

1 **Survival skills for a hostile world**

1 Peter 3:13-17

2 **Peter told us who we are**

- Everything in 1 Peter so far has been leading up to this moment.
- Look where Peter has taken us:
 - Christians are the chosen of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ and then set apart to holy living in the midst of an unholy society (1:1-2:10).
 - They start out in 1:1 as the chosen. By the time you come to 2:9, Peter is saying you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
 - He also teaches us that our purpose in life is to lead others to Christ.

3 **Peter told us how we are to relate**

- There is a recurring theme in 1 Peter that we are to be under authority while fearing God.
- So in 2:13, the Apostle begins then to describe all the human relationships that are essential for us as we attempt to reach this world for Christ.
 - He talks about our relationship to government.
 - He talks about our relationship to authority.
 - He talks about our relationship to our employer.
 - He talks about our relationship to our marital partner, husband to wife, wife to husband (beginning in 3:1).
 - Everything is evangelistic; we live under authority with an evangelistic goal in mind.

4 **Peter prepares us for persecution**

- Peter's readers were undergoing persecution and great difficulty
 - They were under heavy trials of being rejected by their society.
 - Some were experiencing hostile persecution.
- So Peter equips us with survival skills for a hostile world.

5 **Does this passage relate to us?**

- Christianity continues to discredit itself on large scale:
 - TV preacher charlatans offering prayer cloths in exchange for a donation
 - Churches with a political agenda rather than a biblical focus
- We have a society with:
 - a flourishing secularism
 - a flourishing materialism
 - a flourishing humanism
 - a bent toward fornication
 - Where homosexuality is nothing but an alternate life style

- Where magazine racks and the Internet are drowning in pornography
- Where man solves his own problems in whatever way he chooses to feel comfortable about himself
- An emerging and growing hostility toward the definitive character of Christianity. In the days ahead, there will be even greater hostility toward people of a biblical faith.

6 **1 Peter 3:13-17 (KJV)**

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

7 **1 Peter 3:13-17 (KJV) (continued)**

Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

8 **1 Peter 3:13-17 (LEB)**

And who is the one who will harm you if you are a zealous adherent for what is good? But even if you might suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed, but set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you for an accounting concerning the hope that is in you.

9 **1 Peter 3:13-17 (LEB) (continued)**

But do so with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in the things in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.

10 **Be zealous for good**

Survival skill #1

11 **The best gunfight**

- The best gunfight is the one that doesn't happen

12 **#1: Be PASSIONATE for good (3:13)**

- Be PASSIONATE about good works.
- Be in love with goodness.
 - “When it becomes your delight, when it becomes your joy, when it becomes your goal, when the wrong things lose their fascination, when the wrong things lose their power to attract and you become consumed with doing what is good, the world will find it difficult to persecute you even though the world is hostile.” – John MacArthur
- Be ZEALOUS
 - A zealot was so committed to his ideology that he would die for it.

13 **Peter's rhetorical question**

- Who is going to harm you ...?

- Though the adversary, through physical suffering or material hardship, would distress those who were eager (zēlōtai, lit., "zealots") to do good, no real harm can come to those who belong to Christ.
- For even if suffering should occur, Christians are blessed and thus should not be frightened.

14 **#2: Be PLIABLE in suffering (3:14)**

- Be PLIABLE in suffering
 - Doing good works does not guarantee freedom from suffering; it makes persecution more difficult to do
 - So, if you do suffer
 - Do not be surprised; look what happened to Jesus
 - Do not be fearful; God is sovereign
 - Remember that you are blessed

15 **In what way are we blessed?**

- Now what does "blessed" mean?
 - Not so much the idea of happy or joyful as it is privileged and honored.
 - The Gospels say of Mary, "Blessed art thou among women."
 - It didn't necessarily mean "happy."
 - In fact, her heart was pierced with many sorrows.
 - It meant she was privileged to be the object of divine favor and divine grace and divine goodness and special dispensation from God that was granted to her to do a special task and to enjoy special goodness at the hand of God.
- That's what it means here.
 - You are privileged to join in the sufferings of Christ so that you can also know Him in the power of His resurrection (3:10).

16 **Matthew 5:10**

- *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- The more you suffer for God's glory, the greater the reward you will receive from Him.

17 **Peter quotes from Isaiah 8:12-13**

- KJV -- *Say ye not, A confederacy, To all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; And let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*
- LEB – *You must not call conspiracy everything that this people calls conspiracy, and you must not share its fear, and you must not be in dread. You shall regard Yahweh of hosts as holy, and he is your fear, and he is your dread.*

18 **Why the quote from Isaiah?**

- Ahaz, king of Judah, faced a crisis because of an impending invasion by the Assyrian army.
 - The kings of Israel and Syria wanted Ahaz to join them in an alliance against the

Assyrians but Ahaz refused.

- Because he refused, Israel and Syria threatened to invade Judah.
- So Ahaz made an alliance with Assyria.

19 **Isaiah's warning**

- The prophet Isaiah warned him against ungodly alliances and urged him to trust God alone for deliverance and he says to him, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread and fear not their fear."
- In other words, don't you—king of Judah—be afraid of the Assyrians like the Syrians and the people of Israel are, the northern kingdom. Don't fear their fear, fear the Lord and set the Lord apart, sanctify Him. That's behind the scenes in Isaiah.
- And here Peter is quoting that and essentially saying, "Do not fear their intimidation."

