

**Text: 1 Peter 3:13-4:6**

Righteous Behavior (Should) Result in a Peaceful Life.

*13Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? (1 Peter 3:13)*

Today's passage begins with a rhetorical question illustrating that if we live righteous lives, then we can expect no just condemnation by earthly authorities or other individuals. To live in this manner is honoring toward God, and ultimately fulfills the two greatest commandments.

**3For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; (Romans 13:3)**

**17Never pay back evil for evil to anyone Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:17-18)**

**1First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)**

**35One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38" This is the great and foremost commandment. 39" The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40" On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40)**

But, Believers Will Be Persecuted.

*14But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, 15but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 17For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. (1 Peter 3:14-17)*

However, we know that oftentimes Christians do suffer and are persecuted in spite of their righteous lives, because of their confession of Christ as Lord. To suffer righteous judgment because of sinful acts is NOT honoring to Christ, but to suffer for His Name's sake brings honor to Him, and identifies us as His servants.

**18" If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19" If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20" Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master ' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21" But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. (John 15:18-21)**

**14If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. (1 Peter 4:14)**

**10" Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11" Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12" Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12)**

Notice also that we are commanded to be ready at all times to "make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." The word for "make a defense" is in the Greek *apologia*, and is where we get our term *apologetics*. If we are going to be able to bear witness to God's salvation we must first, of course, be saved, but we must also be diligent students of His Word, so that we will be well-equipped to share the Truth with others.

**15**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

That said, if we are truly walking in the Spirit, we have a promise from Christ Himself that if we fall into condemnation or persecution for His Name the Holy Spirit will enable us to speak rightly.

**11**"When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:11)

Also note that we are commanded in even these worst of circumstances to carry ourselves in a humble, God-honoring manner. This in itself is a powerful act of witness that will silence many detractors. Conversely, if we as Christians do not live in a manner that is consistent with the faith we profess, we will only drive unbelievers further from Christ.

**16**"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Finally (for this section), learn to rejoice when you face trials and difficulties in life in spite of righteous living, because God uses these to build and mature your faith.

**2**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3**knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4**And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

A Presentation of the Gospel.

*18*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; (1 Peter 3:18)

I love how in these letters we find short presentations of the Gospel itself, which is what we have in this verse. Jesus Christ, the perfect and holy Incarnate Son of God, died. Why? To save us. From what? Hell. Why do we deserve Hell? Because we are *all* unjust—sinners! But thanks be to God, that all that call upon Him, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and as Savior, will be saved.

**23**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

**1**Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, **2**by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. **3**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4**and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

**21**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

**9**By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10**In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

**9**that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10**for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. **11**For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." **12**For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; **13**for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:9-13)

**5**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6**who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7**but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. **8**Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9**For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, **10**so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11**and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

God Does Bring Judgment Upon Unbelievers, so Examine Yourselves!

*19*in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, *20*who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. (1 Peter 3:19-20)

Some of you know that when I'm preparing a Sunday School lesson I spend more time reading than writing, always taking time to read at least two, and sometimes three or more commentaries on the passage to be studied, in addition to our teacher guides, etc. On these verses, I still don't know about the "proclamation to the spirits now in prison," as there are several opinions among theologians as to what that means, and who the "spirits" are, and I won't pretend to be knowledgeable enough to choose and recommend an opinion. Some contend that this means Christ preached to some already dead in sin (not the Old Testament saints) and allowed them to believe and be saved. This we know cannot be true.

**27**And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, **28**so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

Because of this, we must be diligent to confirm ourselves in the faith. What about "once saved, always saved?" It's absolutely true, but the Bible also commands that we actively question and examine ourselves to make sure that our lives give evidence of a genuine salvation experience. If we are not living in a manner that indicates the presence of and regeneration by the Holy Spirit in our lives, then we have reason to doubt whether or not we have truly believed unto salvation.

