

## **Bless, so that you may inherit blessing even when you suffer (I Peter 3: 8-17)**

### **Prayer**

O God and heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as we conclude today with the passage on sanctification and enter into the section on suffering, open our eyes to see what is written in this passage. Let us hear Your call, change us through it and bless us today. Answer our prayer. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.  
Amen.

### **Scripture**

#### ***1. Be people, who do not repay evil with evil, but people who bless***

*8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*

*9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.*

*10 For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.*

*12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.*

*But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (I Peter 3:8-12)*

Peter begins verse 8 with Finally: all of you. Finally, it means he is concluding a section. I Peter 1: 1-12 showed us God's sovereign power and great mercy. From 1:13 to 3:12 he taught us about holiness. First, that we are called to holiness, because God is holy. Then he showed us we need to grow in holiness and after that he gave us examples of such a holy life. We must be submissive to the authorities, servants to their employers and submissive in marriage. Now he concludes the passage about holiness with: All of you...

*9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless,*

This is the exact example he gave us in I Peter 2:21: *Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps... 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

What is the reason why we should be people who bless? *for to this you were called...* What does “been called” mean? The part in I Peter 2:21 also starts in the same way: *21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example.*

Do you remember when we discussed it, we referred back to the part just before it, in the umbrella verses of I Pet 2:11-12, which we summed it up like this: *Keep your conduct honourable for the salvation of the Gentiles to glory of God*  
Behave well... for the Gentiles' conversion

Do you still remember who called us? *15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. (I Pet 1:15)*

To live differently, to bless those who curse you, you need to change on the inside. Therefore, we see in verse 8: *Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*

It comes only through *the healing* of Jesus Christ (I Pet 2:24). Then we can walk in His footsteps, as He did even to the cross.

## ***2. Bless so that you can obtain blessing as an inheritance.***

What is the result if we do that? Until now, Peter has repeatedly given us the pattern of the umbrella verse. If we live differently, Gentiles see it and then they repent and come to salvation and then God is honoured. Here he surprises us with a result for ourselves:

*that you may obtain a blessing.*

In chapter 1 we saw we have a *Living hope* for two things: *Our inheritance is kept and we are kept for the inheritance.*

These were things we already received and it was precisely this that overflowed into our hope and changed us to live a life of obedience. That was the input needed for the change. So, this sentence does not state that we can get salvation through good works, no it is by grace. Thus, this promise of blessing is not it. It's not something that happened already. It's something we get when we live differently.

As Peter often did, he illuminates the statement with a quote from the Old Testament. We find this in Psalm 34:13-17. It starts with:

*10 For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him*

Here he describes what the blessing means to you: You can love life and see good days. And that in the midst of suffering and insults. He confirms then: For it to happen, you need to live differently. The things he mentions here are mostly external, so they are already part of the blessing your persecutors receive:

*let him:*

*keep his tongue from evil  
and his lips from speaking deceit;*

*11 let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it.*

Then Peter starts to describe the blessing we will get when he says:

12 For

*the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,*

But

*the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

The quote from Isaiah 53 (which Peter quoted in I Peter 2:21-24, also points out God as the one who judges justly: *but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly; that we might die to sin and live to righteousness*

We can rest assured that God will one day judge justly. Through Christ's work we can now walk in those footsteps and live for righteousness.

And the first blessing we get then is that the Lord's eyes are on us!

The second blessing is: For... *his ears are open to their prayer.*

Just a few verses earlier, when the men were addressed, prayer came up. There were prayers that were not answered. We then quoted John 4:13 and showed that prayers that are heard are prayers that are prayed for the purpose of glorifying God.

*Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.  
(Joh 14:13, ESV)*

Answered prayers are a great blessing. John also puts it this way: *Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:23-24)*

Prayers that focus on what we are called to: *Keep your conduct honourable for the salvation of the Gentiles to glory of God,* gets answered and it makes our joy complete. What a blessing!

Then Peter's blessing in the beginning of the letter gets fulfilled: *May grace and peace be multiplied to you.* God gave us grace that overflows into good deeds that leads others to God and that glorifies Him. It fills us with joy and gives us the peace that comes with a restored relationship with God.

