



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Experience the Greatest Blessings in the Worst of Times

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1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be* ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

1 Peter 3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

Peter is writing to people that were going through some very serious times. Not only that but also, he was writing to people who were really in the very near future were going to be going through some—the Bible calls them, Peter calls them—fiery trials. These were some very severe trials and testing that were going to overtake these people.

I thought today, if you pay much attention to world events, you will find out very quickly, if you read your Bible, that we are quickly coming to the place in America that a lot of the other nations have been in for several years. A lot of our nations around, where Christian people are at across the country, across the world actually are being persecuted tonight in a great way. In America, we have lived in freedom and we have been able to worship without much persecution. But we have seen that liberty and that right that we have quickly going away. If there was ever a time, in all of our life and all the history of the church that we need to be praying and seeking the face of God; it is now. Because if we stay here, if the church is here very much longer, there are some tough days ahead. There are some tough days ahead for the people of God.

Persecution—I have said this before. Sometimes we think persecution is when one our five TV's does not work, or one of the three cars will not start, or I am not talking about that. I'm talking about being persecuted because we are Christians, persecuted because we are living for the Lord.

Peter knew that these folks here were getting ready to suffer some official persecution by the government. They were going to go through some very tough times. Since Peter knew that, he was writing to these folks and this particular part we are going to talk about tonight. He wants to encourage them and he wants to give them some instruction on how they need to live through persecution. Not only that, but if they are going to experience the greatest lessons when persecutions come then Peter

understood that there is a way that they needed to live. We are there in our life today. We are there in our Christian life today, even though he was talking about some very severe times, still yet today, if we are going to be able to experience the greatest blessing of God, in our life, as we walk through this life, then there are some things that we are going to have to do and there are some things that we cannot do. Does everybody agree with that? There are positives and negatives. There are things that we must do and things that we must leave alone if we are going to be able to experience the blessing and all the blessing that God wants to bless us with then there are some things that we need to let alone and things that we need to stay away from.

In the first seven verses here, he has been speaking about wives being submissive unto their husbands. He has been speaking about wives and how that they should deal with their husbands that are unsaved. He has been speaking husbands and how that they need to live with their wives and so forth.

However, when he gets down to verse eight, he uses the word “finally.” When he uses the word finally, even though in the first part of the chapter he was directing his thoughts and teachings to different people and different groups. Now he is putting us all together. He says “finally,” “sum it all up,” he says here. I am going to sum up some things here. If you want to experience the greatest blessing in the worst of times then there are going to be some things that you are going to have to do. There is going to be some things that you are going to have to leave alone.

The first thing he says here...

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be* ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

Christian people belong all to one body. If we are saved tonight, we belong to one body. There is not ten different bodies of Christ. There is not a hundred different bodies of Christ or a thousand; but there is one body of Christ. There are different assemblies around; sure. However, there is only one body. The body is made up of born-again people from all over the world whether they call themselves; they hang some kind of a religious title on themselves or not. The church, the body of Christ is made up of by people who are born-again.

Since that is the case, he says here if we are going to get through persecution and we are going to be able to experience the greatness and the goodness and the wonderful blessings that God wants to bless us with then we are going to have to be all of the same mind. That has to do with “unity.”

Unity is not uniformity. Get this. I want to say something here. Peter is not saying here that we need to be clones of one another. He is not saying that at all. Unity does not have to do with uniformity. Do you know what unity does have to do with? When you look at the word *unity*, it is something that it is cooperation in the midst of diversity.

What that means is this. God makes us all different. Everyone of us is different people. We look at things different. We think things differently. God does not want us to be clones. I am going to prove this to you by our body. There is a body of Christ, but you and I have a body. Right? There are many members in this body. Truth? I walk with my feet. I do not talk with my feet. I walk with my feet. Every one of our members—they do not look alike. My feet look nothing like my ears. My hands look nothing like my mouth. My legs do not look like my arms. You can go along with it.

However, he is saying that we have to be—when he is using the word unity here; he is talking about cooperation in the midst of adversity. Even though there are all kinds of diversity in this body, in the body of Christ; there has to be cooperation in that body if we are going to be able to be what we need to be. Does everybody get that?

If my arms do not cooperate with my brain, I do not get very far. If my brain does not cooperate with my legs or vice versa then I cannot walk. Does everybody get that? That is what He is trying to tell us here.

