

Outsiders: Do Good
By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison
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1 Peter 3:8-18

Whiteboard:

AUTHORITY

- 1.) ANSWER**
- 2.) DO GOOD**
- 3.) AVOID EVIL**

Finally, Context: Peter sums up his teaching on **how Christians should live in relationship** to one another- the church, the government, slaves/masters, + husband/wife. Generally, about how we conduct ourselves, bear up under unjust suffering caused by people, submit to authority...

This is the “**Insider**” component.

A real “**Outsider**” sermon. This is outside the main stream of how we live/think. It’s also about how we are to live with those who are “outside” the faith.

The book, Good Faith, discusses how it is that Christians are to live in a culture which increasingly views us as “Irrelevant” at best and “Extreme”

How should an “Outsider” live? The main issues is this: Who’s the **AUTHORITY** of my life. Is Jesus Lord? ¹⁵ ***But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.***

Our culture (or any culture) doesn’t like the exclusivity of naming Jesus as Lord. It wants to proclaim that ANY religion is good – that they are basically all the same and that as long as we are nice people and play by the rules that nothing else really matters. The Christians Peter was writing to wouldn’t have been subject to persecution had they simply not

Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus is “the living Word.” We know about Jesus through personal experience and we know the ways of God through scripture. We cannot compromise scripture.

This is the central issue of our lives – who will be the governing authority of my life? Our default setting = ME! “Our innate Religion = Kingdom of Self.” Our biggest problem = our Pride. Pride blurs our vision and makes us incapable of seeing our own sin. We quickly spot it in others, but completely miss it in the mirror. It’s our pride that won’t allow us to submit to the Lordship of Jesus.

I liked what Bob Goff had to say about not being the hero or the victim in every story. He described being in an elementary school play, Peter Pan, and though he couldn’t dance or sing and was way too tall to be PP and though he really wanted to be PP, instead, he was “Tree #4.” All he did was hold his hands up and wiggle

his 10 fingers. We're not going to be the star in every show. C.S. Lewis: *There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. I have heard people admit that they are bad-tempered, or that they cannot keep their heads about girls or drink, or even that they are cowards. I do not think I have ever heard anyone who was not a Christian accuse himself of this vice. And at the same time I have very seldom met anyone, who was not a Christian, who showed the slightest mercy to it in others. There is no fault that makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others. The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility. According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind. Does this seem to you exaggerated? If so, think it over. I pointed out a moment ago that the more pride one had, the more one disliked pride in others. In fact, if you want to find out how proud you are the easiest way is to ask yourself, "How much do I dislike it when other people snub me, or refuse to take any notice of me, or shove their oar in, or patronize me, or show off?" The point is that each person's pride is in competition with everyone else's pride. It is because I wanted to be the big noise at the party that I am so annoyed at someone else being the big noise. Now what you want to get clear is the Pride is essentially competitive – is competitive by its very nature – while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak,*

For God to use us effectively, we're going to have to **get over ourselves.**

3 Points of Application:

#1.) **ANSWER** ^{15b} ***Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect*** Don't use your tongue for evil, but speak well. Be ready to speak up for your faith. But don't be a hater. Be gentle and respectful.

Joseph Stowell was the President of Moody Bible Institute. He wrote about an experience he had some years ago with the former CBS news broadcaster, Dan Rather. (Sean Groombridge told me later that he knew Dr. Stowell at Moody and this is exactly the sort of honesty which the students came to value in Stowell's leadership.) "Dan Rather was on our campus a couple of years ago to be interviewed on our national radio broadcast. Dan Rather has not been one of my

