

# Being Right - Doing Right

Long Beach Alliance Church • July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

*For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

*~1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:17 (NASB)*

## 1) Authenticity From The Inside Out

- A) Passionately encouraging right behavior amongst God's people (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9-10) which flowed out of a right relationship with Jesus Christ (2:21-25) is a central focus of the Apostle Peter's teaching.
- B) Right "being" which leads to right "doing" was never meant to be simply self-serving for Christ's church (although a significant aspect, 1:22, 2:17; cf. John 13:35).
- C) One of the key purposes to right "doing" is to provide an authentic example of God's love to an unbelieving world, and by doing so, bring glory to God through salvation and exponential worship (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:12; cf. Revelation 5:11-14).
- D) From this context, Peter addresses the behavior of a Christian in relation to pagan government (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:13-17), the pagan workplace (2:18-20), and now the most intimate of examples, the marriage to an unbeliever (3:1-7).

## 2) The Wife Of Faith

- A) How does a wife deal with a husband who does not submit himself to the Lord? Simply, she is to make every attempt to win her wayward husband to the Lord through her exemplary and submissive behavior (3:1-2).
- B) What does "submissive" behavior look like? For the Christian wife it is a content commitment to "inner beauty" of the heart rather than simple externals (3:3-4).
- C) Like Sarah's commitment to Abraham (cf. Genesis 18:12, 12:13?), the Christian wife willingly respects and responds to her husband (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:5-6).
- D) Even in situations where a woman suffers for her faith in the face of opposition from her husband, a woman is to honor God without fright or fear by willingly respecting and showing honor to her husband (3:6).

## 3) The Husband Of Faith

- A) How does a husband deal with a wife (or women) in his household, which may not be followers of God (3:7)? Simply, a man is to treat the women of the household in an "understanding" manner.
- B) What does "an understanding way" look like? First, since a woman is a physically weaker person than a man (3:7), the man must not use his physical prowess in an intimidating manner. A man is to show Christ through strength of character and spirit, but not through intimidation.
- C) Further a Christian husband is to honor his wife by treating her as one who can be a "fellow heir" of God's grace (3:7), not condescending or arrogant about her lack of faith.

- D) The message is clear! Men who follow a culture of lording power and superiority over their wives, instead of treating them with grace and honor, will not even have their prayers heard by God (3:7)!

#### 4) The Household Of Faith

- A) Any household with a Christian should be marked with the same qualities which Christ Himself exemplified (3:8-9).
- B) These applications for dealing with those in the household who are not followers of Christ are excellent to apply, even within the household where there are varying levels of commitment and faith (with children, parents, etc.).
- C) Living in a home where a loved one is not a follower of Christ can be very painful and cause great pain. Sometimes, we attempt to “convert” those we love through intimidation, manipulation, exhausting lectures, or even the withholding of love/compassion.
- D) Peter sees these efforts as the futile methods of well-intentioned Christians to cover up their pain. He quotes a compassionate section of Psalm 34 (3:10-12) to remind followers of Jesus Christ – YOU ARE NOT ALONE, GOD HEARS YOU, LOVES YOU, AND IS IN CONTROL (STILL)!

#### 5) Being Right & Doing Right

- A) Suffering for the sake of righteousness, whether from a pagan government (2:13-17), pagan workplace (2:18-20), or a pagan family situation (3:1-12) is not to be avoided in fear of feeling pain, but absorbed/endured as a blessing with a purpose (3:13-14).

- B) The blessing is Jesus Christ Himself, separated (sanctified) in our hearts for a secure and intimate relationship which is filled with compassion and grace (3:15).
- C) But this relationship with Jesus, complete with its pain and its suffering from living in difficult situations and many pagan relationships, is not without purpose!
- D) The authentic (and suffering) life of the Christian provides a tremendously compelling and persuasive defence of the faith (“apologetic”), which reveals the truth of Jesus Christ to the world, and shames those who are pagan (3:16).
- E) In a sort of “theme verse” of Peter’s letter, he summarizes that enduring suffering for doing righteousness (living as a Christian in a pagan world) is better than doing what is wrong (avoiding pain by numbing suffering or avoiding suffering altogether), and then suffering for it (3:17). This is the example of Jesus Christ (3:18), who chose that which is spiritual over that which was simply physical.

#### 6) Victory In Jesus, Proclaimed & Sealed

- A) Jesus Christ’s phenomenal example of living righteously and enduring the consequences on our behalf (3:18), provided a victorious proclamation to those who were rebellious back during the time of Noah (cf. Genesis 6-10).
- B) Like Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness in the midst of a pagan world (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:5; Hebrews 11:7), so Christians should be righteous in the face of difficulty (3:20).
- C) In like fashion to Noah and his family being saved through the waters of the flood, so the waters of baptism now represent salvation, coming from a transforming relationship with the risen and powerful Christ (3:21-22).