

When Doing the Right Thing Costs You When Life Gets Hard - Part 2

Life Church St. Louis March 23, 2025
Lead Pastor Dan Walker, PhD, MDiv

Pray Daily for your Five Friends Focus

Introduction

Luke 12:51–53 (ESV) Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

Matthew 5:10–12 (ESV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

2 Timothy 1:7–8 (ESV) for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

1. Be Courageous in Suffering for Righteousness

1 Peter 3:13 (ESV) Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

1 Peter 3:14 (ESV) But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled.

Matthew 5:10 (ESV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

2. Honor Christ and Be Ready to Defend Your Faith

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV) but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

1 Peter 3:16 (ESV) having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

1 Peter 3:17 (ESV) For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

3. Follow Jesus' Example of Suffering and Victory

1 Peter 3:18 (ESV) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

1 Peter 3:19–20 (ESV) in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

1 Peter 3:21–22 (ESV) Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

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Introduction

1. When have you experienced a time when doing the right thing felt costly or difficult?
2. How does Jesus' teaching about division within families challenge our expectations of following Him (Luke 12:51–53)?
3. What encouragement can we take from Jesus' promise to bless those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matthew 5:10–12)?
4. How does knowing that God has given us a spirit of power, love, and self-control help us stand firm in our faith (2 Timothy 1:7–8)?

1. Be Courageous in Suffering for Righteousness

1. Why do you think Peter asks, "Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?" (1 Peter 3:13)
2. How can we find courage when suffering for doing what is right (1 Peter 3:14)?
3. What does Jesus' promise teach us about God's perspective on persecution (Matthew 5:10)?
4. What are some ways we can overcome fear when facing opposition for our faith?

2. Honor Christ and Be Ready to Defend Your Faith

1. What does it mean to honor Christ as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15)?
2. How can we prepare ourselves to give an answer for the hope we have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15)?
3. Why is it important to respond to opposition with gentleness and respect rather than hostility (1 Peter 3:16)?
4. Have you ever had an opportunity to share your faith under difficult circumstances? How did you respond?

3. Follow Jesus' Example of Suffering and Victory

1. How does Jesus' suffering encourage us to endure our own hardships (1 Peter 3:18)?
2. What can we learn from Noah's perseverance in a world that rejected his message (1 Peter 3:19–20)?
3. How does baptism symbolize both suffering and victory in the Christian life (1 Peter 3:21–22)?
4. What are some ways we can remain faithful even when obedience to Christ comes at a cost?

Conclusion

1. In what areas of your life are you struggling to stand firm in your faith? How can you seek God's strength?
2. How can you encourage someone who is experiencing rejection or hardship for following Jesus?