favorite people. I looked at him as part of the left-wing media establishment with its secular, pluralistic, relativistic, anti-God philosophy. He seemed a little cold to me and a touch arrogant and he was never one of my favorite anchormen. And there he was on my campus. During a break we spent a bit of time together and I was shocked because he was the warmest individual. He was interested in everything I was saying and he seemed to care about me. He said: 'I grew up in a Baptist home. In my grandma's house the only things she had to read were the Bible and the Sears Roebuck catalogue. My grandmother read me the Bible every day.' He did the interview and at the close as the tapes were rolling, one of the interviewers asked: "Mr. Rather, excuse me, but If you were to die today and you stood before God at the edge of heave and God asked you, "Why should I let you into heaven?' What would you say?' Rather paused and said, 'Well, I'd have to say it wouldn't be for anything I've done. It would have to be totally by the grace of God.' All of that to say this – I have no idea what his spiritual condition is. This is not a statement about HIS spiritual condition – it's a statement about the shame I bear in my heart. It didn't cross my mind once to pray for Dan Rather that God would compassionately reach out and embrace his soul. I hate to tell you that it just never crossed my mind. I was too made about all this (political) stuff to think about his need for a Savior. I REFUSED TO BE A MIDDLEMAN IN A COMPASSION TRANSACTION BETWEEN GOD AND ONE WHO POSSIBLY NEEDED HIM." As Peter tells his congregation, "always be prepared..." It's easy to be distracted by other pursuits than witnessing about God's grace.

#2.) **DO GOOD** (not evil). Peter lists a # of things which we should do: Live in harmony, with love, compassion, sympathy and humility, not with indifference, hostility, pride or evil

¹⁶ ***keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*** This creates 2 things: a clear conscience and a consistent witness.

Why should I do good?

A.) It represents **God's character**. *God is good all the time, all the time God is good.* Sometimes we don't see this or understand it.

B.) **Others need it.** If we are indifferent, apathetic, hostile, etc. in our attitude toward others, we will sow disharmony and our works ultimately will be empty and meaningless. If we are sympathetic, compassionate, and loving - then we will pursue peace and harmony, which is good and pleasing to God, bearing eternal fruit.

Pride fuels evil behaviors. Humility fuels good (godly) behaviors.

C.) **Your life** will be better if you do good than if you practice evil or do nothing. God will bless your life – though you may not see the end result of it. You will be a

blessing to others. It may cost you something, but there's always the gift of heaven. Some might say: "But I'm not hurting anyone." That isn't the question. "Who are you helping?" is.

3.) **AVOID EVIL** ¹⁷ *It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.* The word "evil" shows up 4x in this text. The word means "depraved, harmful, causing injury, or wicked."

Whatever you call it, "sin" isn't innocent. It's deadly.

It's very important that we keep all 3 of these! 2/3 (or 1/3) won't cut it.

There's a wonderful movie out that a number of you told me to go see. Dana and I went to one of the 2 theaters the movie "Greater" is showing in Tulsa. Amy Payne, an Asbury member, told me that the movie is about her childhood and adolescent friend, Brandon Burlsworth. Amy's maiden name began with a "B" and she sat next to Brandon through High School in Harrison, Arkansas. Like Brandon, Amy went to the University of Arkansas. However, she did NOT walk-on to the football team, become an All-American Offensive Lineman, or get drafted in the NFL draft by the Indianapolis Colts like Brandon. If you'll raise your hand and promise to go see the movie, I'll not spoil it for you. If you want me to spoil it for you, stay after church today and I'll tell you about the ending. A couple of points about this Christian movie:

1.) There is a character, who acts like a prosecuting attorney attacking Brandon's brother's faith. It has to do with the central question – is God good? If God is all powerful but not Good – watch out. If God is all good but NOT powerful – we're in trouble.

2.) Romans 8:28: *"All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His service."* We never know the outcome. Good often comes from bad things. Brandon Burlsworth's story is a prime example. God works in redemptive ways. Think of Peter...remember how he denied Jesus. Think of Paul...who persecuted the church. Think of Jesus – how could we possibly call the crucifixion: "GOOD Friday?" What was good about it? Yet, God redeemed it. Paul said: "Now we see into a mirror dimly." We simply don't get it.

Today, we go to serve. We do so because Jesus is the authority (Lord) of our lives. As we go we want to do so not only with our hands but with our lips. We want to speak good words. We want to bless, not curse others. We want to do good. We want our lives to matter. We want to lift others up, knowing that many times, we are the primary beneficiaries. We want to avoid harm. We don't want to be arrogant or full of ourselves – like "I'm the big noise at the party." We serve Christ

to make Him look good; not ourselves. We serve with humility, not full of pride to make ourselves look good.

What's the one thing you want us to walk away with?

Will there be a response time or a commissioning this week?