

The True Beauty of the Child of God

I Peter 3:8-12

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NIV)

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

¹⁰ For, (from PSALM 34:12-16)

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good; they 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.”

Prayer

In this passage of scripture, Peter is telling us of the characteristics of a genuine believer.

When we look at these traits, all of us would no doubt agree that these are traits that we SHOULD have as a Christian. But, I would suggest that these are not traits that we SHOULD live by, they are traits that we MUST live by if we are genuine Children of God.

Many "self-professing" Christians are self-deceived about their spiritual condition and of their eternal destiny. That is why we study God's Word.

Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB)

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.’

What a scary situation. There will be people who THINK they are working for the Lord who will not be saved. They are self-deceived. It appears that although they thought they were doing the Lord's work, they were actually practicing lawlessness.

How can we KNOW that we have a genuine faith?

Through this epistle, Peter has told us how a person with a genuine faith will react to situations around him. He tells us, as Christians,

- How to respond to those in authority in 2:13-17.

- He tells the servant how to respond to their masters in 2:18-25.
- He tells the Christian wives how to respond to their unbelieving husbands in 3:1-6.
- He tells the husband how to treat their wives in 3:7.
- He tells the wives how to have a spirit of true beauty through submission. This actually applies to ALL Christians in our submission to God and mankind.

1 Peter 3:4 (NASB)

⁴ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Now He tells us how we should treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Let's look at his exhortation and see just "How We Can Be a Beautiful Person for God".

A submissive spirit makes a beautiful person for God just as a submissive spirit makes a wife beautiful to her husband.

Let us learn the traits that are "*precious in the sight of God*".

Peter now wants to summarize all that he has taught us. He begins with something that is vitally important to the success of any local church...

BODY:

I. THERE IS TO BE UNITY IN THE CHURCH.

1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded,

Being like-minded is not something that happens only when others agree with you! We are not all going to agree on everything all of the time. We have differing opinions, different likes and dislikes and that is perfectly fine. Peter is not saying that we are required to agree on everything. He is calling for unity, not uniformity. The only way for us to achieve "like-mindedness" is for us to all have the same focus... and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said,

Philippians 2:3-7 (NASB)

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 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.

- We must have the same purpose,
- We must have the same focus,
- We must have the same goal.

And when we do, there is no limit to what God can do in, with, and through us. This like-mindedness contributed to the success of the early church.

God turned this world upside down with a small group of people! The reason that the early church could be used in such a mighty way was the fact that they had unity!!! - Jesus prayed that His followers would have unity -

John 17:20-21 (NASB)

20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

In order for us to reach a place of unity we must submit to the will of the Father. His will must be our goal and His word must be our guide...

THEN we will have the unity that is required of Christ's church.

It is possible to disagree on personal preferences and still have unity in the church. But it is only possible when our primary focus is on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many churches that are filled with conflict and discord. And the reason is that they have lost their focus. Somewhere along the way the Church became about them...

- they began to focus on their preferences.
- they began to focus on their wants.
- they began to focus on their likes and dislikes.
- they began to focus on what furniture should be in the front of the church.
- they began to focus on what color of paint should be used on the walls.
- they began to focus on which carpet to put down.

The membership lost sight of the true mission and purpose of the church. If we focus on anything other than Jesus, TROUBLE IS COMING!!

It is my prayer that we see how blessed we are and take advantage of what God has given us. Let us put aside our differences and personal preferences. Let us focus on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We must join together in unity with the purpose of carrying out the mission that has been given to us by our Lord and Savior!

May we observe the command of 1 Peter 3:8 and "be likeminded".

We also see in this verse that:

II. THERE IS TO BE SYMPATHY IN THE CHURCH

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NIV)

be sympathetic,

This literally means that we are to sympathize with each other. The Greek word used here means to "suffer with someone".

Paul says

Romans 12:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

When our brother or sister has reason to rejoice, we should rejoice with them. And when they are hurting we hurt with them. As the church we are one body, and when one member of that body hurts the whole body hurts. A church body is a family. We are to be more concerned with the needs of our brothers and sisters than we are with our own needs.

Do you care when a brother or sister is hurting? Do you want to make things better? Do you search for words that will provide comfort and encouragement? Sometimes there simply are no words that can heal the hurt. Even in those times your presence will go a long way in helping those who are distressed.

ILLUSTRATION:

One day a woman's little girl arrived home late after school. The mother was so angry that she started to yell at her. However, after a few moments, she suddenly stopped and asked: "Why were you late anyway?" The daughter replied: "Because I had to help another girl who was in trouble." "Well, what did you do to help her?" The daughter replied: "Oh, I sat down next to her and helped her cry."

Peter told us in I Pet. 2:21 that Christ "**left you an example for you to follow in His steps,**"

When we have sympathy toward others we are exhibiting one of the great traits of our Savior.

Matthew 9:36 (NASB)

³⁶ Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

May we have compassion for the brethren.

This leads us to the next trait that should be found in the Church:

III. THERE IS TO BE BROTHERLY LOVE IN THE CHURCH.

1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

love one another,

The Greek word used here is (philadelphos - fil-ad'-el-fos) this speaks of love for the brethren. This is why Philadelphia is called the "city of brotherly love".