### **3. An introduction to suffering**

*13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?*

*14 But even if you should suffer*

*for righteousness' sake,  
you will be blessed.*

*Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,*

*15 but... verse 15-16*

*17 For it is better*

to *suffer for doing good*,  
if that should be *God's will*,  
than *for doing evil*. (I Peter 3:13-14, 17, ESV)

From verse 13, Peter starts the next section of his letter. He begins to focus on dealing with the suffering of the believer. The rhetorical question: *Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?* We would like to answer - after the good works and many blessings - No one! But Peter does not deny that believers suffer.

He says: *But even if you should suffer* but then he confirms what he has already said in chapter 1: *you will be blessed*. We get the blessing he just told us about when the suffering comes from *doing what is right*.

The comfort is in God's sovereignty. We skip verses 15 and 16 for now, which are going to show us what we need to do in suffering. Verse 17 shows us the suffering we experience is God's will:

17 For it is better  
to *suffer for doing good*,  
if that should be *God's will*,  
than *for doing evil*.

Suffering while we do good, for the sake of what is right, brings the blessing we have just seen. Suffering because we do evil bring judgment.

Have no *fear* of them, nor be troubled,  
15 *but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy*,  
always being prepared to make a *defence*  
to anyone who asks you for a *reason*  
for *the hope that is in you*;  
yet do it with *gentleness and respect*, 16 *having a good conscience*,  
so that, when you are *slandered*,  
those who *revile*  
your *good behaviour in Christ*  
*may be put to shame*. (I Peter 3:15-16, ESV)

When we live differently, we don't live in fear, but in our *hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy*.

Our hearts are so full of hope, the firm certainty about what we have and joy of the blessing we receive that we cannot help but testify: *always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*;

We do not share this hope with an attitude that we are better, but *Do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience*,

And the reason? As throughout the book: That the Gentiles may repent:

*so that, when you are slandered*,

those who *revile*  
your *good behaviour in Christ*  
may be put to shame.

## **Conclusion**

We learned 4 things today:

The first two came from Peter's conclusion on holiness:

1. Be *people*  
who does not *repay evil with evil*  
but people who *bless*
2. Bless others so that you can *obtain blessing as an inheritance*.

The last two from his transition to the subject of suffering

3. *Blessed in suffering*  
If it is for the sake of what is right
4. Honour Christ  
Through defending *the hope in you*

We are people who bless

We are *called to it: for* Christ also *suffered for us*;

We are *called* to a *holy life that leads to the conversion of Gentiles* to the glory of God

We are *called* by God, the Holy One

In order for us to do *external good deeds of blessing*, an inner change is needed.

It comes through *healing through Jesus Christ and then following in his footsteps*.

At point 2 we saw Peter clarified it from the Old Testament with

*Whoever desires to love life and see good days – let his actions speak of blessing.*

The blessing you receive when you live like this is:

The eyes of the Lord *are on the righteous* and the face of the Lord is *against those who do evil*.

His ears *are open to your prayer*.

*Inheritance and redemption, you have received by grace. Peace and complete joy are the blessing on your works of gratitude.*

With regards to suffering we have seen:

*We can be joyful in suffering* if it's for the sake of what is right

Suffering is *God's will*.

In suffering we testify of the hope that lives in us.

and we *do it so that the Gentiles may be put to shame* (it can lead to repentance...)

So, our theme for today:

**Bless**

**that you receive blessing as an inheritance**  
**even in suffering**

#### ***4. Reflection***

We learned so many wonderful things today. It's almost overwhelming. Take some time and read the text again and focus on what God has done for you and what the redemptive work of Jesus Christ means to you.

#### ***5. Gratitude***

This passage once again has many beautiful examples of a life overflowing with gratitude. Where does the Spirit lead you, in your own circumstances, today? Write down at least one thing that you are going to do differently today.

#### ***6. Prayer***

End this session in prayer as the Spirit leads you.

Peace to you