There is diversity in the body but there also has to be cooperation, in the body. In this body, in the body of Christ; we all do not think alike. Do you know what we must do? We must have one goal in mind as a body of Christ and that is to teach people about the God of heaven, to be able to make—Jesus said, that He came here to give us life and to give us life more abundantly. He said that. Did He not?

Do you know what that means? That means that Jesus Christ not only came to die for our sins, but do you know what He wants us to do while we are here, while we are traveling through here going to heaven? He wants us to enjoy being here. He wants us to enjoy the life the we have. If we are going to enjoy life here on planet earth, then there has to be unity. There has to be cooperation in the midst of adversity. There has to be cooperation with each other. We do not look at things the same. We do not think about things the same. However, the goal has to be the same. Where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish has to be the same. If the world is going to see anything from the church today, it has to be, first of all, unity. It has to be it has to be people working together. Even though we may think differently. We may look different. We have to have one goal in mind and that is to be able to teach people about Jesus Christ, and to tell people that Jesus Christ died for their sins.

He says here, if you are going to experience the greatest blessing in the worst of times then first you have to have cooperation. You have to have cooperation within the body. He wants to make that very plain.

Not only does he say that here but he says to have compassion one of another. The word *compassion* is a good word. It is a word that we do not see much of in our world today. We do not see much compassion in our world today at all. It is a word that means sincere. It means a sincere feeling for and with the needs of others. He is saying here that not only do we need to have a spirit of cooperation and we need to live in cooperation, even though we are all different. However, we need to compassion one

towards another. If we are going to live in adverse times and times of struggle, and times of hardship; then not only do we need to have unity, but we also need to have compassion, one for another. Do you know what that means? That means that when you hurt, I hurt. When I see your needs then do you know what I want to do? I want to help you with what is going on in your life.

That is what Jesus did. Do you know what He never did? He never turned anyone away that came to Him. He did not do that.

Do you know what? As Christian people who says that we are following Christ and we say that we belong to Him, then why do we think we have the right to turn anyone away. Jesus Christ died for everybody. Truth! We need to be compassionate. We need to be sincere in our love and concern for people. Do you know what people can see? People can see sincerity. It is one thing to—I have said this many times—it is one thing to tell people you love them but it is something else to show people you love them.

Jesus not only told people that He loved them but He proved that He loved them by what He did. Jesus not only told us that He loves us, not only did God the Father say that I love you all, but He proved to us that He loved us by what He did. He gave His Son to die for us on a cross. So, He proved His love. Do you know what gets people's attention in this world? When you and I are sincere, compassionate towards people, when we live, act and do things in a way that we are concerned about people who are hurting and people in need. This world that is unsaved; they see that. Do you know what it does? It is a testimony. It is a witness in this community.

Listen. We need to be like that. The English word we get from the same word that was used here in the Greek, our word sympathy comes from the same word.

Again, we live in a world that we do not have much sympathy today. We do not have much long suffering today. We live in a world that everybody just gets whatever they can get. It is a dog-eat-dog world. Christian people should not live that way.

Listen. If you are going to **experience the greatest blessings in the worst of times**, you are going to have to be compassionate towards people. Listen. There is a God up here watching. His eyes are over the righteous. His ears are open unto our cries. Do you know what God is doing tonight. God knows exactly what I am doing. God knows exactly what you are doing. He has His hand on the dial of your life. Do you think He is going to bless you when we are not living as we should live? Do you think God is going to bless you? It is not going to happen. He want the best for you, even in hard times.

Again, we are part of the same family. We are born, everyone that is saved, if we are saved—not talking about church members—but if we are saved tonight, we have been saved by the same spirit. The same spirit that saved me has saved you. The same spirit that dwells in me, dwells in you. We are part of the same family. Why when family does not hurt, why don't we all hurt? If we really love family like we say we love family then do you know what we won't do? We will not turn our head when people hurt.

Truth! We won't run away from them when people hurt and when people mess up and do things that they should not. We will not try to bury them, but we will try to get them up. We will get them up off the ground, help them wash their faces, help beat the dust off of them, and get them back on the right way again. That is what we will do.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be* ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

Brotherly love. Philadelphian love. We need that. We need to have a love...it is not talking about love that is just words, but he is talking about honestly and sincerely loving people. Words are cheap. Anybody can say I love you. Anybody can say that they love everybody. Words do not mean anything if our actions do not back it up. If our words do not mean anything, it does not mean anything at all if I say I love you and then try to run over you. If I say I love you and you are trying to kill me. Or you say you love me...that does not add up. Does it? The world sees that. Your children listen to what you say at the dinner table. Your neighbors hear what you have to say when you are sitting at your picnic table. Amen! We do not like to talk about that but they do. It may do us good sometimes when we are witnessing to our neighbors to clean our life a little bit before we go over there. Amen!

