

Sermon Notes on I Pet. 3:14-17, Easter VI

1. At I Pet. 1:3 we read: "God, in His great mercy, has begotten us to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." At 1:21 we read that Christ did what He did "so that your faith and hope might be in God." Faith and hope are linked closely. And in our text we are told that at all times we must be ready to testify about the hope which we have in us. All Christians are missionaries.
2. *Christ* Our text speaks of suffering twice, vss. 14 and 17. And then in vs. 18 we read: "Because also suffered once for sins, the just instead of the unjust, to bring us to God." The readers of this letter were suffering. See 1:6. Then read 4:14-19 which ends with these words: "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator." Christ suffered innocently. He did not deserve it. Our text calls Christians who suffer innocently "blessed." It reminds us of Jesus' Word at Mt. 5:11-12: "Blessed are you whenever people revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven. That's the way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
3. Though our text does not contain vss. 18-22, they are very important for the proper understanding of our text. Vs. 15 tells us to sanctify the Lord Christ in our hearts. How do we do that? By looking to vss. 18-22. For Christ suffering meant gain, not loss. Likewise for a Christian suffering is gain, not loss. Vss. 18-22 are a summary statement of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. After He suffered deeply He was highly exalted. His suffering justified all the unjust, all people. His suffering gave us baptism which gives us a good conscience before God. For unbelievers suffering is a curse, Gen. 3:16-19. For believers suffering is a blessing as we have already mentioned and as Rom. 8:28 clearly states. Christ knows how hard it is for us to say: "Thy will be done." He went through it. Christian suffering is impossible without sanctifying the Lord Jesus in our hearts.
4. Vs. 13 before our text asks a simple question: "Who will harm you if you are zealous to do what is beneficial?" It is a rhetorical question. We answer it ourselves: "No one." But then vs. 14: "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed." Here blessed means that your relationship to God is correct. You are on the way to everlasting life. Then Peter quotes Is. 8:12-13. Peter anticipates the Christian's fears. Christians very often fear the threats of the ungodly and so Peter says: "Do not be afraid of their threats but do sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts." Note that Peter added the word "Christ" to the Isaiah passage thus stressing the divinity of Jesus. To sanctify Christ in our hearts means to take seriously what God says about Him. He saved us. He protects us from all harm and evil. He supplies us with all we need.
5. The ungodly try to frighten us. How do we treat them? We defend ourselves by giving them a reason for the hope of everlasting life which we have within us. Then vs. 16 tells us in what spirit we should do that. Peter says that the testifying should be done with meekness and fear. We must be meek, humble, not arrogant, in our presentation. And we should be respectful toward the ungodly. We should treat them as Christ treated people. But there is even more. Vs. 16 uses the adjective "good" in the sense of "beneficial" twice. The Christian must have a beneficial conscience, giving no offense and convinced that he is doing his duty. Why? So that those who slander your beneficial conduct will be ashamed of their slander. The Christian is in the world but not of the world. He is the salt of the earth, a light to mankind. Do not say to yourself: "This is too much for me. I cannot do this." Yes you can. Look only to the Author and Finisher of your faith, Jesus Christ." Hebr. 12:2. Fear not. He has saved you.

## Sermon Outline on I Pet. 3:14-17, Easter VI

Theme: SANCTIFY THE CHRIST AS LORD IN YOUR HEARTS

Introduction: A number of times this epistle speaks of Christians suffering for Jesus' sake. 2:21 tells us that Christ has left us an example that we should suffer as did He. Immediately after our text vs. 18 tells us that Christ once suffered for sin, the just instead of the unjust. In other words He suffered innocently but it saved the world. Of course, we can't save the world but, with Christ as example, we must learn that suffering is gain, not loss.

### I-We Sanctify Christ the Lord by trusting in Him

A-We have Christian hope. Vs. 15 tells us that we should always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is in us. At 1:3 we read "God, in His great mercy, has begotten us to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." At 1:21 we read that God raised Jesus from the dead so that our faith and hope is in God. Our faith in Jesus gives us the hope of everlasting life. We can't tell others about that without first believing it ourselves. We live in a world of suffering. There is so much of it. We are involved in it. How do we handle it? First of all we must turn to Him Who has forgiven our sins and given us hope.

B-We think of why Christ suffered. Vs. 18 says that Christ suffered, the just instead of the unjust to bring us to God. 2:24 which speaks of Christ suffering. He bore our sins on the cross so that we would die to sin and live to righteousness. The suffering Christ did two things for us: took the guilt of our sins on Himself and then gave us the strength to die to sin and live to righteousness. Vs. 14 tells us that we should not fear the threats of the world nor let them disturb us. We cannot do that on our own. Only the Gospel of the Lord Jesus can give us the strength to stand up to the threats of the world. There is so much all around us to unsettle and frighten us. Sanctify Christ, the Lord, by looking constantly to Him for forgiveness, hope, strength to fight sin and courage to testify about our eternal hope.

### II-We Sanctify Christ the Lord by using His example

A-He suffered innocently. Vs. 14 tells us that even if we must suffer for righteousness sake, we are blessed. That means that we might have to suffer for doing that which is right before God. 2:21-23 tells us: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously." Christ is not only our Savior. He is also our example. When He was despised and rejected by men He prayed: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Wherever He went His enemies made life miserable for Him. But He committed Himself to His Father, the judge.

B-When we follow His example people are ashamed of themselves. After Jesus died, the Roman centurion exclaimed: "Truly, this was the Son of God." Jesus' innocent suffering put this man to shame. When one of the malefactors observed Jesus for several hours, he became a believer. Jesus' innocent suffering converted him. Vs. 16 of our text reads: "Give your defense with meekness and fear; having a good conscience that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." We must suffer without arrogance, with respect for our enemies, so that our good conduct has an effect like that of Jesus Who suffered innocently but gained by it.

Conclusion: Suffering innocently for Jesus is grievous and not welcome to our sinful nature. In fact, we can't do it alone. But if we truly sanctify the Christ as Lord in our hearts it will show in our lives. It helps to win people for Christ, not only by Word but also by deed.