

Love the Brothers, Love the Others, Love the Blessing

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- [0 : 00] You'll have noticed when Jill started reading that we're about halfway through the letter. And Peter at this point says, finally. He's not just been an annoying preacher like a lot of us today are.
- But he's referring back to what he started in chapter 2 verse 11. When he was speaking of about to start giving different advice. And he says of how God's people are to live in different spheres of life.
- And he says here, finally. Because he's given us the last set of those instructions. He's spoken already about the need for us to submit to leadership.
- To those in authority. He then spoke about the way believers should conduct themselves in their workplace. Subjecting ourselves to those who we work under.
- And then we saw last week Peter speaking to husbands and to wives. And giving them instructions of how to be with each other. And how they should live. Not exhaustive instructions on marriage.
- [1 : 05] But hopefully ones that did cause us to stop and to think. And so this week we come in. Having tackled those different spheres of life that Peter brings up. We come to these final set of instructions.
- And this time he's not focusing himself on a particular group of people. But in fact this part here is for everyone. And to all those who are part of the church where this letter would be read.
- And by extension to all of us here. He says in verse 8. Finally all of you. And so in these verses Peter he gives to us amazingly helpful instructions.
- On how we are to live with each other. In terms of the church. The body of believers in here. And also with those around us. Even if we're facing hard times.
- Living in difficult times. He's pointing us here. To the need. To desire. To live holy lives. He's saying that because we've been saved.
- [2 : 09] We should have a desire. To live in a certain way. And that should be seen by those who are around us. As we think about these verses. We're going to work through the passage in three sections.
- And so first of all we're going to think about the need to love the brothers. Which is from verse 8. Love the brothers. This verse Peter is speaking about how Christians.
- The Christians he's writing to. Are to act with each other. And he gives five things in that verse. That ought to mark these Christians. That he's writing to. And how they should live.
- Which things that should be true of them. And we'll just comment briefly on them. And then think about the importance actually of them all collectively. He calls them you'll see.
- To have unity of mind. But he also ends verse 8. By calling them to have humble minds. And so those two things speaking of their minds. Are obviously very much linked.

- [3 : 11] This unity of mind. They have to be of one mind. And if they are of that same mind. Then there will be much fewer disagreements. About putting into practice.
- This godly living that they're called to. Is they want to do it together. In unity. It's not that they need to have all the exact same ideas in life. Or vote the same way.
- But it does mean that they're to be of one mind. They're to be collectively convinced. That living as Peter's instructed them here. Is the best way.
- And therefore as they have that unity of mind. They can encourage each other. As brothers and as sisters in Christ. To live these things out. Elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle Paul.
- He tells those that he writes to. That we have the mind of Christ. As believers. And so I think when we hold that in our heads.
- [4 : 08] Along with this unity of mind. There's an emphasis placed on selflessness. That this mind of Christ. This unity of mind. That should lead us to a life of selflessness.
- Because Christ himself. Exemplifies that. He put the needs of others. Before his own. We're not to act. Or to do things for individual gain.
- But we're to do all things. With that unity of mind. Seeking to serve. And love the brothers. First and foremost. That unity has to come. From being on the gospel. To unify them.
- What we believe. On the good news. Of Jesus. I think when we are. I'm solid on that together. I think that's what leads to this humble mind.
- That Peter ends that. This verse with. Such a key aspect. Of having that mind of Christ. To be humble. We see that in Philippians 2. It's a really well-known passage.
- [5 : 08] If you're not sure of it. You should look it up. Later today. But we see there. The apostle Paul. Writing of. Christ's humility. That example he set to us.
- And that is what we. Seek to put into practice. As we have this unity of mind. And as we have humble minds. We seek to mirror. The humility of Christ. To those around us.
- Humility is so important. But yet it's. Really hard at times. To be humble. Sometimes we can be. Stubborn people. Sometimes we. Struggle to see.
- When someone else. Makes a better suggestion. Than ourselves. And those moments. That's a lack of humility. That we see on our part. Being humble. It's not about.
- Being weak. A lot of people think that. But it's much more about. Having an accurate understanding. Accurate view. Of ourselves. Humility is an absence.
- [6 : 01] Of arrogance. An absence of. Pride. An absence of self-importance. And so therefore. The humble person. They desire to bless others.
- They desire to. Be. A blessing. To those around them. And if humility is a mindset. That we. Are united on. Then when people come.
- Into our church. On a Sunday morning. Should be noticeable. To them. That. We're different. From the world. Because we're seeking. To put into practice. Humility.
- Which is something. That is often not pursued. In our world today. Next. He calls them. To have sympathy. Towards each other. There's a deep sense.
- Of care needed. Between believers. When brothers or sisters. Are going through. Hard times. Peter is saying here. That. That in a sense. We should. We should feel the pain.
- [6 : 57] That they're going through. Knowing they're struggling. It should be hard. For us as well. As we feel that care. And sympathy. For them. Sympathy is not just. To be a feeling though.
- I think sympathy. Is something. That should lead. To action. Should be seen. In. Our actions. Should lead us. To want to help. Bear. Our brothers and sisters.

