

## 1 Peter 3:8 -12

**Intro** ~30 AD The Christians persevere through persecution during the Reign of Nero.

Recap: The verses have been talking about how we are called to be holy, we are to be a living stone and holy people, and how we need to submit to authority and how we should treat our wives and husbands.

This is a transition from specific instructions to a list of godly virtues that all believers are called to exemplify at all times

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

In the Greek, these are 5 adjectives... not verbs.

### Characteristics of a Christian

#### **"Unity of mind"**

The call to harmony is common throughout NT. (1 body, Romans "live in harmony w/ one another") This advises Christians to all be unanimous in belief of the same faith. Seems easy, but would be unnecessary if churches were not prone to suffer from dissension. It's ok to have different practices as long as we have one God, one Lord, and one Savior.

#### **"Sympathy"**

We should care deeply about the needs, joys, and sorrow of others. Be compassionate toward those being persecuted.

#### **"Brotherly love"**

Peter is addressing relationships among believers. By having a "unity of mind", we all have a relationship with Christ which inducts all believers into the same family  
Evidence of genuine Christian faith is warm love for others. When we bring people into the family, why would others want to join a dysfunctional family?

### **“A tender heart”**

Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you”*

Compassion is rooted in mercy which is experienced in the forgiveness of sins. This goes back to having sympathy and loving others. Not only does Jesus himself command we forgive, otherwise we are not forgiven ourselves, but who are we to choose not to forgive each other? The mark of a Christian life is love; we love by showing compassion and forgiveness.

### **“A humble mind”**

To be humble means that others are considered more important than oneself and pride does not fill one's life. Humility was scorned in the Greco-Roman world and therefore was distinctive of Christian vision.

**Verse 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.”*

This focused on how to respond to unbelievers who mistreat them. Repaying evil for evil is mentioned throughout the Bible because when we don't repay evil for evil, it shows what it means to be a Christian.

Why should we pay back evil with a blessing? You love them despite their desire to hurt you. When Nero blamed the Christians for fires the Christian's response was not what was expected. The Christian response is to love others. This will confuse others by causing them to think “the Christians I know don't act like that.”

We see or hear the screamers on our campus. What would happen if an atheist stood up to a screamer and said, “My Christian friends aren't like that”?

The main reason why we should bless is because we are “called” to bless others so that they can inherit the blessing of eternal life.

“Those who bless others will receive a blessing from God” (Deuteronomy 28:1-2) *“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his*

*commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God")*

So, how do we bless?

Believers are to ask God to show his favor and grace upon those who have conferred injury upon them – not like the country song “Pray for You.”

Danger of the idea is thinking that we “bless so that they will inherit blessings.”

This is more to show how one is to be identified as a Christian by showing the characteristics of a Christian.

**Verse 10-12** *“For whoever desires to love life and see good day blessed, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 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.”*

This is referencing Psalm 34:12-16 which was previously referenced in 2:3. Psalm 34 focuses on David's suffering and the Lord's deliverance of those who are righteous in their suffering.

Verse 11 reiterates what the Christian characteristics are in verse 8. (Unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, tender heart, humble mind)

Obedience to God in daily life is the path to experiencing God's blessing.

“Life of goodness does not simply happen as believers mediate quietly in their rooms. Believers must make a conscious effort to ‘turn’ from evil and devote themselves to what is ‘good’”

1 Thessalonians 2:8 *“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”*

Psalm 34 is explaining the blessing being earned in verse 9 “repay evil with a blessing so that you may obtain a blessing” This is that blessing.

Psalm 28:7 *“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.”*

Peter is not suggesting that believers will live perfectly by blessing everybody all the time and that such perfection is necessary to obtain an inheritance: but insists that a transformed life is necessary. However, you try.

### **Conclusion**

Those who have received God's gift of salvation will demonstrate that God is in their lives by the way they treat those around them, by implementing those characteristics, and by blessing those around them

In contrast, those who repay evil with evil demonstrate that they have not been truly transformed by God's grace.

James 2:14-24: There are 2 kinds of faith- legitimate and illegitimate; both kinds “believe”, but legitimate faith goes deeper than just the “right thinking” to the “right living” faith without works is dead

Abraham demonstrated legitimate faith – proven by his actions. Abraham's deeds earned him nothing, but they proved his genuine faith; if he had not been able to trust God, Abraham could never have offered his son. Our behavior will show what our faith is made of.

Peter gives us 5 attributes that should be central in our lives, and then describes how we should react to those who may insult Christianity. Finally he shows us through Scripture how the only way to accomplish these things is through the power of God

**Bottom line:** Bless others regardless of how they treat you.