

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson #5 “Servants Under Pressure”

1 Peter Chapter 3:8-22

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Introduction:

In thinking about today’s lesson. I spent some time thinking about the pressures that we as Christians endure from day to day as life goes on. And thinking about these pressures I decided to goggle the word “Pressure”. I found a video presentation on You-tube with David Bowie singing his song “Under Pressure”. This video shows all the bad things that can happen under pressure.

Well, Pressure when allowed to get out of control is destructive:

Arguments turn into fights
Nations become Violent
Child run away home
Car bombs kill innocent people
Businesses suffer and Unemployment results
Political pressure people starve to death
Stock market fail
Hatred
Suicide

*Pressure in a persons life can be very destructive

*Like a Kettle blowing its lid off....

But, properly channeled:.....pressure can be productive

Locomotive
Rocket lift off
Coal becomes a diamond
Pressure correctly applied can inflate tires
Fix joint and muscle pains
Can lead to Repentance

Transitional Statement:

Today, I want to begin with the invitation which simply a question. How do you respond under pressure? When you get squeezed do you keep your focus on God and keep His kingdom purposes in mind?..... or does your lid tend to blow off.

Lesson:

I. Christians should be working together for God's will

1 Peter 3:8

"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

A. First Peter says to *"To Sum up"* so let's add up what he has said.

1. Christians are born again to a living hope 1:3
2. Christians birth is of imperishable seed 1:23
3. Christians are living stones being built into the house of God 2:5
4. Christians are a chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. 2:9
5. Christians are aware of God's structure and purposes in Government, the work place and the home. 2:13 – 3:7

B. When we add up all these things we realize that we have a great responsibility. Here, God points to that responsibility and says **we need to be 5 things for sure:**

1. Are to be Harmonious...

- "Like minded" Sharing the same thoughts and attitudes

- Like a crank shaft on a car helps all the pistons work together

- Harmony with the will of God

- Some resist harmony.....leave me alone and let me do my thing

2. Are to be Sympathetic

- Suffering or feeling with another.....compassion

- Sympathy depends on the willingness to forget self and identify with the hurts of another person.

- Sympathy is action..... it is much more than saying "Oh, what a sad situation"

3. Are to be Brotherly

- Philadelphos....fond of one's brethren

- Full of brotherly love

4. Are to be Kindhearted

- "Tender hearted"

-Compassionate

-Ephesians 4:32

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other,
just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5. And we are to be Humble in spirit

-“Humble minded”

-Not placing ourselves over anyone else. But humbly girding ourselves
with a towel and be willing to wash each others feet.

-Jesus says in Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.”

6. Its about Pulling together Church!

7. For the Lord’s Sake 2:13

*Focusing our pressures in a productive way

II. Christians should not respond in ungodly ways

1 Peter 3:9a

“ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, ...”

A. In learning CPR we were taught when you come upon a injured person to nudge them and say “can you hear me I am the first responder”. If they can’t hear you and they can’t respond and they are not breathing then it is time to begin CPR because they are dead. But if you come up to someone who is only injured most of the time they don’t know what they need because of the trauma of the situation around them. Often times, when a person is hurt, they can be belligerent and adverse even to the point of being hateful.

B. People who are not spiritually well can be the exact same way. They can lash out at us because they feel the stress of an ungodly life. But if we lash back at them that would be like a doctor coming in to find a patient with a broken leg and pulling out a gun to shoot that person to put them out of their misery.....

C. We need to treat other people the way we want to be treated.

Matthew 7:12The golden rule

*“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you,
for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

D. Basically we can’t get on the same level as the sick person or we can’t help them.

-Its like rescue techniques for confined spaces. You never go into a confined space to rescue someone until help arrives because if there is a gas in that space and you go into to rescue someone you'll end up needing rescuing yourself.

* Not blowing our tops.....but keep out cool

E. Jesus says it this way.

-Matthew 5:38-39

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."

III. On the other hand there are some things the Christian ought to be:

1 Peter 3:9b

"...but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

A. We are suppose to blessings givers

1. That is to ask gracious things from God for others
2. Often times we want peoples resume, we want to see that they deserve blessings before we give them....

-It's the cooperate mark of our society.

B. Paul says in Romans 12:14

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

C. But, Jesus takes us a step further in Matthew 5:44

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,"

*i.e. seek their good....be concerned for their salvation

IV. Then Peter directs Christians to pursue peace

-He starts with a quote from a Psalm 34:12-16 that King David wrote after faking insanity before King Abimelech to save his own hide.

1 Peter 3:10-12

10 "For, THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS,

-Obviously aspirations of any Christians....right?

MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

-This is Imperative in the GreekA MUST

-And when we consider the power of the tongue in James 3:1-12

-Like a bridle can direct a horse

-Like a rudder can direct a ship

-Like a spark can set a whole forest on fire

*Tongue may be small but it has much power

*Power for Good or Bad

*I think King David is saying that we should Trust in God in all situations

-And if we are having problems controlling the things coming out of our mouths we should check our hearts.

-Jesus tells us in Matt 12:34

“...Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks”

11 "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD;

-If our desire is for good days we must move and have direction that is away from evil

-But, not just away from evil but toward what is right

-James 4:17

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

-Isn't it true in our society that a we should be bold, and brave and willing to fight to the death for what we believes in. And we who are peaceful and unwilling to engage in fighting are considered to be wimpy.

-Well there is a time to fight to the death like Jesus did on the cross but in bringing people to Christ its all about peace.

-After all salvation is about making peace with God,

-And Jesus is not called the Prince of Peace for nothing. Isa 9:6

-Jesus is the one that can lift his hands to heaven and calm the storms in peoples life and He is the one that holds the peace that surpasses all understanding in the palm of His hand.

-And its only through Jesus that anyone can come to the father. John 14:6

-So Christians need to be promoters of peace because it is the avenue to heaven.

-Jesus puts it this way

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

-So we must not merely seek it but Pursue it

-Go after it with all our hearts!.....For the Lord’s Sake

*12 "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS,
AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER,*

-This is what Blake talked about on Wednesday night.....Understanding that God is watching and he attends our prayers.

-Prayer of the righteous can accomplish a lot o things James 5:16

BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."

V. Christians should not forget the opportunities in suffering

1 Peter 3:13-17

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?

-If you really think about it who can stand against the children of God?

-Paul says in Romans 8:31

“... If God is for us, who is against us?”

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.

-Even if your head gets chopped off

-Even if you get thrown into a lions den

-Even if your sawn into....

-Or ridiculed to the nth degree at work

*It doesn’t matter your Blessed!

*AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, 15 but sanctify
Christ as Lord in your hearts,*

-Our movement in this life shouldn’t be from fear. Fear causes people to act strange and make crazy decisions.

-Our lives should be centered around Christ and our trust should be in Him

Peter says:

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;

-So we should be ready to give reasons for our hope

-2 Timothy 4:2

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

-2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

-This passage doesn't say to tell people about your hope

-Not to just give testimony....here is what God has done in my life.

While that is great.....Helping people to place their faith in God doesn't come from a 2nd hand stories but a from first hand discovery in God's word Rom 10:17

-Paul goes on to point this out in Romans 1:16

16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for **it** is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...”

-Here Peter says to give reasons for ...In other words pick up our bible and be ready to show people why we believe.

-Here is why I believe in God

-Here is why I believe the bible is the word of God

-Here is why I believe heaven exists

-Here is why I believe Jesus is the son of God

-But Peter adds with gentleness and reverence

-This points to the fact that we are not just defending our positions but that we are trying to save souls.

Peter says:

16 and 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.

-When he says conscience he is talking about our understanding and awareness of God's workings in our lives. And we shouldn't loose our understanding or awareness of the greater plan of God in times of pressure and suffering, because maintaining the right focus can and will shame those who are hurting us with the potential of bringing them to Christ.

17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

-Here I think of what Paul says in Romans 8:28

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

-He doesn't say all things will go good for us, but that He will work all things for good.....**To the eternal good of His purpose.**

-Be attitude blessed are

*Church there are Opportunities under pressure.....

VI. Christ' evangelistic example in suffering.

1 Peter 3:18-22

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; 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. 21 Corresponding 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, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

A. Christ set the supreme example in face of suffering.

-He was sinless but willingly took He took on our sins

*So that He might bring us to God.

*So that God's purpose would be fulfilled

B. He suffered the ultimate price in the physical flesh for us.

C. But in the spirit

1. He preached through Noah to those wicked people of that generation trying to get them to turn to God. But only eight listened and were saved.
2. Ironically, the water that killed them all was also the water that lifted the ark up out of the muck and mire of this world and saved Noah and his family.

-The Gospel is the same it will save you if your obedient to it or condemn you if your not.

D. In this great suffering of Jesus the father took care of Him and raised Him from the dead and placed Him at His right hand subjecting everything to Him.

-And God will take care of us in our suffering as well.

E. The point here is that we as Christians are alive in the Spirit also

-And in the Spirit our task is the same as Jesus' ...Preaching the gospel to the lost

*Even if many folks turn their heads and won't listen.

Conclusion:

So,

How do you respond under pressure? When you get squeezed do you keep your focus on God and keep His kingdom purposes in mind?..... or does your lid tend to blow off.