Burdens. With them. In any way that we can. Even if that's. Knowing they're going through. A hard time. And sending them a text. And offering to meet them. For a coffee. As a church.

We often seek. To give meals to people. Who are going through. Maybe tough times. Or a lot going on. That's us showing. And demonstrating. Our care. For those. In our fellowship.

Alistair Begg. On. These verses. He says something. Quite helpful. And he says. That we're to be. Sympathetic. But not. Pathetic.

[7 : 53] Which. Which. I think is. A really helpful point. I think we can often. Think of sympathy. Being something. That is. That is always. Really.

Gentle. But sometimes. To truly care. To truly have sympathy. For others. Is to be willing. To have those firm. Conversations.

Sometimes people. Can be their own. Worst enemies. And so to truly. Care for them. At times. Being gentle. Often isn't. The best way forward.

Sometimes. To really show. Love. And care. For others. We need to be. Firm. We need to be willing. To tell them. That actually. It's time. That they give themselves. A bit of a shake. To point out ways.

That they need to. Seek to start moving forward. I think being gentle. Is much easier. Than having those. Firm conversations. They're hard. They're easy. To shy away from. But if we truly.

[8 : 51] Love. And care. For each other. Then we'll be willing. To make ourselves. Vulnerable. And go. And have those. Tough conversations. And often. Those are the ones. That really lead people.

To realize. The things that need to change. In their lives. Next we see. The calling to have. Brotherly love. And a tender. Heart.

I think. And that is. Similar to the sympathy. The caring for each other. But it really adds. And reminds us. Of that family. The aspect. That we're called to. I love the brothers.

And sisters of course. But work hard. At it. It's not easy. And again. That love. That is between us. Should be something. That people. When they come in here. Can see.

And can feel. Because. We seek to. Make an effort. To show that love. To each other. When you apply. For.

[9 : 45] A job. There's often. A section. On the application form. And it will speak. Of the. The requirements. For the role. You're applying for. Things that are. Absolutely essential.

That you must. Possess. And then. There's usually. A section. Of things that are. That are desirable. Things that would be good. If you had. But it's. It's not too. Big a deal. If you don't.

And well. Paul in verse 8 here. He is. He isn't laying out. Any desirable. Traits for Christians. Any things that it would be good. If you had. But it. Don't worry too much about it.

And what he's given us here. Are essential parts. Of Christian. Living. These are to be things. That we desire. To live out. He's.

Laying out. Requirements. Really. He's saying. That if we've placed. Our trust in Christ. Then these qualities. They should be a natural work. Outworking it.

[10 : 40] In our lives. Not that we should be. Perfectly. Living all of them out. All of the time. We won't do that. Until we're in glory. But that we should have.

This desire. To always be growing. In these traits. And when we mess up. We should be repenting. For those times. I think a big question.

To ask of. The text here. Is why was it so important. For them. For them then. But also for us now. To ensure that this. Is how we conduct ourselves.

With each other. In the church. Why is it so important. That we love the brothers. And we have to remember. That the people.

