

# I Peter 3:12-17 - Proclamation in all of life pt 3 - Living in light of eternity

Saturday, December 22, 2012  
9:37 AM

To Read:

1. Matthew 10
2. Romans 8

## Introduction

### A. Where are we in I Peter

1. The Premise of I Peter - In the face of persecution we must return to the fundamentals of the gospel to remind ourselves of the significance of our salvation and the purpose of our salvation, which is to glorify Christ. Once we understand the significance and purpose of our salvation, we will be ready to understand how both the suffering of Christ and our suffering is leading to our ultimate glorification. Then we will be able to bear up under it in a way that brings glory to God.
2. We've looked at the first section - what are the fundamentals of salvation and concluded that the purpose of salvation is to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
3. We've been in the second section for the last five weeks looking at how we proclaim the excellencies of Christ
  - a. We looked at specific situations
    - i. Citizens and governments
    - ii. Slaves and masters
    - iii. Husbands and wives
  - b. We have been looking at general situations for the last two weeks

### B. Bridge from last week

1. Three part series on the last part of the section of the Proclamation of the Excellencies of Christ
  - a. Two weeks ago we looked at the internal commands in verse 8
    - i. Unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart and a humble mind
  - b. Last week we looked at the external commands in verses 9-11
    - i. Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary bless
    - ii. Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16 to prove that we will be blessed if we respond with a blessing
2. Having quoted Psalm 34, Peter continues to work out the implications of the Psalm
  - a. Last week we ended with verse 11 - looking at the blessing and the action from Psalm 34
  - b. So, this week, we're picking up with the end of the quote in verse 12 - God's presence to bless the righteous and destroy the righteous

### C. Read I Peter 3:8-17

### D. Proposition and Outline

1. Proposition: Peter calls us to live life in light of eternity, transforming our thoughts to conform to eternal truths and when we do so, we will respond to the persecutor with the power of the gospel.
2. Outline
  - a. An Eternal Perspective
  - b. An Internal Transformation
  - c. An External Response

## I. An Eternal Perspective (vs. 12-14a, 17)

### A. To conclude his section on how to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, Peter calls his readers to look at their lives in respect to eternity

1. He does this because this is where his quote from Psalm 34 goes
  - a. I Peter 3:12 (which is a quote from Psalm 34:15-16) tells us that God is looking out for the righteous to bless them and looking out for the unrighteous to destroy them
2. As he goes on in the passage, Peter meditates on what that means for us
  - a. If God is watching over the righteous and the unrighteous, what does that mean for Christians who are being persecuted
  - b. He works this out by asking a question in verse 13 and then providing a commentary on that question in verse 14
  - c. So, we'll look at the question first and then look at Peter's commentary

### B. Who is there to harm you?

1. This is the core question of the book of I Peter
  - a. Peter alluded to this question back in chapter 1 when he compared salvation and suffering and what did he conclude:
    - i. I Peter 1:6 - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials
  - b. Peter alluded to this question back in chapter 2 when he compared those who believe and do not believe
    - i. I Peter 2:6-8 - For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.
  - c. Peter asks this question to people who were suffering under various persecutions
    - i. He wants to point out to them that no one can really harm them
    - ii. The persecutor can't do any lasting harm to them because the persecutor cannot approach their treasure
    - iii. It's what we discussed last week when we discussed what the blessing of Psalm 34 is
      - I) The blessing is God Himself
      - II) The persecutor cannot take God away from us
      - III) So, the persecutor cannot harm us
2. This concept is well attested to in Scripture, emphasizing the need for us to have an eternal perspective on what men can do to us
  - a. Psalm 34:15-22 - *The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*
  - b. Romans 8:31-39 - *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
  - c. Psalm 118:6-9 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.*

- d. Hebrews 13:5-6 - *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*
  - e. Psalm 56:3-4, 9-11 - *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?... Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?*
  - f. Psalm 27:1 - *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
3. So, Peter's points us to the eternal perspective - who is there to harm you?
- a. Emphatically no one
  - b. Your treasure is God Himself - they can't take that away
  - c. Your protector is God Himself - they can't defeat Him
  - d. Their judge is God Himself - they can't escape Him
  - e. Your surety is Christ Himself - they can't overcome Him

