

**Text: 1 Pt 3.13**

We will cover just one verse tonight, 1 Pt 3.13. If you have a paragraph Bible, you will no doubt see that it starts a new paragraph.

However, it is really a transitional verse. It looks forward to the rest of 1 Peter and its central theme of suffering for the Christian faith. Yet it has roots in the preceding passage as well. The dual connections of this verse will make up a big part of our message.

Because this connection, we need to make a careful review.

- The call to submission (2.13)
  - ♦ Whether to kings or governors (2.13-14)
  - ♦ Whether to masters by slaves (2.18)
  - ♦ Whether to husbands by wives (3.1)
- Must follow the “elementary school lesson” set out for you by Christ (2.21)
- Is summed up by kindness of character (3.8)
- And reinforced by the necessities of Ps 34 (3.10-12)

The concluding thought from Psalm 34 is verse 12

1 Pt 3.12 “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.”

Verse 13 starts with an “and” in the Greek. The KJV translates this, but the NAU and many other versions do not.

“And” is very prominent in Hebrew writing – many, many verses in the OT begin “and...” However, I don’t think that is what Peter is doing here.

Verse 12 teaches “that the Lord will look with favor on the righteous, but he sets his face against those who practice evil.”<sup>1</sup>

- Certainly, this looks far into the future towards the coming judgement
- Yet, on average, this is true in this life as well

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 169.

The righteous tend to do well; the wicked tend to stumble in this life (despite some wicked who seem to prosper).

- Verse 10 also puts the message into the “here and now” — “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS”

Recall that there were “three necessities” for the one who desires a good life:

1. Must keep his tongue from evil (10)
2. Must turn from evil deeds to good deeds (11a)
3. Must zealously seek peace (11b)

The whole context, it seems to me, is mostly about living in this present age.

Then comes verse 13 and its beginning “and...”

“Peter’s question, almost an exclamation, ties directly to what he has just said about the fact that the Lord Himself is watching over those who are His, and is set against evildoers. The ‘And’ has the sense of ‘And therefore.’”<sup>2</sup>

Since we have this connection, the Lord’s disposition of good for the righteous and opposition to the evil, then what should we think of how to live in this life?

<sup>1</sup> Pt 3.13 ¶ Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?

**Proposition:** The sweet Christian spirit of submission, as taught by Peter, is your primary means of preventing future mistreatment.

## I. The possibility of harm

### A. The meaning of “harm”

1. The verb has the same root as the word “evil,” see v. 12
2. NT usage
  - a. The mistreatment of Israel by the Egyptians (Ac 7.6, 19)
  - b. Herod laying hands on some in the church to mistreat them [James, Peter] (Ac 12.1)

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Peter,” in *James, 1, 2 Peter, & Jude*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1992), 173.

- c. The Lord's promise to Paul of "no harm" in Corinth while he labored there (Ac 18.10)
- d. The attacks of Jews in Iconium against Paul and Barnabas (Ac 14.1-2)

"The verb denotes mistreatment and implies that real damage is done through such actions."<sup>3</sup>

## B. The term in context:

1. Future tense participle (very unusual construction)
2. According to commentators, we should just treat as a future verb:
  - a. Either "who will harm you?" — immediate sense, in this life
  - b. Or "who is able to harm you?" — ultimate sense, considering judgement to come (some of my commentators take it this way)
3. Hiebert takes it in the immediate sense because of v. 14

<sup>1</sup> Pt 3.14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. ...

- a. Our verse asks, "who will harm you?"
- b. The next verse implies "someone might harm you anyway"

In other words, there is a real possibility of harm *in this life*.  
What should we do about it?

## II. The preventative condition

... if you prove zealous for what is good

- A. The sentence is a conditional sentence with the "if ... then" reversed
  1. if you prove zealous for what is good
  2. Who is there to harm you
- B. The idea is that the Christian who is zealous for the good
  1. Provides no *cause* for harm

<sup>3</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 222.

2. Most likely will *experience no harm*

C. Thus, I call this “the preventative condition” — zeal for the good

1. Lit. “if of the good zealous you became”

2. When did we become zealous of the good?

One commentator: “When you became a Christian”

3. What is zeal for the good?

<sup>1 Pt 3.8</sup> ¶ To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

<sup>1 Pt 2.13</sup> ¶ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

<sup>1 Pt 2.18</sup> ¶ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

<sup>1 Pt 3.1</sup> ¶ In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

<sup>1 Pt 3.7</sup> ¶ You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

We can sum this up into the inner spiritual life we’ve talked about in this whole section. That’s what’s needed, no matter what relationship you are in.

### III. The present pursuit

A. How do we develop this kind of inner spiritual life? The Spiritual Disciplines

1. Bible reading

2. Prayer

3. Church attendance

#### 4. Memorization/meditation

Jas 4.8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

B. As I think about this, one of the reasons we still provoke harm is that we don't walk close enough to God

1. We do the Spiritual disciplines by rote, not by heart
2. We think too much in terms of self; not enough in terms of "Jesus and others"

We used to have an acronym: "Jesus, others, and you = JOY"

If you put "You" first, we have a mess. "YJO" or "YOJ"

#### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The sweet Christian spirit of submission, as taught by Peter, is your primary means of preventing future mistreatment.

Peter doesn't teach you will prevent all mistreatment, but what can people do to you if you are unfailingly sweet, gracious, kind, doing good to others?

If they harm you, they will earn greater judgement.

Our goal isn't "harm reduction" but that sweet fellowship with the Holy Spirit, our Lord, and our Father. But that fellowship gains so much for us in this life, and in the next.

We need to apply our hearts with earnestness to our prayers and Christian walk.