

HOLDING ON IN SUFFERING

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.” CS Lewis

Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble, not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.

For the one who wants to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, and let him turn away from evil and do what is good. Let him seek peace and pursue it, because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil.

Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. (1 Peter 3:8-22)

1. In your heart, set Christ as Lord.
...in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy... (1 Peter 3:15)

Do not call everything a conspiracy that these people say is a conspiracy. Do not fear what they fear; do not be terrified. You are to regard only the Lord of Armies as holy. Only he should be feared; only he should be held in awe. (Isaiah 8:12-13)

2. In your speech, be gentle.
...ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and reverence... (1 Peter 3:15-16)

3. In your mind, keep a clear conscience.
...keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:16)

4. In your actions, do good.
For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:17)

Reflection Question:

Describe a time you felt hopeless. What did you learn about yourself and God through that time?

Scripture from the CSB unless noted.