



# **“Love as Brothers and Sisters”**

## **Sermon on 1 Peter 3:1-12**

### **Steve Stanis 1 Nov 2020**

#### ***Story before Introduction:***

This week I had the joy of sharing the Lord’s Supper with seven women on the day of Iris’ 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday at her home. Iris prayed and read the service with us. It was a moving and powerful moment, her faith so clear in her mind and heart.

I shared Psalm 134. It notes that the ‘servants of God’ were called to minister by night in the house of the Lord. I asked what that meant to each one of them. All spoke of nights lying awake for hours.

I asked them what does God do in these times. They described great times in the depths of reading the Bible, intentional prayer for people, and being thankful to God in the dark of night, leading into the light of a new day.

What godly women! Praise the Lord!

#### ***Introduction:***

1 Peter is an epistle that shows us how God calls us out of darkness into his wonderful light...and how God calls us to go right back into that dark world to shine his light.

We must set our gaze on our true home, not the things of this world.

Our ultimate citizenship determines our conduct here and now.

We heard it in last week’s preaching from Chapter 2 verses 11 and 12.

Peter gave us principles for how to live like this. We must know our status, as *'aliens and strangers in this world'* but loved and precious to God. Our status must determine our conduct; *"Live such good lives that they may glorify God."*

Do you daily submit your life to God?

We are reminded and challenged that God will use us always.

### ***Marriage V1-7:***

In 3:1-7 Peter is pastorally addressing vulnerable members of the congregation within marriage. It is surprising that Peter is even addressing women directly. He is being counter cultural.

For a Christian woman at this time, Peter knows marital submission to an unbelieving man is extremely challenging. He says to continue on in your faith, don't give in to fear. Follow Christ but be submissive to your husband.

This is a confronting statement in this culture. Peter does not tell women to follow the cultural tradition and follow their husband's religion. Instead he says to follow Christ and to live in such a way that you bring honour to Christ.

This means her ordinary, regular, ongoing, respectful conduct commends God's character to her husband. In this way her testimony to her husband will be far better than anything she can say until he is ready to listen to God's Word.

Peter says the greatest testimony a Christian wife can have to her unbelieving husband is to be a godly wife of good character, reflecting Christ-like visible living.

Many of us may understand this challenge of being married to someone who doesn't follow Jesus. Some of you will have been praying for years, or decades, that God would draw your partner out of darkness and into his wonderful light.

Maybe you're tired. Maybe you feel very alone.

A recorded interview with Linda Scherlowski, who is married with a non-Christian husband, was shown at this point. You can view the interview on the Kiama Anglican Church Facebook. For those unable to access this interview, here are the questions that were put to Linda:

Q. How can we encourage, support and engage with other Church members, families and friends in their lives with this same challenge?

(For growth and Gospel opportunities at KAC.)

Q. Linda, tell us briefly about your married life?

(Personal faith conversion, meeting each other, married life, culture, children)

Q. Has there been a challenge in your married life?

(Non-Christian)

Q. How can we best minister to people in situations similar to this?

(Sharing and caring and walking on the faith journey as 1 Peter 3:1-12 speaks to us)

Q. What would be your parting wisdom on this?

(Prayer as conclusion).

In this example of marriage that Peter uses to encourage us to live for our eternal hope, he addresses three temptations in this passage (v1-7):

**Firstly**, *'they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives,'* (v1).

Sometimes in marriage we're tempted to use words in unhelpful ways, to manipulate or be unkind. Being a Christian does not exempt us from our sinful desires. I urge you to reflect on your words so that they do not distract from your actions.

At this time Peter urged the wives, *'when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.'* (v2). Today I urge us all to live pure, reverent lives before each other.

Build God's Word wherever you can into faithful married lives.

Faithfulness will prepare the non-Christian through darkness for God's light to be revealed. We have been given assurance of God's endeavour in this (v15). *'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.'*

That is faithful submission to the Gospel proclaimed as God intends.

**Secondly**, whether husband or wife, many of us, if honest, may feel dissatisfied with the situations in our life. It can be tempting to quiet the anguish of our heart with 'things'. 'Things' gives us the illusion of control that we so desperately crave. When we are most aware of our inadequacies, we are most tempted to find our security *'from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes.'* (v3).

