

<sup>3:13</sup> Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats<sup>a</sup>; do not be frightened.”<sup>b</sup> <sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> After being made alive,<sup>c</sup> he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— <sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.<sup>d</sup> It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

### Understand it.

- **Review:** What does it mean to “do good” in a world that is often hostile to believers?
- Peter writes “if you suffer (for doing right)...you are blessed.” Read Matthew 5:10-15. How might Peter be restating or applying the very principles of God’s Kingdom that Jesus taught his followers? How can we consider such suffering as “blessed”?
- How does Peter explain what type of *fear* to avoid and what *fear* is good for believers? Why does this matter?
- Peter’s parallel to Christ (again, see 2:21) reinforces the benefit for suffering. (v.18). Why is this wisdom difficult to swallow today?
- Jesus’ suffering allowed him to proclaim the Gospel (see 4:6) to the imprisoned spirits. (v.19-20)
  - What might be the significance of this event?
  - Why could the statement be confusing or controversial?
  - Who were these “prisoners”? How were they disobedient?
- How does Peter use the story of Noah to illustrate salvation? (v.20-21: “saved through water” & “...baptism that now saves you.”)
- How does God clear one’s conscience? (v.21)
- What does Jesus’ resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand symbolize? What does his present authority matter to our spiritual or physical lives?

**“Gentleness and respect”** (v15) Peter challenges believers to rise above their contentions with honorable behavior. As in the previous sections, this type of response is intended to protect our Christian witness as well as deepen trust in God and his sovereign judgment.

**Dig deeper.** Look at Nehemiah’s struggles with those who opposed the rebuilding of the wall surrounding Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 4). Reflect on the Israelites perspective on threats and how they stayed “on mission”.

### Apply it.

- How would you articulate the reason for the hope you have? (v.15)
- Look at *your* story. Where can you see goodness or usefulness in any particular suffering you’ve experienced?

<sup>a</sup> 1 Peter 3:14 Or *fear what they fear*

<sup>b</sup> 1 Peter 3:14 Isaiah 8:12

<sup>c</sup> 1 Peter 3:19 Or *but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also*

<sup>d</sup> 1 Peter 3:21 Or *but an appeal to God for a clear conscience*