Peter is writing to. They're going through. A hard time there. Persecution. Is. Kind of just starting out. And it's going to get. Much worse for them. Before it gets any better.

[11 : 34] And so. When we keep that in mind. The hard time they're going through. The suffering for the sake. Of righteousness. They need. The church to be.

A place of. Safety. The gathering of believers. It has to be. A refuge for them. From the world. It has to be a place.

Where they're united. Where they're demonstrating. Their love. For each other. Gathering together. A way. From the hardships. That they were facing.

It was to be an opportunity. For them to come in. And to. To exhale. And forget about. Everything that's going on. Out there. And join together. With one voice. And rejoice.

In who they are. In Christ. It's a heartbreaking thought. That if you were facing. Persecution. Like they were. There. And then you come.

[12 : 30] And you meet with the Lord's people. And there's no unity. There's arrogance. There's. There's. Unkindness. And yet that.

Although that thought. Is an awful thought. It's also a reality. That there's so many churches. Today. Where. Where that is true. People. In our fellowship.

Know that to be true. Where. Live in a broken world. World. Churches are made up. Of sinful people. So they aren't. Perfect. Places. I think we need to keep.

That danger. In mind. We can't lose sight. Of this. We have to work. Hard. At putting these things. In the practice. We don't want to be a church. That isn't a refuge.

From the world. We want a church. To be a place. That. That is different. From out there. A place where we see. These things. That Peter writes about. That lived out. On a Sunday.

[13 : 25] Church should be a place. We are excited. To come. We look forward. To. Coming. And meeting. Together. Although.

It is full of sinful people. In church. And although we do see. Things going wrong. At times. It doesn't mean that. We accept. Anything less. Than this environment. That Peter is calling us to.

To be lived out. In the church. This. This. It should be like a place. That. It is nothing like. The world. Out there. And. That doesn't just mean. That it should be.

Perfectly living these out. But it means that. When they are not lived out. We are honest. With each other. We are willing. To apologize. And. On the back of that. Those who.

We are apologizing to. Hopefully will be willing. To forgive. Us. For what we have done. Um. Yeah. We. We want to live these things out. But when we don't. And we make mistakes.

[14 : 23] and we have to seek to repent of those. This should be a place where forgiveness is seen in abundance. Some of us, I think, here are really great at putting these things into practice.

A real example to many of us in the church. But there's also, I imagine, some of us, as we look at these different qualities that are sat here this morning feeling convicted by God's word and recognizing the areas where we struggle in and include myself in that this week as I've wrestled with this passage.

It's certainly been convicting for me. And I think that sense of conviction, if you're feeling it, I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's healthy. And I think, hopefully, as we remain united of one mind, we can seek to pray for each other and seek to grow and move forward together as the Lord's people, seeking to make this place a real place of refuge where we as believers delight to come and rejoice together in who we are in Christ.

So that's love the brothers. A little longer than the next two points, in case you're starting to worry a little. So secondly, we see here, in verse nine, really focusing on, go from loving the brothers and now the call to love the others.

We read in verse nine, do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

[16:08] We'll come on to that blessing. And our third point, for now, we'll focus on how Peter is calling them to conduct themselves with those who are outwith the church.

For the first readers, this reality would have been difficult. People were treating them harshly. Persecution was growing. And what were they to do in the face of that?

They might have hoped that, Peter would tell them, that they could repay evil for evil. They could retaliate, maybe some way to the cruelty they were facing.

Or perhaps some of them just hoped that they would be told it was okay to just turn a blind eye to completely ignore the people, to avoid them, to have nothing to do with them whatsoever.

Act as though they didn't exist. Maybe it seems like a fairly reasonable way to deal with these people. And it almost starts to sound as though that's what Peter is going to tell them. He says, don't repay evil for evil.

[17:09] Or reviling for reviling. He's saying, don't react to what they're doing. Don't do it back to them. Might not sound easy, but it does sound manageable.

But that's not where Peter ends. He tells them what they're not to do, but then he tells them what they are supposed to do. He says, but on the contrary, bless.