But also our bank accounts, our jobs, the success of our children, the success of our ministry. The unique impacts on Covid have added many extra pressures to outward measures. This is not what God intended. We adorn ourselves with these 'things' so that our lives will feel full. These are not gifts to be measured *'of great worth in God's*

*sight*'. (v4) The beautiful outward adornments are only ever to be understood as gifts from God; they will fade in God's timing. We must set our gaze on our true home, not the things of this world.

*'The unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit'* (v4)

Faith only truly reveals beauty inwardly as it comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Peter reinforces the *'craving after pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation'* (1 Peter 2:2).

The witness of the wife in this marriage, submitting to God's authority so that the Spirit may work inwardly in her husband, is reinforced in Peter's recall of Sarah, married to Abraham, which is a powerful example to the first century Jewish Christian world who knew these Scriptures by heart. Genesis 12:14 describes Sarah's ravishing outward beauty so admired by the Egyptians. Sarah adorned herself with imperishable beauty by submitting to Abraham calling him, her 'lord'(v6) as was required at this time by God.

Faithful obedience may call different responses for different purposes and reasons but always under submission as God calls. As Ecclesiastes reminds us - always the right time for everything under heaven with God!

**Thirdly**, the women Peter is writing to here had reason to be fearful, humanly speaking. For a woman to hear the good news of Jesus and follow Christ, she is refusing to follow her husband's religion. As I said, this is counter cultural. This might have provoked anger in him. He may have spoken harshly or threatened her. In these circumstances it would be easy to feel fear and carry anxiety.

I'd like to say in clear and certain terms that God does not call a woman to subject herself to anything that violates her dignity as a child of God, including submitting to a husband's violence, either physical, emotional or verbal. I understand

that some listening to this message today have experienced the evil of domestic violence and the pain, the horror and the loneliness that comes with it. Respectful and pure conduct in a situation of domestic violence demands that when we are able, we remove ourselves and seek help. I would confidentially invite you please contact me today if this speaks to you!

Peter charges husbands to likewise in v7 follow in the footsteps of Christ. Christian husbands must not belittle or exploit their wives, taking advantage of a woman's comparative weakness in that culture. This is what I take Peter to mean when he describes the 'weaker partner'. Christian husbands must show their wives honour and understanding. Peter leaves no room for any domineering here.

In Peter's day women weren't legal heirs, so again, Peter is counter cultural when he says "as heirs **with** you of the gracious gift of life". All believing men **and women** share full equality in their status as "the living stones", the people of God together.

God makes us all his children. We are all heirs to his throne. Thanks be to Jesus!

Marriages that are respectful and honouring, Peter says, make visible the grace of God to the Gentiles of the day.

Today marriages that are respectful and honouring make visible the grace of God to those in our community, encouraging them out of the darkness and into his wonderful light.

We are all called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Our testimony about God is real when we live it practically. Our hope is in him.

## ***Suffering V8-12:***

We turn to verses 8-12. Peter, throughout his epistle, is calling God's people to holiness. The letter of 1 Peter picks up three key themes:

Firstly 'hope', then 'suffering' and finally 'doing good'. Peter picks up the theme of suffering in the pagan world he introduced in chapter 2.

Peter urges us to live before all, striving to *'bear up under the pain of unjust suffering,'* (2v19) in our awareness of the faith we have in God.

Our status must determine our conduct, *'If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.'* (2v20)

For husbands and wives these principles were to be applied to marriages.

Suffering and doing good can have great cost to faithfulness. We are tempted to take the easy road so we don't feel the weight of suffering and avoid the cost of doing good if we can. Or, are you someone who suffers daily and you need to be reminded of hope, that we are aliens and foreigners in this place waiting for our future home with God when all suffering will cease for eternity?

Suffering starts with sharing faithfulness before God in all ways at all times. In all life, resist evil and do good for the glory of God.

As we relate with fellow believers, *'Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.'* (v8)

So abstain from things that divide us.

And as we relate with all people doing good together, *'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.'* (v9).

Be a blessing! This is to walk in the footprints of Christ. When, like Jesus, we bless the very person who persecutes us, we bring glory to God. Not worldly glory we might seek to receive; giving without worldly measure.

Psalm 34:12-16 captures verses 10-12 which continue to encourage us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. These words are as much a Biblical truth and foundation now as when they were originally recorded, as our gracious God ordained. If we do this, we know God's blessing, in part now and fully when we receive our inheritance in our future home.

Let me conclude with these verses as prayer.

For...

*'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.'*

Amen.