

1 Peter 3:8-15

8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For, (Psalm 34:11-16)

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

11 He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?

14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.

15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Context: Letter From Apostle Peter

To Christians in northern and central Turkey

Written to strengthen them when under persecution.

Holy love in action. 1:13 Prepare you minds for action, be self-controlled; set out hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Obey, do not conform to evil desires, be holy, as God is holy.

Concluding a section on living the Christian life.

v8 'Finally' = either, to sum up; or bring to a climax by adding a crowning point. Not the end of the letter, just the section that began at 2:11.

2:11 As aliens and strangers in the world, abstain from sinful desires. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see our good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Brief, practical calls applicable to all of the Christians, including the categories singled out above: citizens, slaves, masters, wives, husbands. To all, just like the opening words:

Social: Christians relationships with one another.

Notice five words: I've called them, 'five gems'

In harmony, sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate, and humble.

Followed by v9 do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called, so that you may inherit a blessing.

in harmony = literally Of one mind, minding the same things. 'Mind' is crucial in living out the life of Christ. 'Let this mind be

Starter questions

What's before? How much after?
All of whom?

What is living in harmony
Sympathy?

How does love as brothers differ from other loves?

What does 'compassionate' add?
Why humble? And how do it?

What sorts of evil? What sort of payback?

Who calls, what inheritance?

What sort of blessing?

Where is the quote from?
Why?

Doesn't everybody want to love life and see good days?

Why single out speech?

How turn from evil?
Must you do this before the do good?

How seek + pursue peace? Why?

If God sees everything, surely his eyes and ears are always facing us?

What does it mean to have his face against us?

Well, actually, criminals trying to cover up the truth might!

Peter concedes we *might* suffer for doing what is right

In what sense can such a person be blessed?

What do those who harm them fear? Is fear their motive for accusing us?

How can we replace fear?

Is fearlessness possible only when we set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts?

in you which is also in Christ Jesus, who... humbled himself.. even to death on the cross.’
What does your mind dwell on? What do you feed it? When a person knows themselves a sinner, lost for ever, then saved by Christ, their mind is transformed Rom 12, renewed.
And they share that reality with all the rest of Christ’s people.

Harmony in music is the combination of separate musical notes sounded together, to produce chords and chord progressions that have a pleasing effect.

So, in a church meeting we may hold different opinions on some choice before us, but we handle the difference as brothers and sisters in Christ.

sympathetic,

feeling with, alongside. English word with Greek roots.

Concise Oxford Dictionary: Feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. Rejoicing with those that rejoice, weeping with those that weep.

It follows that if we are united by a common mind, we will be moved by the same spiritual emotions. When we Christians sing a rousing hymn, it is not merely the music but the words that rouse us.

Words that point us to Christ. When I think that God, his son not sparing, sent him to die.. that on the cross my burden gladly bearing he bled and died to take away my sin, *then* sings my soul How great thou art.

It is having the mind of Christ that thrills us and drives us to worship.

In sympathy = in harmony

Guitar string can vibrate in sympathy with another of the same pitch. (this was demonstrated in the talk to the children, leading in to a version of Lord, Make me an instrument

love as brothers,

how does this differ from other loves? The Greeks had four different words where English has only one.

Books, magazines, TV and films go overboard to portray erotic love, because that’s what sells their product. In fiction, they seem to get away with all sorts of unreality. Brotherly love, philadelphia, has feeling, yes, but it is utterly practical . Less passionate, more caring?

In old age, a man who once loved passionately his now forgetful wife may well be visiting her daily in the nursing home, caring for her, lifting food to her mouth, washing and dressing her, telling her stories, smiling to her, looking into her eyes, eyes that no longer recognize him. They once felt erotic love, but this steadfast caring is just as certainly love.

Christians are aware that Christ has died for them, and through faith they are now united to him. That makes all of us share in his sonship of God. We are fellow-members of God’s family. No wonder brotherly love should be constantly evident. The God-component is what gives this word its context and drive.

be compassionate,

what does this add to sympathetic? English word with Latin root, also meaning ‘feeling with’.

Concise Oxford Dictionary: sympathetic pity and concern for sufferings or misfortunes of others.

In my mind (I could be wrong) sympathy can refer to a person weeping tears as you do; compassion is when they bring you a hanky and a cup of tea. I think of the former as a feeling, and the latter as more likely to involve action.

humble

Anonymous : Humility is remaining teachable.

Anon: The person who looks up to God rarely looks down on people.

Anon: Humility is like underwear. We should all have it but not let it show!

J John: Humility is to receive praise and to pass it on to God untouched.

Martin Luther: God created the world out of nothing, and as long as we are nothing, he can make something out of us.

And how to do it?

Romans 12:3 Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with

sober judgement.

So, five 'gems' that describe the attitudes to be seen within the Christian family.

Then, having spoken of Christian relations *within* the fellowship, Peter turns his attention to reacting to people who are unfriendly towards us.

Again in Romans 12, Paul, just like Peter here, writes about blessing those who persecute you, not repaying evil for evil.

What sorts of evil? What sort of payback?

Who calls, what inheritance?

What sort of blessing?

quote from Psalm 34 -

Doesn't everybody want to love life and see good days?

Well, if we want to enjoy life and find God's help rather than opposition, we need actively to reject evil and consciously to choose good.

Why single out speech?

How turn from evil? Must you do this before you do good? Or are they two sides of the same coin? Can't do one without other?

How seek + pursue peace? Why?

If God sees everything, surely his eyes and ears are always facing us? What does it mean to have his face against us?

13 'Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?' Well, actually, criminals trying to cover up the truth might! People embarrassed by our choice of good over evil might.

We think this letter was written in the time of Nero, about 60AD. Every chapter mentions coping with suffering, usually unfair suffering.

Peter concedes we *might* suffer for doing what is right

In what sense can such a person be blessed?

What do those who harm them fear? Is fear their motive for accusing us?

How can we replace fear?

Is fearlessness possible only when we set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts?

Fresh out of Business school, a young man answered an advertisement for an accountant. He was interviewed by a very stressed man who ran a small business that he had started himself.

'I need someone with an accounting degree,' the man said, 'but mainly, I am looking for someone to do my worrying for me.'

'Excuse me?' said the accountant.

'I worry about a lot of things,' said the man, 'but I don't want to have to worry about money. Your job will be to take all the money worries off my back.'

'I see,' said the young man, 'and how much does the job pay?'

'I'll start you at 60 thousand.'

'£60,000!' exclaimed the accountant; 'How can such a small business afford a sum like that?'

'That,' replied the owner, 'is your first worry!'

People who don't know God often worry about money, or not having enough. In Scotland today, many people are wondering how the money is going to work out.

Ps 34 again: The Lord watches over the righteous... Jesus, Matthew 6: Those who make first priority to find God's will so they can obey him as king, who long to do what is right as desperately as a person who hungers and thirsts for food and drink...