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be* ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

He says this. Not only did he talk about being of one mind, having compassion, but he says "be pitiful." The word *pitiful* here is a good word. It means to be compassionate, to be kind, when we look at people see the shape they are in and what is going on in their lives then we need to be tenderhearted. When we see what is going on—Christians should never be hardhearted. We should never get to the place in life that when we see someone's needs that it does not touch us. If you get to the place in life when someone in the family of God is suffering, and it does not touch you then there is something wrong somewhere. Again, we are part of the same family. You are supposed to love your family. Amen! You are supposed to love everybody.

Real genuine love is revealed when we have pity, when we are tenderhearted towards people. We need to cultivate that. We need to work on that. We need to take that and use that. A heart that has feeling in it that when we see people's needs that we want to help them.

I want to tell you this too. Not everybody wants our help. Not everybody wants your help. Not everybody wants my help. Even though we see that they may need help, and we may see the help that they really need; not everybody wants our help. However, that does not give me any right not to be compassionate or pitiful towards people, to be tenderhearted towards people, to have a heart of flesh towards people. Whether they like us or do not like us does not give us a right to be a jerk. Amen! We need to be concerned about one another.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous*:

Not only that but also, he says to be courteous. That is a good word. There was a time in America, when men and women were courteous; a whole lot more than they are today.

Years ago, when we were home and even after that a little bit—I have said this here probably before—if you would go to a store or building on the outside, a shop or whatever, and a lady was about to come in or go out; do you know what most men would do? They would go over and open the door and be courteous and show some courtesy. You had better not try that today, they would run over you with a buggy. You do not see much courtesy anymore.

The word *courtesy* means to be humble-minded. It means just exactly the opposite of pride or being proud. That is what courtesy means.

It is talking about here when we are courteous to put other people in front of ourselves. Never put ourselves in front of anybody else. We always put other people in front of ourselves. We are never to be high-minded. We are never to think that we are better than anybody else. We are never to act proud, haughty, or arrogant. That has no place in the life of a Christian. Also, if we are going to enjoy the blessing of God in the worst of times, then we have to be courteous people. Amen!

Not only that but he says...

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Not being that way. Our walk matters. A Christian should never have a spirit of retaliation about them. Jesus did not. They said everything in the world about Jesus. They talked about Him. They used all kinds of sayings and language about Him. However, do you know what He did not do? He did not retaliate. Now the disciples wanted to pray down fire one day and destroy them all. Do you remember that? However, Jesus did not want to do that. He did not want to retaliate when they did evil towards Him and spoke words toward Him.

He says here...

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

We should never do that. This world is going to hate us. They are going to treat us wrongly. They are going to treat us with disrespect. They are not going to respect what we are doing. However, that does not give us a right to retaliate, or say, hey, they got me and I am going to get them back. That should never be in our lives. That should never be in a Christian's life to render evil for evil or railing for railing it says here. That should never be in our lives. We should never take that approach. When we do take

that approach, when trials, problems and sufferings come—do you know what you are not going to be? You are not going to be blessed as God wants you to be blessed. What it does, when we take that approach; when we take the attitude, you got me so I am going to get you back. That is not a Christian attitude. I have seen some people that has done that. When we take the attitude you got me, I am going to get you. Do you know what is happening? Your children are watching. Your husband is watching. Your wife is watching. Your co-workers are watching. They are watching what you say and what you do.

If you want to ruin your testimony very quick, do you know what you do? You can ruin it with your mouth. You can say words and I can say words and in 30 seconds, which could ruin everything that we have done for years. Amen! We can all do that.

However, if we are going to experience the best of times in the worst of times then we cannot render evil for evil or railing for railing. He wants to make sure that we understand that. Criticizing and scolding people, being harsh and using abusive language towards people and doing all that stuff. We cannot take that trip if we expect God to bless us. We cannot do that.

