not do so with an attitude of pride but instead display meekness and proper respect. If we mock them it will likely only solidify their unbelief, but if we speak respectfully they are more likely to listen.

A good conscience (I Pet. 3:16-17). Believers should have “a good conscience.” Peter wrote that we are to live righteously. If others call us evil-doers, our actions should prove them wrong. They will be ashamed because the charges they have brought are unjustified. Suffering for doing good is better than for doing evil. We may suffer sometimes for doing what is right.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE—I Pet. 4:7-11

Various duties (I Pet. 4:7-9). Since no one knows when Christ will return (Matt. 24:36), God’s people should always live as if the end is near, and be alert. Alertness and prayerfulness are important ways of staying prepared for His return. Most importantly, we must love one another. Such love will cover a multitude of sins. Some have suggested this means that God will overlook a multitude of sins in us if we love others, but it probably means that our love for others causes us to overlook their sin (cf. Prov. 10:12). Love can be shown through hospitality.

Various gifts (I Pet. 4:10-11). Each Christian has received gifts from God. They should be used for His glory and to serve one another (Matt. 5:16, I Cor. 13:1-3).

Peter mentioned two general areas of Christian work: speaking and serving. Those who speak should do so as one giving the very words of God, remembering that God is speaking through them. The purpose of all speaking and serving is to bring glory to God in all things through Jesus Christ. Christian service should not focus on the one serving but point people to God (I Cor. 9:16).

THE EXAMPLE OF RESISTING EVIL—I Pet. 5:8-10

Be vigilant (I Pet. 5:8-9). We need to be vigilant because we have a great ad-

versary in Satan. Like a roaring lion, he is on the prowl. His goal is to devour us. We can resist the devil by being steadfast in the faith. Having a strong personal faith in God is essential in warding off the onslaughts of the evil one. Whatever trials we face are not unique.

Doxology (I Pet. 5:10). As Peter concluded the letter, he broke forth in praise to the “God of all grace.” We are saved by God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-9), sustained by His grace (II Cor. 12:9), and serve through His grace (Rom. 12:3).

Not only has God called us to live for Him, He has called us to eternal glory, to receive the inheritance awaiting us in heaven (I Pet. 1:4).

—John Owston

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are Christians foreigners and pilgrims in this world (I Pet. 2:11)?
2. Why is it important to perform good works (vs. 12)?
3. Why should we be able to give an answer for the hope we have? What attitude should we have in doing this?
4. What does having a good conscience mean in the context of this passage (3:16)?
5. Is it ever God’s will for us to suffer (vs. 17)? Why?
6. How could the end of all things be at hand for Peter’s readers?
7. How does charity (love) cover a multitude of sins?
8. How should we use the spiritual gifts God has given us?
9. How is Satan described by Peter? What is Satan’s goal?
10. How can we resist the devil?

—John Owston

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The Lord has given the necessary tools to win our spiritual battles (I Pet. 2:11; cf. Gal. 5:16; Eph. 6:11).
2. Never underestimate the power of the example of godly living (I Pet. 2:12; cf. Matt. 5:16).
3. Pray that God will give the strength to stand firm should persecution come (I Pet. 3:13-14).
4. God will help us share the gospel if we will give Him our hearts (I Pet. 3:15-17; cf. Matt. 28:18-20).
5. Let us be sure our lives include ministry to each other (I Pet. 4:7-11; cf. I Cor. 14:26).
6. Satan is dangerous and must be resisted (I Pet. 5:8-9).
7. We must rely on God's grace every day (vs. 10).

—Darrell W. McKay

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. What characteristics of strangers and pilgrims make them appropriate titles for Christians (I Pet. 2:11; cf. Heb. 11:9-10)? Do we tend to live that way today?
2. Why are those who do right so often accused of doing wrong (I Pet. 2:12; cf. Isa. 5:20)?
3. How do we typically react to suffering? How can we respond in the way that Peter describes (cf. I Pet. 3:13-17)?
4. How is allowing charity (love) to cover the sins of a brother consistent with giving a word of admonishment (I Pet. 4:8; cf. Gal. 6:1)?
5. How can we resist the devil (I Pet. 5:8-9; cf. Matt. 4:1-11)?

—Darrell W. McKay

Golden Text Illuminated

“Having your conversation honest . . . that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God” (I Peter 2:12).

Christians may be misinterpreted and criticized. Jewish leaders in Rome, for example, told Paul that everyone everywhere speaks against the Christian way (Acts 28:22).

Peter knew that Christians were struggling to live faithfully in a pagan society. Their faith was maligned and they were accused of doing evil. Peter instructed them not to repay evil for evil (cf. Rom. 12:17); rather, they were to be honest and upright to silence their critics. Their conduct would be subjected to scrutiny and tested by those outside the faith. As we conduct ourselves in a manner pleasing to our Savior, others may come to know Him as well.

Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16), which Peter recalled in verse 12. When asked, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29).

As believers, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to do good works. We will feed the hungry, clothe the needy, show hospitality to the stranger, take care of the sick, and visit those in prison (cf. Matt. 25:35-36). Our good works will be a witness to the world of the glory of God.

—Margaret Hicks