

# Ministry of Grace Church

## 1 Peter 3:8-13 - Speaker Notes

### Introduction

Here's a little quiz about what Peter is going to say to us today. For those of you who are worried about your grade, this is a straight-A quiz.

- 1) The proper response when someone insults you is:
  - a. To bless them.
  - b. To curse them.
  - c. To ignore them.
- 2) The way we speak and the things we say will have an effect on the way we live.
  - a. True
  - b. False
- 3) Peter commands us to turn completely away from evil, doing good instead.
  - a. True
  - b. False
- 4) Peter admonishes us to pursue peace with a vengeance.
  - a. True
  - b. False
- 5) God is watching over and listening to His righteous children.
  - a. True
  - b. False
- 6) God frowns on those who aren't His righteous children.
  - a. True
  - b. False.

Okay now, let's dive in to see what Peter actually tells us.

### 1 Peter 3:8-9

**Now to sum up, all of you be like-minded, sympathetic, brotherly, tender-hearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but giving a blessing instead, for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.**

The construction of this verse is very interesting. Peter says, "Now to sum up," clarifying what he has been saying about how we are all to live in relation to one another. This is followed by a series of adjectives, but there is no verb present. It is implied as a command "to be." Thus, we see the translation "... all of you be." Well, what is it that we are all commanded to be?

"Like-minded" is from *homophrōn*, made up of *homo*, meaning "all the same" and a form of *phrēn*, which refers to the mind. Therefore, this means "be of the same mind" or "the same thinking."

The word translated “sympathetic” is *sumpatheis*. It is made up of *sun*, meaning “together” and a form of *pathos*, meaning “strong feelings, either good or bad.” Therefore, it literally means that we should, “feel joys and sorrows with each other.”

The next word is *philadelphos*, which is made up of a form of *philos*, meaning “friend” and *adelphos*, meaning “brother.” Therefore, it refers to being “brother friendly.” The noun form of this word is often translated as “brotherly love.”

The word translated “tenderhearted” is *eusplangchnos*, which is made up of *eu*, meaning “good” or “well” and *splangchnos*, which literally refers to “the intestines.” This may seem strange to us, but in the first century it was believed that emotional feelings came from the intestines. Therefore, this word refers to “good feelings” toward one another.

“Humble in spirit” is translated from *tapeinophrones*, made up of *tapeinos*, meaning “low, particularly in attitude or social position,” that is, “humble” and a form of *phrēn*, referring to the mind. So, this word literally means “humble minded.”

A few verses back Peter said that Christ was our example of how we ought to suffer patiently when we suffer for doing good. He is, in fact, our ultimate example of, not just suffering but of living. Think of how Christ lived his life here on earth as you read this translation of the current verse concerning how we are to live our lives:

Now to sum up, all of you be like-minded, sympathetic, brotherly, tender-hearted, and humble in spirit; (1 Peter 3:8)

The world will *not* treat us this way! In fact, if we behave this way we will probably suffer for it. The real question is will we suffer patiently?

But think about this - whether He was a baby in a manger, a teacher, a healer, or our Savior on the cross, Jesus was always... **agreeable, sympathetic, brotherly friendly, compassionate, and humble.**

Okay, let’s just sit in the afterglow of that for a minute or two.

whether He was a baby in a manger, a teacher, a healer, or our Savior on the cross, Jesus was always... **agreeable, sympathetic, brotherly friendly, compassionate, and humble.** That’s how we are supposed to live in this world (even though it’s not our home).

Next, after telling us how we should behave, Peter now tells us how we shouldn’t behave. He said:

not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling. (1 Peter 3:9a)

Few of us go around looking for people we can do bad things to or people on whom we can cast a vicious insult. On the other hand, how quickly we seem to react to the pain inflicted by others with a little pain infliction of our own. How effortlessly we can deliver a quick and powerful (and stinging) response to others when we are simply defending ourselves.