**C. Even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed.**

1. This is the core conclusion that Peter wants his readers to make.
  - a. If, "Who is there to harm you" is the core question of I Peter, then this is the core conclusion that Peter wants his readers to make
  - b. As we consider this conclusion, first we need to realize that Peter is not contradicting his previous question
    - i. Peter asked a rhetorical question right before this claiming that no one is able to harm us
    - ii. In the very next verse he states that we might be harmed - is this a contradiction?
    - iii. It is not a contradiction - Peter is pointing out that though the persecutor can in no way harm you eternally, you may suffer temporal persecutions
    - iv. But even these temporal persecutions cannot take away your blessing - in fact, they prepare a blessing for you
2. Two ways that we are blessed when we suffer persecution
  - a. Persecution prepares for you a future blessing
    - i. II Corinthians 4:17-18 - *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*
    - ii. Matthew 5:10-12 - *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
    - iii. Romans 8:16-18 - *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs---heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
    - iv. Hebrews 11:26 - *He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.*
  - b. Persecution is a current blessing
    - i. Hebrews 12:7-11 - *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*
    - ii. Romans 5:3-5 - *More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*
    - iii. II Corinthians 12:10 - *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

- iv. Colossians 1:24 - *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,*
- 3. Therefore persecution is an honor and not a dishonor
  - a. I Peter 4:13-14 - *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*
  - b. Acts 5:40-41 - *and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*
  - c. I think this is what Peter is aiming toward at the end of our passage this morning in verse 17
    - i. *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*
    - ii. There is no honor in suffering for doing evil - that is simply the just payment for the evil deed
    - iii. But, on the contrary, when you suffer for doing good, this is something honorable
    - iv. So, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil

**D. Why is this Peter's core conclusion of the book**

1. First, when I say this is his core conclusion, I'm sure others could argue that there are other core conclusions in the book
2. But this is at the heart of what Peter is trying to get across
3. Peter wants the suffering Christians to which he is writing to understand the greatness of their salvation and how feeble the persecutor really is
4. Even when the persecutor is causing them to suffer, the persecutor is actually blessing them
5. When the suffering Christian is able to grasp that perspective - the perspective that their treasure is God Himself and their salvation is in Christ Himself and that no one can take that away - then they are able to proclaim the excellencies of Christ without reservation even while suffering
6. So, Peter puts this at the center of His book - who can harm you? And even if they do 'harm' you, they are actually preparing a blessing for you.

## II. An Internal Transformation (vs 14b-15a)

### A. Peter continues our passage by taking the eternal perspective and applying it to our lives

1. He starts by telling us how this should change us on the inside - the internal transformation
2. Then he tells us how this should change us on the outside - the external response
3. We'll start with the internal transformation - which is our second point this morning

### B. In meditating on the fact that no one can harm us and that even if we should suffer we will be blessed, Peter realizes that this means we should have two internal responses, or perhaps a twofold internal response

1. We're going to consider two phrases this morning that Peter uses to describe our internal transformation
2. They are really flip sides of each other when we consider them

### C. Have no fear of them or be troubled. (vs 14b)

1. Peter says our first response should be to not fear the persecutor or to fear any man
  - a. This makes a lot of sense - if they can't hurt us, why would be afraid of them
  - b. This is just applying the eternal perspective to the persecutor
  - c. It is saying to the persecutor, I understand this situation between me and you in light of eternity and I know you cannot take my treasure away and you're futile efforts are only going to provide me a blessing
  - d. Therefore, I do not need to serve you, I do not need to be afraid of you, I do not need to react to your actions against me
    - i. I think recognizing that fear in this context is a servile fear is important
    - ii. When we fear the persecutor we are serving him
    - iii. He has control of us, we will react to what he does or may do
    - iv. So, when we don't fear the persecutor, we are no longer serving him
  - e. Whatever the persecutor does, it doesn't affect us - we don't fear man
2. Not fearing men who might hurt us, not serving them, is a common theme of Scripture
  - a. Isaiah 51:12-13 - *"I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass, and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you fear continually all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor, when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the wrath of the oppressor?"*
  - b. John 14:1, 27 - *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me....Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*
  - c. Matthew 10:26-28a - *"So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."*
  - d. Luke 2:4 - *"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do."*

