

### **1Peter 3:8-9, Living as Blessings from God...**

In a previous study (cf. **1Peter 2:13-17**), Peter exhorted us to submit to authorities and institutions, both civil (kings and governors) and societal (supervisors and employers); he then gave attention (cf. **1Peter 3:1-7**) to the institution of marriage, instructing believing husbands and believing wives to live with their unbelieving spouses in such a manner, so as to influence them for Christ, that they might come to salvation.

In our text today, Peter tells how God's people are to behave with everyone, believers and unbelievers, so that we might be a blessing to them.

**Read 1Peter 3:8-9...** Notice (**verse 8**), "To sum up," i.e., in conclusion, be "harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit." These are the virtuous attitudes we are to have and to display as members of the Church of God, the Body of Christ, the Family of Believers and Followers of God's Son.

Let's consider each of these attitudes that we are to have and to demonstrate:

- Be **harmonious** -This literally means 'same-think,' to be 'like-minded' or 'of one-mind,' i.e., having the same commitment to the Truth of God, though the Spirit of God in us, leading to a deep and settled unity in all our hearts.

**Ephesians 4:1-6**, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

**Philippians 1:27**, "Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about you that you are *standing firm in one spirit, with one mind* striving together for the faith of the gospel."

It is the divine love of God in us that allows us to live in harmony with each other, and that is what the Lord desires, so the world will know us by His love in us (**John 13:34-35**), "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

After the Holy Spirit came upon and into those first believers in Jerusalem, on the Day of Pentecost, it became clear that something outside of this world was the cause (**Acts 2:36-47**), "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.' Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of

you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.' And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." "Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And *all those who had believed were together and had all things in common*; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. *Day by day continuing with one mind* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

- Be **sympathetic** - This means to 'share the same feeling' that someone else is experiencing, whether it be their sorrow or their joy; even if they are unbelievers who are struggling with the chaos and anxiety of this pandemic, as well as the normal issues of daily life. We are to show empathy by coming alongside those who have spiritual, physical, and emotional needs; so that, we might be able to help them on God's behalf, by sharing God's message of love and hope with them.

- Be **brotherly** - This is the loving affection that is expressed among people who are closely related, a demonstration of the unselfish and sometimes sacrificial serving of one another within a family. Its greatest example is to be seen among those who are in the Family of God, and it is to then to expand from there in order to reach out to the world around us.

- Be **kindhearted** - This is an affection or feeling of kindness that causes us to feel the pain of others deeply. It is expressed as the tenderhearted compassion of God shown to lost sinners through Christ (**Romans 5:8**), "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

In **John 11:35**, Jesus is approaching the grave of Lazarus, and He is aware of the pain that Mary and Martha and the rest of Lazarus's family are feeling, it says, "Jesus wept." Jesus's tears are the result of a very deep sense of compassion for those who loved Lazarus and were grieving his loss.

- Be **humble in spirit** - This is one word in the Greek, literally, 'humble-minded', it is the most important virtue in our Christian life, as we seek to follow the example of Jesus (**Matthew 11:29**), "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls,"

(**Mark 10:45**), "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

**Philippians 2:1-11**, "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In **1Peter 3:8** we are told that God wants us to not just express, but to actually be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.

In the first part of **1Peter 3:9**, we are told that God wants us to be "not returning evil for evil or insult for insult."

The word translated 'evil' here means much more than something that is done or said, it implies that 'evil' means the very inherent nature or quality of all things that are considered bad.

Peter exhorts all Christians not to respond to evil (done against you) with evil, you are not to start doing so; and if you are retaliating with evil, you must stop doing so immediately, because that in itself is evil.

Jesus says (**Matthew 5:38**), "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'" The teaching Jesus is referencing here comes from two Old Testament passages:

**Exodus 21:21-25**, "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."

**Leviticus 24:17-21**, "If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for

life. If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. "

The reason for this law was to prohibit retaliation, to prevent excessive or unjust retribution that is fueled by anger, i.e., God says that the punishment is to match the crime. According to Israel's civil law, punishment was often carried out by the injured party, the victim, or by one of the family members; but the trial and sentencing was always officiated by the appointed judges or rulers of the people.

We are required to keep the laws of our government (unless they contradict God's Law), and we expect and insist that others to do the same; but we, God's people, aren't to seek retaliation or retribution (**Romans 12:19**; pp. Deuteronomy 32:35), "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."

Now, look at **Matthew 5:39**, Jesus said, "I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

This is one of those verses that is misinterpreted more than it is properly interpreted, so, it needs some clarification; or I'm afraid a few of you may leave here today thinking that I'm saying it is okay to let some evil person beat you up.

Let me make it very clear, I am not inferring or even implying, that you should allow some evil person attack to you, or anyone who is with you. This verse does not mean that you are to run from, be pushed around by, or give in to, bad people.

God's Word records that early in His ministry Jesus turned over tables and drove evil men out of the Temple (cf. **Matthew 21:12**); and near the end of His ministry (cf. **John 2:15**) He used a whip, that He had made, to drive evil men out of His Father's House.

Look, we are not to be doormats or pacifists when it comes to evil, for by not restraining evil we may fail to protect the innocent and stand up for justice; but even so, we are not to seek retaliation, as Paul writes (**Romans 12:21**), "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

But, what about being slapped in the face (cf. **Matthew 5:39**)? In the Jewish culture, as in ours, being slapped in the face is an act of contempt or disdain; even a slave during Bible times would have preferred to be whipped on the back rather than slapped in the face by his master.

Again, **Matthew 5:39** says, "whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." This is not advocating that we let some bully beat us up, this is not a physical attack. Most Jews are right handed (about 90%) along with most all ethnic groups; and so to strike with the back of the right hand across the right

cheek of a person's face, is clearly an act of contempt -- this is not about being assaulted, as much as it is about being insulted, devalued, even humiliated.

On that subject, let me say this: parents should never slap their children, for that is a demoralizing injury that leaves a wound in the heart of one being slapped.

**Back to 1Peter 3:9...** Neither are we to return insult for insult. This means to use words in a vengeful way, to be abusive, speaking evil of or cursing another. It is not about my or your individual rights, or the injustices done to us, or getting even with those who harm us.

As God's children, we can expect to be minimized, ridiculed, insulted, and treated with contempt, because of our relationship with the Lord; the point is, you are not to retaliate when that happens, you are not to seek retribution; but you are to respond (**1Peter 3:9**) by, "giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

Believers should be a blessing to both believers and unbelievers: We can pray for the salvation of an unbeliever. We can pray for the sanctification of a believer. We should express gratitude for someone's kindness toward us or toward others. We should forgive those who sin against us, seek forgiveness from those we sin against, and pray for those who persecute us.

**1Corinthians 1:18**, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

**2Corinthians 5:20-21**, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

**Mark 1:14-15**, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the gospel." **17**, "**Follow Me**, and I will make you become fishers of men."

As Christians, those born-again by the Spirit of God, we have received God's blessings of forgiveness for all our sins, and eternal life in heaven; all because of God's great love for us; therefore, we ought to be a blessing to others on God's behalf.

If you have not received God's blessings, but you would like to, you need to do the following:

**Repent** of your sins, *we are all sinners!*

**Believe** in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, *for there is no other way to receive forgiveness for sins and eternal life.*

**Follow Christ** by demonstrating your new life in Him, *as you seek to know, obey, and proclaim God's Word.*

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

*Pastor Mike*  
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