

## Cruciform Character, Confidence, & Commitment in a World of Conflict

1 Peter 3:8-22

by Colton Conrad

*“<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. <sup>11</sup> They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. <sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (1 Pet. 3:8-12)*

### I. Character

- 1) be like-minded
- 2) be sympathetic
- 3) love one another
- 4) be compassionate
- 5) be humble

*“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”*

“Opposition and hatred cannot thwart the life of blessing. Even when Christians are cursed, they bless. This is how Christians ‘get even.’ They pay back evil with good, insults with blessing.” (Ed Clowney)

“But I tell you”, he said, “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 5: 44-45)

“Christians are free from vindictiveness because they trust God’s justice; but they are free for blessing because they know God’s goodness.” (Ed Clowney)

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (Psalm 34)

This Psalm is a call to trust the Lord in the midst of trouble, knowing that God is ultimately going to deliver you.

“Suffering in the present doesn’t jeopardize one’s status before God...Contemporary suffering is not to be confused with ultimate harm... Present suffering is not the final word. God’s sovereign justice is.” (Joel Green)

## II. A Clear Conscience amidst Conflict

*13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts revere 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, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (1 Pet. 3:13-17)*

“Words put on public notice the nature of one’s character and commitments.” (Joel Green)

“Our character commitments are showcased in practices.”

“...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.” (Is. 8:12-13).

“We hallow the name of God by embodying his character.”  
(Green)

### **Two focuses for setting apart Christ as Lord:**

Embodying Jesus’ Heart: Gentleness

Embodying Jesus Vision: Fearing God (living to please Him alone)

The humility of our life gives credence to the boldness of our hope.

*4 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows...<sup>11</sup> “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, <sup>12</sup>for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.” (Luke 12:4-7,11-12).*

Often, the *us vs. them* mentality is more fear based than *revere* based, especially when you are face to face with insult.

Will we embody the response that Jesus had when He was wrongly accused, of gently responding and not giving Pilate, or anyone for that matter, any real reason for accusing Him of wrongdoing? How will we operate when we suffer for doing what is right?

### **Confidence and Commitment**

*18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 After being made alive, he*

*went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—<sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,<sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,<sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him.* (1 Pet. 3:18-22)

### **III. Confidence**

*Christus Victor – Christ is the Victor*

*“<sup>19</sup> After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—<sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.”* (1 Pet. 3:19 -20)

“<sup>4</sup> For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup> if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; <sup>6</sup> . . . <sup>9</sup> if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.” (2 Peter 2:4-6, 9)

He has conquered Hades and all “powers and principalities” whose existence is out of step with God’s purpose, and he sits at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him.

### **IV. Commitment**

#### **Baptism**

The flood symbolizes our baptism.

“While a wooden ark delivered Noah from physical death, a wooden cross delivers us from spiritual [and ultimately physical] death. Just as Noah obeyed God by climbing onto a boat to save a few, Jesus obeyed his Father by climbing onto a cross to save many.” (Brandon Smith)

Though the chaos of the waters of evil are still crashing on us, those who take refuge in the ark of the Lord Jesus Christ, will one day see the Risen Jesus, who will reign forever, and conquer the chaos of sin once and for all.

Peter calls us to “live into our baptism.” (Green)

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:4)

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20).

We are called to have Cruciform Character, Confidence, and Commitment in a World of Conflict.

What does it mean for you to live into your baptism? What ways do you need to die to yourself and live for Christ? Is there gentleness and boldness evident in how you witness for Christ? What ways can you be encouraged to reflect the character of Christ even as you suffer? How can your life, marked by suffering, beg others to ask you for the reason for the hope you have?

### **REFLECTION & LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS:**

*This week, as it is a special week, please follow along with the Holy Week Reading Plan - provided by Pastor Dave. In addition, here are a few questions to help you reflect on the message:*

(The first two questions are from Juan Sanchez’s *1 Peter - For You* Commentary and Bible Study):

1. What do you think it will take for you to embrace Peter, and Jesus’, view of suffering?

2. How would your life, conduct and words be different if you really did not fear anything because you knew that the worst that can happen cannot happen - that you cannot lose God’s love for you?

3. How do *Christus Victor* and Baptism shape our view of the world around us and our relation to it? What becomes our primary way of operating in the world if we believe the two of those are true for us?

4. Describe how your life is *cruciform* – how does it take a “cross-shaped” identity? If there are areas where it does not, consider writing these down, and listing some ideas where the cruciform could take root. Then, pray for it to be so!