#### **D. In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as Holy (vs 15a)**

1. If we are not to fear man or serve man, whom are we to serve?
  - a. It is interesting that Peter doesn't turn around and say instead fear God in this second point
    - i. He doesn't say, 'don't fear man, fear God'
    - ii. He says, 'don't fear man, honor Christ the Lord as Holy'
  - b. But, I think it comes to about the same thing
    - i. Since fear in this context is a servile fear if we aren't to fear man, whom are we to serve
    - ii. The answer is, we are to set ourselves apart for service to Christ - honor Christ the Lord as holy
      - (1) We are to remember that Christ as God is the one who is watching over the righteous to bless and the unrighteous to destroy - we ought to fear Him - what we just saw in the quote out of Psalm 34
      - (2) We are to remember that Christ is the one who is the living stone of our salvation, in and through whom we are being built up into a holy temple
      - (3) We are to remember that the purpose of our salvation is to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
      - (4) When we are remembering and setting ourselves apart to these things, we are honoring Christ the Lord as holy
  - c. The difference is that Peter emphasizes how we are to fear God - we fear God by honoring Christ the Lord as holy - setting ourselves apart for His service and remembering Him in all of our life - even during persecutions
2. Again, the concept of fearing God instead of man is prevalent throughout Scripture
  - a. Isaiah 8:11-13 - *For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*
  - b. Matthew 10:28b-33 - *"Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*
  - c. Luke 12:5-9 - *But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

#### **E. So, our internal transformation means that:**

1. We don't fear or serve men - do not fear them or be troubled
2. Instead we fear and serve Christ - but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy
3. This is incredibly easy to understand, but incredibly hard to live out - it requires us to firmly hold onto the eternal perspective of the blessings of Christ - it requires faith lived out

### III. An External Response (vs 15b-16)

#### A. Having called us to an eternal perspective and an internal transformation, Peter concludes his second major section by calling us to an external response

1. This sermon builds nicely on itself because the eternal perspective leads directly to the internal transformation
2. And the internal transformation leads directly to the external response
3. If we aren't going to fear and serve the persecutor, what are we going to do toward him?
4. Peter's answer is, 'always be prepared to give a defense for the hope that is in you'

#### B. Always be prepared to give a defense

1. What does it mean to always be prepared to give a defense for a reason for the hope that is in you
  - a. First, it means we must live in a way that would cause people to ask us to give a defense for a reason for the hope that is in us
    - i. This is important not to overlook as we consider this command
    - ii. Peter assumes that our lives will be different from those around us
    - iii. Peter assumes that unbelievers will be able to look in on us and form questions because they see we are different
    - iv. So, we must be living differently
      - (1) This doesn't mean we live differently for the purpose of living differently
      - (2) But we do live differently because we follow after Christ, we find out what pleases Him with all of our lives
      - (3) When we live that way, we will look different and we will invite questions
  - b. Second, it means we must clearly know the reason for the hope that is in us
    - i. What is the reason for the hope that is in us? It is the gospel of Christ.
    - ii. So, when Peter calls us to be ready to give a defense, we must be sure we understand the gospel well
    - iii. We must understand why Christ came to earth, how He suffered in our place, how He bore the wrath of God, how He rose again to secure our blessing, how we have been adopted with Him in the heavenly realms, how we are now in Christ and He is our Lord
    - iv. So, second, not only do we need to live in a way that is different, we ought to devote ourselves to understanding the gospel well so we know the reason for the hope that is in us
  - c. Third, it means we must prepare ourselves to give a defense of that reason
    - i. This means that we should have some idea how to share the gospel with someone
    - ii. Now, I'm not saying that we have to take professional evangelism classes or anything of that sort - I think some people can get carried away in this respect
    - iii. But, we ought to prepare ourselves to give clear statements of the gospel to those who ask
    - iv. This is really just an extension of knowing the gospel well - we ought to know it well enough to communicate it to those around us
  - d. Fourth, it means we must always be ready to give that defense
    - i. This is really the point that Peter is making here, we ought to be ready to give that defense
    - ii. This means that the gospel ought to be fast to our mouths when someone notices something different about us
      - (1) When someone inquires about why we're different, we ought not to be ashamed of the gospel but ready to proclaim Christ as the reason why we are different and to share the glories of His gospel with them
    - iii. This means that the gospel ought to be fast to our mouths when someone is trying to persecute us
      - (1) Remember the audience that Peter is writing to - those who were suffering under various persecutions
      - (2) Peter is telling them that even when the persecutor is trying to get a confession out of them that they should be fast to share the gospel