Do you know what I want above everything else in the world; more than I want food, water, and raiment? Do you know what I want upon my life? I want the blessing of Almighty God. Amen! Whether it is in good times or bad times, whether I am healthy or sick; I want the blessing of God upon my life. Do you know what I know? I know that if the blessing of God is upon my life and I am going the direction I need to be going; I know that God will take care of me. Amen!

Our walk in our life matter folks; it matters. We should never act like the world. That is what the world does. The world renders evil for evil. That is what they do. Christians should not do that. We should not do that. Again, if we are going to expect the blessing of God upon our lives, we cannot be that way.

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

In other words, instead of using all kinds of language and running people down, and giving evil back to them, and doing all of that; do you know what the bible tells us here? It is a blessing. If you really want to do something that gets people's attention when they start saying all kinds of evil against you—again, this is not every situation, and I know that there are times that this may not necessarily be the right way to say things. However, the greatest thing that we can do is when people are using us and abusing us, is to keep our mouth shut. If there is anything in their life that we can say something good about then that is what we should do. You will never get anywhere, you will never mend a relationship when you render evil for evil. It will never happen. You will never receive the blessing of God in your life, how that God wants to bless you and use you and take you to when you are rendering evil for evil and railing for railing. It is never going to work. We need to speak good things about these folks if we can.

1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Do you know what that tells us? When people rail against us and when people do all kinds of evil against us, when we bless them; do you know what happens to us? We inherit a blessing. God will bless us for that. Do you know what that shows the world? It shows the world that we are like Christ. The world knows that Jesus died on a cross. The world knows that He was crucified and all of that. The world knows that. Do you know what also they know? They know that He has the power to wipe them all out. People knows that. Yet He did not do that. Because of that, then you and I, when we take that approach then we can receive a blessing.

I want to say this too here. To love and enjoy life there are some things we have to get under control. As we go through trials and temptations, and hard times, and if we are courteous and kind, and if we do not render railing for railing and evil for evil and we act the way we should; then here is what is going to happen. We are going to be able to love life and we are going to be able to enjoy life.

Listen. I mean this sincerely. I am not trying to be critical. I am not trying to be mean. I am not trying to be anything. I am just trying to be honest. I dealt with so many people over the last forty some years that are just existing in life. They do not love life. They do not enjoy life. I have talked to husbands and wives over the last forty some years—they go to church, they have gone to church. They do not love one another. They do not love where they are at in life. They do not love a thing that is going on in life. One lives on one end of the house, and the other lives on—if some of you do this here; I do not know it. If I am saying this here and—I do not know it. I promise you I do not. One lives on one end of the house and the other lives on the other end of the house, or one lives on the second floor and one lives in the basement. They do not love one another. They do not love life. They do not love where they are at in life. They just exist. They wake up every day miserable.

You see them at church. You see them out at the grocery store. They smile and everything is hunky dory and all of that. However, they are not really enjoying life. They are not really enjoying life. The first step that we must take as Christian people, if we are going to be blessed through hard times and times of persecution and if we are going to get to the place that we are going to enjoy life; step one is that we have to control our tongue.

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Get this. If you want to love life and if you do love life and see good days; he says this...

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

“Let him refrain his tongue from evil...” Does everybody get that? “If you love life and see good days...” in other words, if you are going to enjoy living here and have some good days; the first thing is you have to refrain your tongue from evil.

Now that sounds easy. Does it? However, it is not. It not an easy thing to do because we are human. So many times—get this—so many times, we get busy with everything else in life, with jobs, kids, and all kinds of stuff and situations; do you know what happens? We start drifting and getting farther, and farther away from God. We do not read our Bibles like we should. We get weak spiritually. We do not pray like we should. Do you know the first thing the enemy does? He gives us all kinds of opportunities to lose control of our tongue. When we lose control of our tongue, there is absolutely no way that we can love life and enjoy living if we cannot keep our tongue under control. It is impossible.

If you talk to people who are busybodies, who are always running their mouth, and running their tongue; they do not enjoy living. They do not enjoy life. They do not enjoy being here. However, there is a way that we can enjoy living—that is what I want you to understand. There is a way that we can enjoy living here on planet earth. There is a way that we can live here and love life and see good days and we can enjoy being here.

The first thing is that we have to control our tongue. We have to refrain our tongue from evil. That is an absolute must. We just cannot let our words run lose. We just cannot say whatever comes to our mind. We just cannot jump into conversations and inject poison into them and do all kinds of stuff and then expect to love life and expect God to bless my life and enjoy life. You cannot do that.