Don't repay evil for evil. Repay evil by seeking to bless those who are being evil towards you. Demonstrate kindness to those that are treating you harshly.

seeking to bless these people. I'm sure it would have looked different depending on what exactly was going on. Sometimes I'm sure they would have had to avoid them.

But they were to have this heart posture which is focused on finding ways to bless those who are being evil to them.

[18:08] It was a big ask to truly have a desire to bless those who are being evil to you. It's not an easy thing. But that is the role that God's people are called to in this world.

that stems all the way back to Genesis. We see it written quite clearly in Genesis 22, 18. God tells Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Speaking partly, I think, of Jesus but also of all who will trust in Jesus. The descendants of Abraham are to bless the people around them. So it's a key function to be one of the Lord's people.

To be a blessing to others. Peter says here, don't treat them how they treat you. Show them kindness.

Be patient. Show them love. And to do that all keeping verse 8 in mind in unity as they all respond desiring the same thing to this persecution.

[19:11] They all respond wanting to bless those who are being harsh with them. They're going to be pointing these people to the Lord Jesus and what they do. I think part of blessing people we can often think it would be impossible probably in some of those instances to bless them to be a blessing.

And so I think we have to remember that actually a huge way to be a blessing to people is to pray for them. And so I think that's part of what Peter's calling them here to do. As they seek to bless them and how they're living how they're responding they're also praying for them.

It made me ask myself the question this week of what's our response when people are evil to us when people revile us maybe we're we're at school people are being cruel to us because we're Christians or there's people at work that we just really find annoying.

In those moments how do we seek to be a blessing? It's a really hard thing I think to do but I think starting with prayer is a really good place to start.

Not just praying for them but praying for yourself that God would give you that desire to want to be a blessing to those around us even those that we can't stand even those that are cruel.

[20 : 32] Pray for that desire and pray for them and I'm sure the Lord will use us to be a blessing in those different situations even if they are I'm hard.

Big thing to remember here it sounds like it doesn't sound like it it's a massive ask a massive thing to try and do to be a blessing to those that are cruel or harsh with us but we need to remember that God's not asking us here to do anything that we've not seen done by his son by our Lord Jesus.

Jesus himself in his time on this earth he set the perfect example of how to treat those that are evil towards us the perfect example of loving our enemies we could go to so many different places in the gospels and see different ways that Jesus puts us into practice so well but one of my favourite examples from his life is when he was on the cross and the very people that caused him to be nailed to that cross were the same people that while he was there he prayed for those well known words as he said Father forgive them for they do not know what they're doing just imagine that moment he's just been nailed to a piece of wood he's just been lifted up and he's now hanging from that tree in complete agony more pain than we could ever imagine and his reaction it's not to start shouting and cursing at those who just nailed him to that tree instead as he hangs there he feels sympathy for those that put him there and he prays that they would be forgiven and as well as seeking to bless them as he prayed for them the cross itself is of course the best example that we have of someone seeking to bless their enemies and that's because the Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that we ourselves are God's enemies because we've rejected him we've sinned against him we've rebelled against him we've made ourselves to be his enemies through how we've lived and rather than God then repaying our evil for evil or rather even than just leaving us to our own devices what he does is the complete opposite he wants to bless those who have rejected them he wants to bless his enemies and he does that by taking on flesh by going to the cross and dying in the place of his enemies and so when we keep that in mind when we see what he's done for us that call to bless those that are harsh with us

I think starts to seem much more fair much more realistic I'm not stood here naively saying this if this is all really easy for us to do but in times that we find it really hard that we're struggling to bless others let's remember the cross let's remember the lengths that Jesus went to in order to bless us his enemies and I think that will then help us to let what he has done spur us on to put that into practice in our own lives as we seek to bless those in the world so love the brothers love the others and now thirdly and finally love the blessing this is from verse 10 through 14 love the blessing the promise in this section is that if we adopt this Christ-like way of life loving each other loving others well in the world then we'll obtain a blessing and it's through recognizing this that we're then spurred on to love our enemies and to seek to bless them

