

1 Peter 3:13-17

¹³ Who can harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be shaken.” ¹⁵ But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. But respond with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your good behavior in Christ. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Berean Study Bible

¹³ Now, who will harm you, if you prove to be zealous for what is good?

¹⁴ But even if you suffer for righteousness, you are blessed.

Do not fear what they fear. Do not be disturbed.

¹⁵ Instead, in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord,
always ready with a defense to everyone who asks you

a reason for the confidence that is in you;

yet do it with gentleness and respect,

¹⁶ keeping a good conscience,

so that, in case they might speak against you,

they shall be ashamed of slandering your good behaviour in Christ.

¹⁷ For, if the will of God wills it, it is better to suffer for doing good, than for doing evil.

My own translation, Preachers Literal Translation

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Inversion parallelism. 1 Peter 3:14-17

A¹, 14a “suffer for what is right”

B¹, 15a “in your hearts sanctify Christ”

C¹, 15a “prepared to give a defense”

D^x, 15b “the reason for the hope that is in you”

C², 15c “respond with gentleness and respect”

B², 16b “your good behaviour in Christ”

A², 17b “suffer for doing good”

2

What should I be? 1 Peter 3:13-17

Be fearless. 3:14 “Do not fear”

Be focused. 3:15 “sanctify Christ as Lord”

Be prepared. 3:15 “Always be prepared to...”

Be logical. 3:15 “the reason for the hope”

Be kind. 3:15 “with gentleness and respect”

3

Be prepared. 1 Peter 3:15

Prepare your heart. 3:15a “in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord”

Prepare your mind. 3:15b “be prepared to give a defense”

Prepare your logic. 3:15c “the reason”

Prepare your emotion. 3:15d “the hope that is in you”

Prepare your actions. 3:15e “gentleness and respect”

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Driven by good. 1 Peter 3:13-17

Driven by good emotion. 3:13-14

Driven by good reason. 3:15-16

Driven by good action. 3:17

5

To infinity and beyond. 1 Peter 3:13-17

Beyond fear/anger. 3:13-14

Beyond hope. 3:15-16

Beyond good. 3:17

6

Making sense in a crazy world. 1 Peter 3:13-17

Bad can be good. 3:13-14

Good can be great. 3:15-16

Logic is always good. 3:17

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Ready. Set. Go! 1 Peter 3:13-17

Ready. 3:15 “sanctify Christ”

Set. 3:15 “be prepared”

Go. 3:15 “give a defense”

8

Look! 1 Peter 3:15

Look up. 3:15 “sanctify Christ as Lord”

Look in. 3:15 “Always be prepared to...”

Look down. 3:15 “the reason for the hope”

Look out. 3:15 “with gentleness and respect”

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Preppers welcome. 1 Peter 3:13-17

Private preparation. 3:13-14

Illogical. 3:13 “harm you [for doing] good”

Unjust. 3:14a “suffer for what is right”

Personal preparation. 3:15

Prepare your heart. 15a “in your hearts sanctify Christ”

Prepare your mind. 15b “be prepared... who asks you the reason”

Public preparation. 3:15

Have confidence. 15c “prepared to give a defense... for the reason”

Have gentleness. 15c “with gentleness and respect”

Your survival plan for when worlds collide. 1 Peter 3:13-17

Living in a crazy world. 3:13-14

The world is confused about 'good' and 'bad'. 13 "harm you... good"

The world is confused about 'right' and 'wrong'. 14a "suffer for what is right"

The world is confused about 'fear' and 'faith'. 14b "what they fear... not be shaken"

Living in a stable world. 3:15

My Christ-centred world has priority. 15a "sanctify Christ as Lord"

My Christ-centred world has purpose. 15b "reason for the hope"

My Christ-centred world has peace. 15c "gentleness and respect"

Living where worlds collide. 3:16-17

Keep your inside clear. 16a "keeping a clear conscience"

Keep your outside clear. 16b "good behaviour in Christ"

Keep your upline clear. 17 "God's will"

Q and A. 1 Peter 3:13-17

A question with the wrong answer. 3:13-14

The right question. 13 "zealous for what is good?"

The wrong response. 13-14 "harm you... you suffer"

The right outcome. 14 "you are blessed... not fear"

A heart with the right answer. 3:15

The right position. 15a "in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord"

The right preparation. 15b "prepared to give a defense"

The right perspective. 15c "gentleness and respect"

A life with the right answer. 3:16-17

I remain right within. 16a "keeping a clear conscience"

I remain right without. 16b "good behaviour in Christ"

I remain right with God. 17 "God's will, to suffer"

Other possible titles

What do you hope for?

Why? What is your reason?

Witness for all you're worth.

Your words are worth their weight.

Logic or Faith – take your pick.

The blessing you don't want. 13 "if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed"

God's unpleasant will for your life. 17 "it is God's will, to suffer"

Smart answers to dumb questions.

Cross references

Cross references about overcoming

¹⁰ Do not fear, because I am with you. Do not be afraid, because I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will surely help you. I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness. ¹¹ Behold, all who rage against you will be ashamed and disgraced. Those who contend with you will be reduced to nothing and will perish. Isaiah 41:10-11

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39

Cross references about peace.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid. John 14:27

I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world! John 16:33 BSB

Other resources

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/10-ways-christians-should-respond-to-opposition/>

<https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1995-09-17-ready-to-give-an-answer/>

My sermon on Luke 12:54-56 at sermoninspiration.net

2 Timothy 2:25&26 “Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”

Music and songs

Songs about “Do not fear what they fear” v14

Fear not, for I am with you.

I’m not ashamed to own my Lord... At the cross. H

Songs about “Christ as Lord” v15

He is Lord. He is Lord.

Songs about “always ready with a defense” v15

I cannot tell... but this I know...

I serve a risen Saviour... You ask me how I know...

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Have you seen the program, Doomsday Preppers? Can you understand why these people hoard food and weapons?
 2. Today’s text begins with a question (v13). Do you think bad people would ever want to harm good people; if so, why?
 3. The first half of v14 reminds us of our position, in spite of our circumstances. We are... The second half of v14 reminds us how to maintain that position. How do these “do not”s maintain blessing?
 4. We are given an alternate pathway in v15. What are these steps; and why are they presented in this order?
 5. What are we defending against? What makes for a good defence? What is your less-than-30-second defence?
 6. This text ends with a return to Christians suffering (v16b-17). Why would it be God’s will for His children to suffer for doing good?
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