Peter wants these people to understand that if you are going to love life and you are really going to love being here, and you are going to see good days then number one, you have to control your tongue. You cannot lose your temper. You cannot throw it all away in a minute. He says you have to control your tongue. You have to discipline your tongue. You have to know that you just cannot say...

I am doing better at that. I do not have it conquered yet. I will be honest with you. I would say by talking to some of you all that you all do not either.

Here is the thing. We have to be better at it today than we were yesterday. That has to be the goal. We have to have more control over our tongues today than we had yesterday.

I am going to say this too. This was mentioned tonight. So many people would not be taking their lives tonight if they really loved life and they were seeing good days. So many people would not be destroying themselves. Truth!

We can enjoy living here. We can love life and we can see good days if we will refrain our tongues from speaking evil, and his lips that they should speak no guile.

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Do you know what the word guile means? *Guile* means deception. It means deceit, to lie, to cheat, treachery, deceptive, flattery.

First of all, if I am going to love life and see good days; then I have to refrain, stay away, or not use my speech to speak evil and the second thing is that I cannot be deceptive in my words. I cannot be deceptive.

The Bible says that Jesus had not guile within Him. Do you know what that means in very simple terms? It means He spoke straight from the shoulder. He spoke words exactly what needed to be said. What He meant, He said. He did not say—in conversations sometimes, in talking to people—they will tell you one thing but in reality, they mean something else to them. They are trying to gain an advantage. They are trying to beguile you. They are trying to mislead you. Jesus never did that.

If I am going to enjoy living here on this earth, and if I am going to see good days, and I am going to allow, and God is going to bless me through times of hardships then the first thing is that you have to refrain your tongue from evil. The second thing is that I have to be straight with everybody. Jesus was and they hated Him for it. amen! He spoke the truth to people and they did not like Him.

I want to say this too tonight. As we live lives of truth—again, we will fail, mess up, and blow up—but when we live lives of truth and when we do not beguile people and we do not speak evil of people; do you know what life is? It is so much better. It is so much better when you just tell the truth. It is so much better when you do not beguile people. You do not remember what you said. If you are going to tell a lie then you had better have a good memory. If you are going to be a liar then you had better have a good memory. Amen! If you tell one then you have to tell another one to get out of that one, and another, then another. It never ends. If you are going to see good days, and if you are going to enjoy life and love life then you have to refrain your tongue from evil and you cannot beguile.

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

If you read the Bible, you can have a list of scriptures this tall about the tongue and how dangerous it is. Not only does it destroy the speaker's life, but so many times it destroys other people's lives. People's friendships have been destroyed because of lies. People have beguiled other people and marriages have been ruined. Amen! People have lost jobs, fights and wars have broken out because of people beguiling or speaking evil about other people. Christians, we cannot make that our life, folks.

If that is what we wake up every day to do, we are going to wake up every day miserable. We are going to go through life miserable. We are going to go to bed

miserable and we are going to get up the next morning miserable; if that is the trip that we take.

Peter, not only Peter but Jesus Christ wants us to enjoy living life while we are here. He died to save us. We know that was His primary goal for coming to earth, to give us eternal life. Also, if we follow Him and submit to Him and live for Him there is a way that we can live and wake up every day and enjoy being alive. To get up—you might have to take this hand and put this leg out of the bed—you have to do that every now and then. You might have to take your hands and walk yourself down the mattress to get up sometimes. However, you can get up every day and say, “Lord, what have you got for me today? Where do you want me to go today, Lord?”

Spend some time praying. Spend some time in His Word. Clean ourselves up. Wash our spiritual face. You do that—you do not do that with a wash cloth. You do that with this (the Bible). Amen! Spend some time in this book. Clean ourselves up a little bit. Put our spiritual shoes on, our uniform on and comb our spiritual hair. Wash our spiritual face. Eat from this book and say, “Lord, I’m ready. I am up. I am cleaned up. My uniform is pressed. I have lent rolled it. I have all the spots off of it. Lord, I have had breakfast, now what do you have for me? What are we going to do today?” You can enjoy life like that.

I know people has to work. That is fine. You can go to work every day and be happy. You might not be happy in your situation. You might not be happy necessarily where you are at but you can get up every day and be able to love life and enjoy being here on planet earth.

Peter is telling us here there is a way we can do that. There is a way that we must do that if we are going to experience the great blessing of God.

Come and pray—