



**Old Testament Reading – Psalm 34:1-22 – New Testament Reading –
Colossians 3:12-25**

**How Should We Then Live
“With A Clear Conscience”
1 Peter 3:8-17**

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The title of this sermon series is from 2 Peter 3:11, where the Apostle Peter asked, *“Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of men ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness.”*

- In view of the fact that, one day, all of the elements of this physical earth will be dissolved by fire, nullifying every facet of the way of life as we know it today, how should we, as Christians, then live?
- Since God has promised to make a new heaven and a new earth, a place where God’s people will dwell with Him forever and where nothing but pure righteousness will dwell, how should we, as Christians, then live?
- Should we, as God’s people, be wasting our time in anger at the rise of sin and unrighteousness in the world; ready to call down the fires of heaven upon the ungodly, or should we be living our lives in holy conduct and godliness, with love from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a sincere faith?

Certainly, Christians must be much in prayer over the distress of the nations of the world and the imminent demise of America.

- Many people within our government want to destroy the biblical foundations upon which America was built and surrender our sovereignty to the U.N. and the World Economic Order.
- Many prophecy-watchers connect this with the reveal of the Antichrist, leading up to the seven years of Tribulation.
- Therefore, how should we, as Christians, then live?
 - In anger at those who are doing precisely what the Bible says world leaders will do at the end of this age?
 - In urgency to see that all of our loved ones hear the gospel and will hopefully be saved?

Certainly, Christians must be much in prayer for the legislation President Biden has agreed to sign called “The Equality Act.”

- Many Christian leaders view this law as the greatest threat to our religious freedom in our lifetime, as it limits the rights of parents to raise their children according to godly values, and it empowers the government to punish those who do not affirm the ungodly views of gender selection and marriage equality.
- Therefore, how should we, as Christians, then live?

- Attacking those who designed this legislation to silence Christians from expressing a biblical worldview?
- Asking God to take notice of their threats, but grant us an even greater boldness to speak His Word? Acts 4:29

Viewing the current events through the lens of the Scriptures:

- On earth, we have the war of the two worldviews – Psalm 2:1-3
 - *God's people have always been, and will always be under persecution from the ungodly – 2 Timothy 3:12*
- In the Spiritual realm, we have the 6000-year-old war between God, the Creator of the world, and Satan, the god of this world – Ephesians 6, 2 Corinthians 4
 - *This world will be the kingdom of Satan until Jesus returns to earth as the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and casts Satan into eternal hell – Revelation 20:10*
- In the heavenly realm, there is total composure – Psalm 2:4ff.
 - *God alone knows the future, but the signs of the times indicate the end of the age is near.*
 - *Rather than fight against the god of this world, or against those who attack us, Christians should drop the anchor of our soul in the Rock of Ages and be prepared to go when Jesus calls us to "Come forth!"*

In our battle with the god of this world, and with those he uses to persecute us, we must not yield to our old nature and defend ourselves with the weapons of the flesh.

- If we obey the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and that requires us to suffer persecution, we must accept that as the will of God, and rejoice that our conscience is clear before Him and before man.
- This call for Christians to submit, even to ungodly leadership, is repeated throughout the Scriptures, and for good reason: That we, like Jesus, would do nothing to deserve the persecution we are called to endure.
- That's why Peter told those Christians who were being persecuted not to do anything they would be ashamed of, but rather, by their submission to those in authority, they would put to shame those who were persecuting them.

If we want to love life and see good days, even while we are being persecuted for our faith, we must change our attitude toward what is happening to us and toward those who are persecuting us.

- Contemporary Christians have been spoiled to expect quick solutions to their problems, and even quicker deliverance from pain and suffering.
- However, while God will deliver us from evil, i.e., *He will give us the power to resist the devil*, He will not deliver us from the pain of our problems until they have achieved His purpose in us.

- The goal of every Christian is to be conformed to the image of Christ, and that has nothing to do with our physical health or our worldly wealth but rather how we handle the hardships of life.
- Carnal Christians want to get out from under the pressure of their problems but God wants to use that pressure to motivate them to a deeper level of devotion to Him and a greater sympathy toward those who are suffering for Him.
- God allows us to experience conflicts we cannot solve to break our pride, and to humble us by His grace; to develop our life-message and to prepare us for our next assignment.
- Therefore, instead of fighting against the persecution or against the ungodly people who are persecuting us, we must change our attitude toward them and ask God to show us why He allowed this to happen in our lives.
- 1 Peter 2:13 – *“Have your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, (a reference to unbelievers) that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

Peter then gave five characteristics of that honorable conduct:

1. Harmoniously – Vs. 8 – “All of you be of one mind.”

- The cardinal characteristic of those who are truly born again is their supernatural ability to live in harmony with others, even with those who are not Christians.
- Jesus said the world would know we are Christians by our love for one another, and when the Jesus in me loves the Jesus in you, it cannot help but spill out on those who are around us.

2. Sympathetic – Vs. 8 – “Having compassion for one another.”

- The Greek word used here means to suffer with someone; to share in the sufferings of others, including unbelievers.
- There is much in the world that is deserving of our criticism but hurting people will not care how much we know about how to solve their problems until they see how much we care about them as persons.

3. Brotherly – Vs. 8 – “Love as brothers.”

- In 1 Peter 1:11, Peter said our souls are to be so purified of all sin that we can love one another with a sincere love.
- When the unbelievers see that kind of love flowing from us, even for those who are persecuting us, they will not only take notice of it, but God will use it to draw them to Christ in due time.

4. Kindhearted – Vs. 8 – “Be tenderhearted.”

- The Greeks used this word to describe the convulsion of emotions one might express when they saw the hurts of others.

- Such was the heart of God toward us, in that He sent His Son to be our Savior.
- Such was the heart of God the Son, who saw the sinfulness of man and the lack of hope beyond the grave, and He wept!

5. Courteous – Vs. 8 – “Humble in spirit.”

- Jesus was the very Word of God, made flesh, to dwell among us.
- Yet, in Philippians 2:8, the Apostle Paul said, Jesus “humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”
- Just as God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, neither has He left us in the world to do the same, but that through our witness, some might be saved.
- God has not called us to be critics of those who choose to live their lives in sin, but He has called us to so live our lives that they would see Jesus in us and be drawn to Him.