1 Corinthians 13 (NASB)

13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have

love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Why is love the greatest? Because **faith** and **hope** will no longer be necessary when Christ returns because He will be with us, but LOVE will last forever. We are to love our neighbors and our Christian brothers and sisters just as Christ has loved us.

Remember what Jesus said about love?

Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)

³⁷ And 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.'

It our Savior's will for us to love everyone. We are to love:

- Our family,
- Our friends,
- Our co-workers,
- The people we run into at the store,
- The people who live next door.

We are commanded to love THEM ALL!

Jesus didn't say "love those who are easy to love". Jesus said "Love you neighbor as yourself"!

Some of the most hateful people I know are "professing Christians". They will say "I love God but I just hate so and so". It is amazing to hear them attempt to justify their hate for someone else.

The bible makes it very clear...

1 John 4:20 (NASB)

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Peter continues with another trait.

IV. THERE IS TO BE COMPASSION IN THE CHURCH.

1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

be compassionate

Peter says "be compassionate". The word here literally means to be tenderhearted. The idea here is that we should have compassion for those in need. We are not just to notice that someone is hurting. We are not just supposed to see the need. We should care enough to meet the needs of others.

Consider the story of the Good Samaritan: There was a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was attacked, beaten, stripped and left for dead on the side of the road. A **priest** came along, saw him and walked by on the other side of the road. A **Levite** came along, walked over to the man and looked at his condition and just left him there. Then a **Samaritan** came along put ointment on his wounds, bound them up, put him on his donkey and took him to an inn and cared for him. Notice that the religious **men** saw the need. But they did not have time... or they refused to take the time to help this man. Then comes the Samaritan who was tenderhearted and compassionate and he met the needs of this man who was left for dead.

There are hurting people everywhere we go. There are even hurting people inside the church. Will you have a tender heart? Will you have enough compassion to help others in their time of need???? It is easy to make excuses. It is easy to ignore people and their problems. It is easy to get so consumed with "life" that you don't even notice the problems. But God has given us eyes to see, ears to listen, hearts to care, and hands ready to reach out to those who are wounded. May we use what God has given us to minister to those in need!

Not only are we to have a tender heart and possess compassion, we also see that:

V. THERE IS TO BE HUMILITY IN THE CHURCH.

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NIV)

humble.

As Christians we are to maintain a humble attitude. We must follow the example of Christ and be humble servants. We must do what it takes to help a brother in need, we are to be courteous toward all men.

- Whether they are rich or poor,
- Whether they are polite or rude,
- Whether they are brethren or pagans,
- Whether you consider them superior or inferior to you

We must be courteous!

It is usually not difficult to show "courtesy" to a brother or sister in Christ. We have the common bond of Jesus. We serve together, pray together, study together, and worship

together. We have a friendship and a faith family relationship. And in most instances we treat each other with kindness.

- But how do you treat people that you don't know?
- How do you treat that waitress who is not giving you the service that you would like.
- How do you treat the cashier when the item rings up the wrong price or the debit card reader is not working?
- How do you treat people that come up to you asking for money?
- How do we treat people who come into this church and don't look like us?
- How do you treat those of another race or culture or even another religion?
- How do you treat those who obviously don't know Christ?

Are you as friendly and courteous to these people as you are those who attend your Sunday School class?

If not...You must!!

VI. THERE IS TO BE MERCY IN THE CHURCH.

1 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

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

Nowhere in the bible are we authorized to only treat people well who are nice to us! Peter says that we are not justified in repaying evil with evil. We are not to insult people when they insult us. In fact we are to do the direct opposite. God has us to bless those that harm us And in return He will bless us!

Jesus covered this in His sermon on the mount -

Matthew 5:38-45 (NASB)

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. ⁴¹ Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

Christ did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. Thus many of the laws from the Old Testament are now fulfilled and are no longer binding upon our spiritual life.

When someone harms us, curses us, or persecutes us, our response should be to Serve them, Pray for them, be kind to them, and forgive them. The fact that we do not take vengeance on those who abuse us, is what separates us as Christians.

God showed us mercy, He did not give us what we truly deserve. What we deserve as sinners is eternal separation from God. But God showed mercy on us by sending His Son to die on the cross for our sins and through His grace make us righteous and sinless before God. We are to show that same kind of mercy toward our enemies. Love them even when they do not deserve the love.

Peter then uses Psalm 34:12-16 to reemphasize his point just as we do when we study God's Word.

1 Peter 3:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ For, (from PSALM 34:12-16)

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good; they 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.”

CONCLUSION:

Do you have the true beauty that Peter refers to?

1 Peter 3:4 (NASB)

⁴ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

These are not traits that you **SHOULD** have, they are attributes that we **MUST** have! Do you possess these attributes?

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NIV)

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Or has the Holy Spirit convicted you about one or more of these areas in your life? Turn to the Lord and allow Him to help you with those areas.

John 10:27-28 (NASB)

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

If **you** are one of His sheep, **you** will hear his commands and follow them. **We** follow Christ because He first loved us and taught us how to live. When **you** live according to His plan, **you** will **KNOW** that you are one of His sheep and you will receive the blessing of eternal life with Him!

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God be with You.