20 **John Bunyan**

- John Bunyan, you know, when he was in Bedford Jail, he was put in prison because of the hostility of his society.
- They didn't want him to preach so they locked him in prison so he couldn't have the public place of preaching.
- And from prison he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*.
- He also wrote these words, "*This prison very sweet to me hath been since I came here and so would also hanging be if Thou didst then appear.*"

21 **How can we be pliable?**

- Remember Jesus suffered, too
- Remember that suffering for righteousness brings rewards
- Remember that suffering can transform you
- Remember that suffering can bear much fruit
- Remember that suffering is a privilege
- Remember the world cannot take away your true treasure

22 **Survival tool #3 (3:15)**

- After you:
 - Pursue a passion for goodness
 - Become pliable in suffering
- You must make a PLACE for Christ
 - *Set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts...*
 - In Isaiah 8:12, it says "*Sanctify the Lord of host Himself*"
 - Peter substitutes the word "Christ" for "Lord." He is plainly stating that Jesus Christ is the Lord God Jehovah (YHWH).

23 **#3: Make a PLACE for Christ !**

- He is the object of my loyalty.
- He is the one to whom I am committed.

- He is the object of my awe, He is the object of my reverence.
- He is the object of my worship.
- I recognize His perfection. I magnify His glory. I exalt His greatness.
- I honor the living Christ as my Lord and therefore I submit myself to Him and this is in His plan.
- And I will not fear, I will accept what He has brought.
- I will please Him with loyal submission.

24 **Alexander Maclaren**

- Scottish minister
- *Only he who can say, 'The Lord is the strength of my life' can go on to say, 'Of whom shall I be afraid?'*

25 **#4: Be PREPARED (3:16)**

- We are to be eager and willing to give to every man who ask us a reason for the hope that we have in the midst of our problems
- We are to speak with gracious and gentle nullity and a sense of reverence for God.
- Treat others with respect
- Can you articulate your faith explain to others how to have a relationship with Christ in non-theological terms?

26 **My testimony and pineapples**

- This verse raises the question of how many Christians today could make an articulate statement of the reasons for their faith in Christ in terms that would be understood by modern society.
- Most "testimonies," when given at all, are given in a Christian gathering, using the jargon of the church, which makes perfect sense to the converted, but in terms that have little meaning for those who are not already believers.
- Believers must be able to relate the Christian faith to unbelievers by addressing their questions in terms they find meaningful.

27 **Effective testimony requires clear conscience**

- You must walk the talk and talk rightly.
- You must have personal integrity before the Lord.
- You cannot explain the hope we have in Christ while living in ways that contradict that hope.
- Even the best-intentioned testimony must be conducted in an appropriate manner.
- If offense is to be taken it should be over the content of the message and not with the way in which we offered that message we must reflect humility and respect for the hearer.

28 **Alexander Maclaren**

If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it.

29 **#5: Maintain a PURE conscience**

- You must constantly work at maintaining a good conscience.
- That means that your conscience is not accusing or making excuses for you.
- If you are living a sinful life and are not zealous for goodness and not making Christ first priority in your life, then when persecution comes against you, you will feel a great weight of guilt. But if your conscience is clear you are not troubled.

30 **Numbers 5:21-27**

- In the Old Testament, if a woman was accused of adultery, her spouse or fiancé could take her to the Tabernacle and accuse her before the priest.
- The priest could make a mixture with dirt from the Tabernacle floor and water and barley and cause the woman to drink it while pronouncing a curse on her that would be valid only if she was guilty of the adultery.
- If she was guilty of adultery, her belly would swell and her thigh would rot.
- If she was not guilty, she would be fruitful and bear children.
- The point is to watch people's reactions to criticism. It is often a good indicator of their guilt.

31 **Two choices about suffering**

1. You can suffer for doing what is right, if God wills it. And you can be blessed in that suffering and eternally rewarded. You will be strengthened and God will be glorified.
 2. You can suffer for what is wrong. You will receive God's chastening.
- Which option will you choose?

32 **Is suffering the will of God?**

- The Greek of 3:17 seems rather explicit: εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ (ei theloi to thelêma tou theou, if the will of God wills), but again the verb (theloi) is in the present optative.
- Just as the possibility of suffering for doing good (3:14) is expressed in the optative mood, meaning that suffering is a possibility but not a certainty, the will of God might possibly will a Christian to suffer for doing good. Peter affirms that it is not God's purpose to make Christians suffer.

33 **Is suffering the will of God? (2)**

- J. H. Elliott expresses it well: "The qualification, if this should be God's will, refers to suffering for doing what is right and not simply suffering per se. The point is not that God wills suffering but that God wills doing what is right rather than doing what is wrong... , even if and when this results in suffering."
- Elliott correctly emphasizes that God wills for his people to live faithfully and to do what is right even if the response of an unbelieving world causes them to suffer. This is a quite different concept from "God causes Christians to suffer in this life for their spiritual well-being" (Kistemaker)

34 **Is suffering the will of God? (3)**

- Peter's affirmation is meant to be taken as an encouragement.
- If suffering is within God's will, it is also within God's sovereign control.

- And thus Christian suffering is determined not by the will of one's adversaries but by the will of one's heavenly Father.