**15**"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16**"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? **17**"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. **18**"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **19**"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20**"So then, you will know them by their fruits. **21**"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **22**"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' **23**"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Matthew 7:15-23)

**5**Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, **6**and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, **7**and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8**For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9**For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. **10**Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11**for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Peter 1:5-11)

Peter brings up the example of Noah, who diligently built the ark and preached righteousness, yet only he and his family believed. Sadly, this is often the case today, when people are content to live as they always have, not acknowledging their accountability before God, or perhaps saying "I have plenty of time. I'm going to "sow some wild oats" and then I'll "get saved."" Besides making a mockery of the holiness of God, this attitude denies that each of us might die at any time, and that the Lord may return at any time. The time to believe and be saved is now—you might not have another chance!

**36**"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. **37**"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. **38**"For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, **39**and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:36-39)

**3**Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, **4**and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." **5**For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, **6**through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. **7**But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. **8**But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. **9**The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:3-9)

## Salvation by Baptism?

*21Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. (1 Peter 3:21-22)*

What? Baptism saves us? I thought it was just a symbol! Well, it is. We are, of course, commanded to be baptized as a means of identifying with and bearing witness to Christ's work.

**37Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38)**

**4Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, (Romans 6:4-5)**

Also, we have recorded that it is possible to be water baptized without being saved.

**9Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." 11And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. 12But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 13Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. 14Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21" You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22" Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23" For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." 24But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." (Acts 8:9-24)**

My question is, to what baptism is Peter referring? Water baptism, or something else? Do you remember what John the Baptist said about baptism into Jesus Christ?

**15Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, 16John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17" His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:15-17)**

All who believe in Christ receive not only the symbolic *water* baptism, but are, more importantly, baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. The first occurrence of this baptism was dramatic, powerful, and visibly apparent.

**1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)**

Notice, finally, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit *precedes* water baptism, occurring at the moment one believes. Water baptism is a symbolic act of obedience and we must certainly submit to it. But, it is the work—yea, the baptism—of the Holy Spirit that brings us to faith in Christ, resulting in salvation.

**34Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. 36" The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--37you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all**

**Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. 38" You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39" We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. 40" God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42" And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. 43" Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" 48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. (Acts 10:34-48)**

Christ is Our Example. Life Like Him, and For Him.

*1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. (1 Peter 4:1-3)*

Christ is our example. If He is truly our Lord, then we will seek to live in a manner that pleases Him. How do we know what pleases Him? By studying His Word!

**1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3)**

**1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)**

Remember, if we are truly saved, we will live in a manner that demonstrates the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. God can save anyone, no matter how grievous their sin, but the truly saved will not continue in a life of rampant sin.

**9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)**

“Such WERE some of you....”

Unbelievers Will Mock, But Believers Will Be Saved.

*4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God. (1 Peter 4:4-6)*

Yes, people will make fun of you if you live a life that is pleasing to Christ. It seems that, even in “polite” society, social events center around the consumption of copious amounts of alcohol, food, or both. The temptation to immoral sexual relationships and behaviors is presented all over the television, movies, and Internet. The assumption that truly intelligent, reasonable people will not believe in the God of the Bible is all over the academic and scientific worlds. None of this should be surprising—the Gospel only makes sense when the Holy Spirit reveals its truth to us.

**14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Corinthians 2:14)**

We should not fear the disdain of men—if you seek God, they will mock you. Instead, fear God. Worship Him. Serve Him. Make Him Lord, Master, and Savior. Remember: we are accountable to Him, and all that do not believe will be tormented forever.

**28"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)**

**12So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. (Romans 14:12)**

**11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)**

Verse 6 mentions those *“judged in the flesh as men.”* This is a reference to physical death, which is a result of sin. We were meant to live forever, but man’s sin brought death into the world.

**12Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned- (Romans 5:12)**

However, those that believe will continue to live in the spirit, and at the last day will be raised physically to spend eternity with Him in worship and service, in a world free of all the ravages of sin.

**10If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:10-11)**

**1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new " And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6Then He said to me, "It is done I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:1-8)**

This eternal, perfect life is free to all who call upon Jesus. Repent of your sin and confess Him as Lord and Savior, if you haven’t done so. If you have done so, always examine yourself and your faith to make sure you are truly in Christ, and thank and praise Him for an eternal life that you could never deserve and never earn, but receive by His grace, through faith.