

Date: 23.08.2020

Time: 6pm

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 61:1-5

Reading: 1 Peter 3

Text: 1 Peter 3:9-17

Outline:

- a) Introduction
 - 1. Biblical imperatives
 - 2. Biblical principles
 - 3. Biblical arguments
 - 4. Biblical apologetics

- **Introduction**

Sola scriptura was a motto of the reformers. The Bible is vital to us. It tells us what God has done for us and what is required of us. We're to have dependence on the Bible.

1) **Biblical imperatives**

Do not respond to evil: (v. 9) We're not to respond to evil with evil. By nature, when we're treated badly, our tendency is to respond in the same way – our disposition is to seek our own justice through revenge. This happens across the world. We're not to behave this way as Christians towards other believers or the world. We're not to respond to evil with evil. This goes against our nature and is only possible by God's enabling. We're to respond with good.

Do bless: (v. 9) It's already difficult not to seek revenge, but we're also called to seek the good of those who have done wrong. We're to pray for them, do good to them, wish them well – it's easy to say this, difficult to put into practice.

Do not be afraid: (v. 14) We're to have no fear of those who cause our suffering. We're not to be afraid of those who can hurt you. Don't fear what man can do to you. Often we seek revenge to protect ourselves and to obtain respect – but we're not to be troubled or fearful of those who can hurt us. Some are bold, some are fearful of people. We're called not to fear. We've been delivered from what is really fearful (condemnation of our sins).

Do honour Christ: (v. 15) Don't be afraid of men. Don't seek revenge. Bless those who hurt you. Honour Christ. The One who makes us strong is Christ. If we acknowledge that Christ is the Lord, this will deliver us from fear of man. If we fear God, we won't fear man. We're to focus and fix our eyes on Jesus. We're to give Him the place He deserves.

2) Biblical principles

Peter gives a basis for what's commanded.

The Psalms: (vv. 10-12) Peter quotes from Psalm 34 – this is a biblical principle, not just Peter's convictions. The Psalms teach us to love our enemies and ask God to do what is right, putting enemies in God's hands rather than seeking own revenge. The law of God is that you don't seek revenge, but leave things in God's hands (we see this in Deuteronomy and Exodus). We're to respond to the evil of our enemies by doing good to them.

The sermon of the mount: We see from this that we're not to respond to evil with evil. Loving your enemy is not just in the Old Testament, or just in the New Testament – it's in the whole of scripture.

The writings of Paul: In Romans 12, Paul shares that from Deuteronomy, we're to put everything into the hands of God.

The example of Christ: Jesus did not revile, or abuse those who mocked and abused Him. Jesus prayed for those who mocked Him. We're to pray for the salvation of those who hurt us.

3) Biblical arguments

God's word: (vv. 10-12) The Bible teaches that we're to turn from what's evil and do good – Peter argues that this is not a new command, but in the Bible. This is what God desires. This is God's authority that must be obeyed.

God's calling: (vv. 9-12) God has called us to this; to be a blessing to others and to do good to them.

God's children: (vv. 10-12) We're to be who we are; we have the life of God in us, His Spirit in us, we're a new creation. We're children of God made new. We're to have new ambitions and new attitudes and actions. We're to bless and seek the good of others.

God's promises: (vv. 10-12) There are blessings for this obedience. God sees and delights in the obedience He sees. We're to bless and we will receive blessing – don't seek your own blessing; God will bless you. When you're hurting or unfairly treated, respond to that with good and God will honour and bless you for that.

God's warning: (vv. 10-12) The moment we respond to evil with evil, we've done what is unrighteous and wrong and God is not for this.

God's will: (v. 17) It might be that you suffer for doing right and have enemies; if that happens, it is the will of God. Behind the suffering caused by a person is God – this is God's will for that time. All

things work together for good, even the pain caused by unfair treatment and hurt. Even behind that is God's good purpose for His children. This is not easy, but we're still to respond to evil with good. Pray for the blessing of those who hurt you. Respond to suffering with good.

4) Biblical apologetics

Peter uses the opportunity here to teach the people of God how to reach out and evangelise with the gospel. "Apologetics" has to do with defending the Word of God.

Our hope: (v. 15) One of the elements necessary for being a faithful witness of Christ is to have hope within us. We need hope in Someone able to deliver us from all these sufferings. We can respond to evil with good only with hope within us. This hope is that God will reward our conduct and do us good. Hope that there is an inheritance kept for us. Hope is the starting point and the world needs to see this in us. We're not without hope even in the worst of times. People will see that hope in us and then ask questions. That hope in us distinguishes us from the rest of the world. The hope in Christ makes the world of difference between us and the world and the world will notice this difference. Let the people see the hope that is in you. Does the world see the hope of glory in you?

Our reasons: (v. 15) As the world sees hope in us, the world will ask questions and that's where we're to be able to give a reason for hope in us. We can respond to evil with good as that's the example of the One who saved us – God responded to my evil with grace. Faith is response to truth, not a leap in the dark. Our hope is rooted in God's character and truth – it has a sure foundation. The Christian is a thinking creature and we have to be ready to give answers for our hope.

Our gentleness: (v. 15) We're to give answers for our hope with gentleness and respect. Often we can be fixated on winning an argument to prove ourselves right and in doing so we lose respect for the person we're speaking to. We need gentleness; it goes a long way. There is a soul before us, not our name or the name of our church – gentleness is crucial to show the reason for the hope within us.

Our behaviour: (v. 16) A good conscience comes from good behaviour. Sometimes it can lead us astray. But a sanctified conscience comes from doing what's right. This will help us to do what is right. This conduct could put to shame those who mistreat or accuse us. We're so aware of our failings and often the world sees it too. Our behaviour is often not what it should be, so this hinders our conscience and hinders our witness.

This is a challenging passage, but we need to hear it and understand it. May God enable us, through His Spirit to live lives that are a good witness to those around us.