I think there's two key parts of this blessing that I just want to flag up the most obvious part I think is that through living like this and desiring to live like this I think it offers all of us assurance that our salvation is genuine that we have been truly saved otherwise this way of life it would seem crazy to us and being more assured in our salvation I think is an incredible blessing for us as God's people today if we have real confidence in who we are in Christ and the reality that our future in his kingdom is certain and I think this makes verse 13 make so much sense verse 13 who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good of course people can cause harm to us in this life but compared to the riches of knowing

[25 : 59] Christ and the certainty of our future in that sense no one can harm us any harm caused in this life it will pale into complete insignificance on the day of the Lord Jesus when he comes to take us home and the other aspect of how we are blessed is the reminder that even in the midst of being faithful during suffering we'll obtain the blessing of nearness to Christ and the psalm that Peter quotes from in those verses I think helps make this point particularly in verse 12 where we read for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer that great reminder that for those of us who've been saved those of us who desire to live God's way his eyes are on us his ears are open to our prayers while we're struggling this promised blessing is that he's near to us he's watching us he's listening to us he's with us verse 10 speaks of seeing good days and when we remember these blessings that are ours that allows us to see good days even when we're being reviled even when we're suffering for the sake of righteousness because even on those days that are hard and difficult we always have these great truths of the gospel to cling onto to hold onto and the truth that

Christ is near with us as we struggle to help make this point of being able to have good days where we are joyful even in the midst of trials and in the midst of suffering Ed Clowney in his commentary he turns our attention to Paul and Silas in Acts 16 there we read that they're both in prison they're in shackles and yet they're there full of joy in the face of their suffering they begin to sing praises to God together in the prison rejoicing together they're able to have good days even while they're chained up in prison and as they rejoice in the Lord together they must have been an amazing blessing and encouragement to each other as brothers in Christ that must have warmed both of their hearts in that hard time as they sang together but they were also an amazing blessing to those who were around them we read in Acts 16 that the other prisoners they heard them sing in praises they must have listened to them and thought what do these guys have that we don't how can they be so joyful while we're chained up in here now as they lived out Christ's example so well they were also holding out another way of life to those that were there and while singing an earthquake came and the shackles fell off and the jailer whose job it was was to watch the prisoners he was going to kill himself because he thought that they'd all escaped and he would get the blame but they shouted to tell him not to kill himself don't harm yourself because they were all still there and then the jailer replied saying what must

I do to be saved and that day he trusted in Christ and was baptized along with his family and I think that section in act 16 I think it really helpfully summarizes a lot of what we've been thinking about this morning loving the brothers well as they loved each other and cared for each other in the midst of their suffering loving others as they set that Christ like example to those around them even the jailer who was making sure they stayed in jail and then loving the blessing they knew the way that they were blessed in Christ and that allowed them to rejoice even as they suffered and God used their faithfulness and their suffering to lead that jailer to Christ and so as we ourselves seek to put these things into practice as God's people for his glory our hope ought to be that in God's kindness he would encourage each of us by using us to lead others to place their trust in the

Lord Jesus us and to share in that certain hope that we each have for it is to this that we as his people have been called let's pray together let's pray Father God we give you thanks for this privilege to spend time looking at your word together we thank you for the apostle Peter for the care he had for your people and we thank you for these verses we looked at together this morning we recognize the challenge of them we also recognize that because you have called us to be your people that these are things that we should naturally desire to want to live out so would you help us to be people who do love and care well for each other would this be a real place where love is seen love is known love is felt help us to put the needs of each other before our own so that this place really would be a refuge from the world a place where we come and we exhale from the busyness and we can rejoice together in the

Lord Jesus and build each other up we pray that that would be the foundation that when we go out from here we remain unified and what we do and how we conduct ourselves and those around us help us to be a blessing to those in our lives whether they're people we got on well with people that we don't would you use us to point people to the Lord Jesus and we pray that in the midst of all that we're doing we would always remember how blessed we are in Christ and that now that he has called us as his people he promises that he's the one he'll never let us go and would you reaffirm that on our hearts and would you build us up in our faith that we might be people who live these things out faithfully and people who hold out the gospel to those you've placed in our lives we will you be good and faithful witnesses to you so we ask it for your glory and in Jesus name amen