However, Peter says we should do just the opposite. Christians should respond with a blessing when we are insulted or when someone does something bad to us. We should eulogize them. Do you remember what that means? To eulogize someone means to say good and kind words about them. When we are insulted or treated badly, we should respond with kind words (Yeah, right! That’s what I want to do when someone slams me!) The point is, that we should follow Jesus’s example of doing what God wants us to do, instead of doing what we want to do.

“Why should I say something nice to someone who just did something bad to me?” you may ask. Peter says, in effect, that this is our purpose in life. Unto this we were called. Here’s how the Apostle Paul said it to the Christians in Rome:

and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified. (Romans 8:30)

Because God chose us and called us, He also justified us (declared us as just, or righteous), and in God’s mind at least, He has already glorified us. And - because of this calling, we are also expected to behave in a certain manner. We were called to inherit a blessing, actually, a series of blessings. Not from the world, but from God. Think about it, justification, glorification, and salvation! That’s especially amazing considering what we deserve! Therefore we certainly should, in light of what God has already done for us and in light of what He is going to do for us, return a blessing on those who do bad things to us.

The next time someone does something bad to you or insults you, try saying something nice to them in return. You may be surprised by what happens!

Notice that I didn’t say to be sarcastically nice to them. Say something really nice to them. However, if you’re anything like me, you will find it difficult to say anything truly nice at that point in time.

### **1 Peter 3:10-12**

**For, “the one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. “He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. “For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”**

The word translated “desires” (“wants” or “wills” in some translations) is the Greek verb *thelō*, which means “to desire, implying active volition and purpose.” In other words, it means “to determine.” There is another word translated “will” or “want” in the New Testament. It is the Greek verb *boulomai*, which means “to want” or “to desire.” It really means “to be disposed to or to intend to, but not pressing on to execute any action.” However, *thelo* implies a determination that produces action. It is a subtle, but important, distinction especially in today’s verse. With this in mind, the opening part of this verse could be paraphrased as:

For, the one who is determined to live well, to love, and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

Boy, that’s totally opposite to what the world system is constantly telling us isn’t it? The message we get from the world is, “Look, if you don’t look out for yourself, no one is going to!” But that’s not what we learn from our almighty father. In fact, He tells us:

For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. (1 Peter 3:12)

The Greek word *epi*, meaning “on, over, or upon” appears twice in this verse. The first time it is translated “toward” and the second time it is translated “against.” I’ll explain this further in just a few minutes.

In the previous verse Peter admonished us not to retaliate when people do or say bad things against us. Instead, we are to respond with “good words.” As we have discussed before, we Christians **will**

suffer persecution on this earth. This world is not our home, and we are not of this place. Our home is in the heavenlies, and we are but strangers and wanderers on this earth. As such we will be treated as aliens by those who are of this world. If we have a witness that we are Christians, then the inhabitants of this world will do evil to us, and they will insult us. It's their nature.

However, we must be ever mindful that we are the children of the King, and we are His ambassadors. Since we represent Him, people should see Him in us, particularly in our actions. Not only is He the great King but He is Almighty God who is in control of all things. He knows what will make us truly happy, and in these verses, Peter tells us how to be that way.

Peter is not saying that if you desire to love life, then do the following. He is saying that if you have determined to love life, then do the following. It's not a wishy-washy hope that you might love life, rather a determination that you will love life and see good days. Isn't this what we all really want (desire)? If so, then let us decide (determine) to do what it takes to have it.

Peter says, if we have determined that it will be so, we must stop using our tongue for evil and our lips for speaking guile. That is, we need to stop saying worthless or injurious things and stop trying to trick or deceive people with our words.

If you remember what we learned in our study of James, you will recognize how difficult it is to control the tongue. So, what Peter is telling us, though it sounds easy, really isn't. But that shouldn't stop us from trying! Let our language reflect our spiritual position (in Christ) not our physical surroundings.

Now Peter continues - if you have determined to love life and to see good days then not only must you be very careful about what you say and how you say it, you must do several other things as well.

