New-Life Lessons from the Apostle Peter’s First Letter

**New Behavior: Suffering for Righteousness**

When Good Deeds Are Punished

1 Peter 3:13-22

In general, Peter says, law-abiding citizens do well, but he warns that more is going on behind the scenes. The same evil that brought about the Flood and crucified Christ is alive and well today, but believers can deal with it without revenge if they see how Jesus’ death and resurrection has cleared the way for their own eternal triumph over sin. Life can neither defeat nor embitter us when we hope in God.

***When your good deeds are punished, remember: God will bless you, and in the end, vindicate you. vv. 13-17***

Peter’s thoughts reflect Jesus: Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungry-for-righteousness, the peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness. Matthew 5:2-12. Peter and Jesus are calling for responses from a transformed heart, a person who knows that this is not “home” and that final victory is assured because of God’s promises. Here is a firm and gentle reminder that our constant frustration at life in a fallen world is quite misplaced, for the mature do not throw tantrums, or are even surprised that life is often not comfortable.

***When your good deeds are punished, remember: Jesus has won, proclaimed victory to His enemies and has gone before you to reign triumphantly in heaven.*  vv. 18-22**



All that has happened to Jesus happens to us who are “in Him.” We were crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, and resurrected with Christ. Baptism reflects our identification with Him, a true symbol of our salvation “by water” just as Noah was saved by means of the same water that brought judgment upon the disobedient. Jesus has completed His round trip back to Heaven, triumphant over His enemies, dying for our sins that He might bring us to God. Be patient. Victory is guaranteed.

***Applying Truth to Life: Leaving the Bitters Behind***

Peter seeks to save us from those fatal three R’s: Resentment, Retaliation, and Regret. But how? Our knee-jerk reactions move us quickly to defend ourselves, to seek justice, and even to sin in order to find relief. Left to ourselves, we will always compare what we have to what others have, to measure our heartaches against theirs, to expect fair treatment, to seek any port in our emotional storms.

The alternative is in the example and work of Jesus. Peter points out that Jesus’ methods should guide us and His victories comfort us. But to follow Jesus and be empowered by His victories means a new viewpoint, namely that of faith. We must truly believe that Heaven is real, Jesus is trustworthy, and God has our best interests at heart. But do we?

It is often here where we falter, for when life appears to turn against us, our emotions remind us of how unfair life is. But if we believe what Peter is saying, and what Jesus said about the meek inheriting the earth and blessings coming out of trials, we have a new perspective that carries the day. A promise is only as good as the Promise Maker. Do you believe God is trustworthy and loving? Matthew 7:24-29; Hebrews 6:10-20