2. Proclaiming the gospel of Christ as a response to not fearing man is again a clear theme of Scripture
  - a. Luke 12:2-3 - *Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.*
  - b. Matthew 10:26-28a - *So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.*
    - i. Luke 2 and Matthew 10 are Christ's discussion of fearing God and not man. In both cases he heads the discussion by telling us to proclaim what you have heard in secret from the rooftops. The fact that we don't fear man ought to free us to proclaim the gospel earnestly and readily. We don't hide the gospel because we are afraid of what men might do to us, we share the gospel openly because we fear and serve Christ instead.
  - c. Colossians 4:5-6 - *Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*
3. How does our internal transformation lead to being prepared to give a defense?
  - a. If we don't fear and serve the persecutor but instead fear and serve Christ then we are going to have His truths and His goals on our mind
    - i. So, serving Christ means we will want to proclaim Christ as our hope to those who would ask
  - b. Also, since we don't fear the persecutor, we are now free to share the gospel with them without fear of how they might react to the gospel
    - i. We can be ready to give a defense even if the gospel is poorly received because we don't fear man

**C. Do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience**

1. Peter clarifies how we are to be giving an answer here in his last sentence
  - a. Having called us to be ready to give an answer, Peter guards us against doing it in a way that actually dishonors Christ
  - b. We do this when we have an angry attitude
    - i. I think this is the first attitude Peter has in mind because he was writing to people who were undergoing persecution
    - ii. When sharing the gospel even with the persecutor, we cannot do it with anger
    - iii. The gospel isn't something we attack people with
    - iv. We must first take Peter's last command - to return a blessing and not a curse - before we share the gospel
  - c. We do this when we have an argumentative attitude
    - i. This is another common way the gospel is presented that is not honoring to Christ
    - ii. When we share the gospel with someone in order to win an argument, to prove that we are right and they are wrong, we are not doing it with gentleness and respect
    - iii. Now, I'm talking about an attitude not an action - sometimes to share the gospel well we will have to prove how it is correct and other positions are incorrect - that's ok
    - iv. But that's not our goal, our goal ought to be to see Christ glorified and people saved, not to win an argument or prove ourselves right
  - d. We do this when we have a prideful attitude
    - i. This is very similar to an argumentative attitude, but our pride doesn't always work itself out in arguing
    - ii. For example, perhaps we would be dismissive towards others, not really listening or caring what they said because we are proud that we are Christians
    - iii. Again, for example, perhaps we would be judgmental towards others, taking pleasure in calling them sinners
    - iv. Instead, we ought always to have a humble attitude when we present the gospel, remembering that we are sinners too saved by grace - we aren't better than those we share the gospel with, we have just experienced more of the grace of God
  - e. We do this when we have an unloving attitude
    - i. This is another common way the gospel is presented that is not honoring to Christ
    - ii. When we share the gospel with someone simply because we have to or in a mechanical checkmark sort of way, we aren't demonstrating love for that person
    - iii. Instead, we ought to share the gospel with God's heart for people, loving them and desiring them to be saved from the wrath of God and follow Christ

2. What does it mean to do it with gentleness and respect?
  - a. We don't allow sinful attitudes to drive our presentation of the gospel
    - i. This seems like a no brainer - but as we've just considered, there are lot's of ways that sinful attitudes can drive our presentation of the gospel
    - ii. Peter call's us to examine our attitudes when we share the gospel with people - are we doing it out of love for Christ and love for our fellow man or are we doing it for some other motive
    - iii. If we are doing it out of some other motive, we may be failing to do it with gentleness and respect and we may be dishonoring Christ with our gospel message
  - b. We make sure that the offensiveness of the gospel is from the gospel and not from our actions
    - i. The gospel is inherently offensive, but we can easily add offense by how we share it with people
    - ii. So, when we share the gospel, we ought to consider, am I causing offense that is necessary to the gospel or am I causing offense because I am doing it in an angry, unloving, or prideful way?
    - iii. There is no need to add extra offense to the gospel, if we are simply true to the truths of the gospel it will be plenty offensive on its own
3. What does it not mean to do it with gentleness and respect?
  - a. It doesn't mean that we can't discuss sin, wrath, repentance and other hard parts of the gospel
    - i. Sharing the gospel with gentleness and respect might be characterized by some people as working to not offend anyone by our gospel message, but that is not and cannot be the case
    - ii. We must be true to the truths of the gospel, including sin, wrath and repentance
    - iii. We don't work to make sure that there is no offense from the gospel - the offense of the gospel must be protected
  - b. It doesn't mean that we can't be impassioned about the gospel
    - i. Some people might characterize gentleness and respect as quite and unassuming
    - ii. Quite and unassuming could be a way that the gospel is shared correctly
    - iii. But sharing the gospel with fervor and passion is also possible while doing it gently and with respect
4. Where can we learn how to do this?
  - a. I'm just going to list some examples that are found in Scripture for your consideration later
    - i. I'm not going to read or discuss these for the sake of time this morning
    - ii. But I'll list off some examples of sharing the gospel in Scripture that you can consider how they did it with gentleness and respect
  - b. Consider Peter and John testifying to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:1-22 and again in Acts 5:17-22
    - i. I think this is a particularly good one to consider for several reasons
    - ii. One, this is Peter's own experience - what he may be thinking about as he's writing this
    - iii. Second, this fits the situation that Peter is addressing - answering the persecutor who asks you
  - c. Consider Stephen testifying to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7
  - d. In each of these cases, these men are testifying to the persecutor who asks them for a reason for the hope that is in them
    - i. On the one hand they are all true to the gospel and talk about sin and judgment
    - ii. They are all true to Christ and refuse to back down from the gospel
    - iii. But on the other hand they all also give a gentle answer, reading through these accounts can help us understand what this means