Many translations continue here with the words, "let him." On the surface it appears that Peter is saying, "allow him ..." but that is not what he is saying. In fact, in English the use of the word "let," when used with verbs, is an expression of the imperative, or command, form of the Greek verb. So "Let him ..." doesn't mean "Allow him ...", rather it means "It is imperative for him to ..." or "He must ..."

Peter said, "he must seek peace and pursue it." The word translated "pursue" is *diōkō*, meaning "to pursue" or "to persecute." It implies much more than simply looking for something. It indicates determination and tenacity, an unwillingness to give up. This verb, like the others in this verse, is in the imperative mood. It's a command!

If we have determined to love life and to see good days, then we must control our language and we must turn completely away from evil. In their place we must do good and - not only seek peace but pursue it diligently.

It's easy to talk about doing good and it's easy to talk about peace. The real challenge is to pursue peace and good deeds with the same fervor that we pursue our favorite activities.

These particular verses should sound familiar to anyone who spends time in the Psalms, where it says:

Who is the man who delights in life  
And loves many days that he may see good?  
Guard your tongue from evil  
And your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil and do good;  
Seek peace and pursue it.  
The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous  
And His ears are open to their cry for help.  
The face of Yahweh is against evildoers ... (Psalms 34:12-16a)

Verse 12 says that **the eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry for help**. But also notice that it says, **The face of Yahweh is against evildoers**. This should catch the attention of any God-fearing person, especially Christians!

This demonstrates that even this common fisherman (Peter) had studied and memorized the scriptures of his day. Let us not use the excuse that the Bible is too complicated or too difficult to understand as our reason for not studying and memorizing it, since this common fisherman was able to do it!

As I mentioned earlier, the Greek translation of this Old Testament passage used the same word (*epi*) for the eyes of the Lord being “**toward**” the righteous and the face of the Lord being “**against**” evil doers. Here’s why. The Hebrews of that day believed that having God’s eyes on you indicated the presence of His blessing whereas having God’s face toward you indicated His condemnation and coming wrath.

If you study the book of Romans, you will find that it is because of our faith in the blood of Jesus that we have been declared righteous by God. We have this righteousness credited to us the same way Abraham was declared righteous, because he believed God. Because we believe God’s message about His Son (He died in the cross to pay for our sins, and He arose from the grave), His eyes of blessing are on us. But those who reject God’s message regarding His Son will suffer His wrath because His face is toward them watching all their faithless sin.

Are God’s eyes on you or is his face toward you? It all depends on your position in Christ. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, His eyes are on you. Otherwise ...

The real lesson here is that we should live our lives as examples of the goodness of God, knowing that He is watching over us. In doing so, we can truly give God the glory for **anything** that happens to us knowing that our future is secure!

### **1 Peter 3:13**

#### **And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?**

Now, Peter is telling us that if we are zealous about doing good, who is there that will harm us for this?

The answer to this question in **not** “no one!” (Excuse the double negative.) That is, Peter is not saying nothing bad (as we see it) will ever happen to those who are benevolent and keep their tongue under control. What he said in the previous verse is that God will watch over and listen to those who live their life in such a manner. God is a good God, one who truly loves us. Peter is telling us that since God is watching over us when we are zealous for good or when we follow goodness, who can really do anything bad to us without God allowing it for His eternal purpose.

Let’s look at Christ as our supreme example. He surely was zealous for good, He was the epitome of goodness, and yet, at least from a human perspective, bad things were done to Him. These bad things, however, resulted in glorious goodness for all who believe, so they weren’t really bad in God’s eyes.

The other way to look at this is to realize that those of us who have truly accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, already have been declared righteous in God’s book. And, we have already been adopted into His family, which includes the promise of spending eternity with Him in heaven. Therefore, if we behave the way His children should, there is no permanent badness that can be done to us!

## **So What?**

Okay, we've seen what Peter is teaching us, let's take the quiz again.

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  - a. **To bless them.**
  - b. To curse them.
  - c. To ignore them.
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  - a. **True**
  - b. False
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  - a. **True**
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Let's pray.