

Happy Are Ye

I Peter 3:8-17

- God gives us eternal joy, especially as we consider our eternal destiny
- However, God also wants us to enjoy life in this world as well. When we do it God's way, we can love and enjoy this life, see good days in this world and also await the future blessings in Heaven
- There are many unhappy people in this world!
- We have to first recognize that often times we bring upon unhappiness on ourselves with wrong, sinful choices. There are consequences to sin!
- Also, we must recognize that we can endure bad circumstances and be happy in the Lord!- v. 14

I. Principles to enjoy life- v.8-11

a. V. 10- Peter is quoting Psalm 34:12-16

b. A plea for unity- v. 8-9

- i. One mind- likeminded
- ii. David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity..." Psalm 133
- iii. The NT gives many commands for unity in the church- I Cor. 1:10
- iv. A church cannot properly function without unity. Unity does not mean monotony or sameness- it means harmony and agreement. Uniformity is not the goal, unity is- we will not always see eye-to-eye on everything.
- v. "In fundamentals, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in everything, love"
- vi. Love and compassion are vital
- vii. Part of happiness is getting along with others- when we fail in this regard it's no surprise that it is hard to be happy!

c. Be courteous- considerate. It's good to put on other people's shoes sometimes!
(Reverse roles)

- d. V. 9-No desire for revenge- Do you secretly get happy when a brother/sister falls? Don't return evil for evil, but give a blessing instead! Try praying! Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."
 - e. V. 9- Being a blessing allows you to inherit MORE blessings- channels of blessings
 - f. Enjoying life starts with turning away from evil, and pursuing peace- v. 10-11
- II. God's provisions- v. 12-13
- a. V. 12 The Lord looks with approval on those who act righteously, and is attentive to their prayers
 - b. We want God's presence among us, not against us!
 - c. V. 13- paradox? What about martyrs? I read a story about a pagan king who demanded that a Christian recant his faith in Christ. The Christian refused to deny Christ, and so the king started threatening him.
 - i. "If you do not give up your faith in Christ, I will banish you!"
 - ii. "But you cannot banish me from Christ, for He said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'"
 - iii. "Then I will confiscate your property!"
 - iv. "My treasure is laid up in heaven. It is safe there."
 - v. "Then I will kill you!"
 - vi. "Then I will go straight to heaven to be with my Lord. 'We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.'" The King gave up, exasperated.
- III. Happiness even in suffering- v. 14-17
- a. 1Pe 3:13-17- How to handle it when our good is returned with evil.
 - b. But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed: Peter reminds us that there is even a blessing for us when we suffer for righteousness' sake. God will care for us, especially when we suffer unjustly- illustr: Joseph

- c. V. 15- Sanctify the Lord- reverence the Lord- make Him Lord in your heart and over your entire life
- d. "The simple meaning of the injunction is that at the very centre of life there is to be one Lord, and that is Christ.... Other lords are permitted to invade the sanctuary of the heart, and to exercise dominion over us. Our own selfish desires, the opinion of others, worldly wisdom, the pressure of circumstances, these and many other lords command us, and we turn away our simple and complete allegiance to our one Lord." (Morgan)
- e. Be ready (in persecution/suffering)- Apologetics- the defense of the Faith. Arguing cannot win someone to Christ, but we can give reasons for our faith!
- f. When our good is returned with evil, will prove others wrong in their opinions about us and it will make them ashamed for speaking against our godly lives.

Conclusion:

- Happy are ye- Matt 5:10-12
- Foxe's Book of Martyrs gives many accounts of Christian martyrs burned at the stake who rejoiced in the flames.
- When Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were burnt at the stake by the command of Bloody Mary, the Roman Catholic queen of England, outside Balliol College, Oxford on October 16, 1555, Latimer said to his friend Ridley, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, play the man; We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Those were his last words.
- When Stephen was being stoned to death by the angry mob, he saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).
- And his last words were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).
- V. 17- None of us want to suffer. But if we must, may it be for doing good and not for doing evil.