#### **D. Why: to put to shame those who would revile you**

1. Peter's concern is about those who are listening and looking on when we share the gospel
  - a. In sharing the gospel with someone, those who hear and see can learn one of two things
  - b. Either by our example and attitude we can teach them that the gospel we are proclaiming is not true because it hasn't affected us
  - c. Or, by our example and attitude we can demonstrate that the gospel we are proclaiming is true because it has significantly affected us
  - d. Peter wants us to make sure that we are adorning the gospel even with our presentation of the gospel so that our actions and attitudes are not detracting from it
2. Peter is not saying that when we share the gospel correctly that people won't revile us
  - a. In fact, he seems to be saying exactly the opposite, even when we share the gospel correctly people will revile our good behavior in Christ
  - b. Sinful humans hate the gospel of Christ, so it should be no surprise that people revile us for it

3. Peter is also not saying that when we share the gospel correctly people will instantly be shamed into stopping reviling us
  - a. There are two ways that the reviler may be put to shame
  - b. They may be put to shame right away and see that their reviling is wrong and turn and accept the gospel
  - c. Or they may be put to shame on the last day when all the deeds of men are read before the great judgment throne and they are judged for their reviling
4. But, whether people stop reviling now or are judged for it later, we should act above reproach while sharing the gospel so that Christ is glorified even in our presentation of the gospel

## Conclusion

- A. Peter wants us to live all of our lives to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
  1. We proclaim Christ's excellencies by loving each other in the church
  2. We proclaim Christ's excellencies by responding with a blessing to the persecutor
  3. We proclaim Christ's excellencies by living in light of eternity
- B. We live our lives in light of eternity to the glory of Christ when we:
  1. Realize that the persecutor cannot harm us in any way because our reward is God Himself
  2. Realize that even when the persecutor does cause us to suffer that he is actually preparing a blessing for us
  3. We cease to fear and serve the persecutor and instead set ourselves apart for service to Christ
  4. We proclaim the gospel to everyone who asks and do it in a way that glorifies Christ
- C. We've spent six weeks considering how we practically proclaim the excellencies of Christ - the purpose of our salvation
  1. For five of these weeks, we have only considered our actions - how we act demonstrates who Christ is
    - a. We can either glorify Christ or dishonor Christ by how we live
    - b. We can either testify to the gospel or deny the gospel by how we live
    - c. How we live adorns the gospel of Christ
  2. But now, on our sixth week, we consider how we speak the gospel of Christ
    - a. Speaking the gospel is necessary, living the gospel is necessary and speaking the gospel is necessary
    - b. We've spent five weeks considering how we live to demonstrate the gospel, to proclaim the excellencies of Christ because this is vitally important, because it is what Peter focuses on and because it is something that is often overlooked in American Christianity today
    - c. But speaking the gospel is also just as important and its where our living should lead
- D. So, as we go out this week, let's refocus ourselves on the eternal perspective
  1. Let's remember that this world is temporary and our God is eternal
  2. Let's remember that our suffering, real or possible, is miniscule and our salvation beyond measure
  3. Then as we focus on the external perspective let's share the gospel freely and readily because we have set ourselves apart for service to Christ and do not fear what man might do to us