

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

## 1 PETER 3-5

A couple celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary were at a reception held in their honor. They were posing for photos when the husband bursts into tears.

The wife is posing - smiling from ear to ear, while the husband is weeping... She turns to her husband and asks, *“Honey, what’s wrong? Why are you crying?”*

He answers, *“Well, 50 years ago today, your daddy put a shotgun to my head, and said that if I didn’t marry you, he’d see to it I spent the next 50 years in jail.*

*It suddenly dawned on me that if I’d listened to him, I’d be a free man tomorrow.”* Tonight, Peter teaches us to have a *“no regrets marriage.”* Follow God’s blueprint and 50 years later you’ll be glad you tied the knot.

Peter begins chapter 3 by addressing the wives.

He provides them with instruction in three areas: their **boundaries**, their **behavior**, and their **beauty**.

Verse 1, *“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands...”* God’s plan for a Christian home calls for **an ordered equality**. Both partners are equal in value, but different in roles. Women are not inferior to men.

In fact, it’s my observation that just the opposite is true. *Most women are smarter than most men.*

If survival of the fittest were actually true women would be leading men around on dog-chains by now.

God has appointed that in the home and in the church the man is to lead, and the woman is to follow, and in adhering to this blueprint, they paint a wonderful picture of Christ's relationship with His Church.

The Greek word translated “**submissive**” is the term “**hupotasso**,” which means “**to arrange under, or to work within set boundaries.**” The husband is to pursue the calling that God places upon his life. And it's his pursuits that form boundaries for the rest of the family.

The wife is then free to do whatever God leads her to do, as long as she arranges her pursuits around the direction in life that her husband has taken.

Ruth Graham, Billy's wife, once wrote, “**The best advice I can give to unmarried girls is to marry someone you don't mind adjusting to. God tailors the wife to fit the husband, not the husband to fit the wife.**”

Wives be submissive to your husbands... “**that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives...**”

Wives need to realize the only time a woman successfully changes a man is when he's a baby with a dirty diaper... The saying is true, “**Women marry men hoping they'll change. While men marry women hoping they'll never change.**” And both end up disappointed.

Yet there were women in Peter's day who were right in wanting their husband to change. When the Gospel reached their family they embraced Jesus, but he didn't. They were now believers married to unbelievers.

And oh, the stress this placed on their marriage.

These ladies had fallen in love with Jesus. He was the most important thing in their life - yet they were unable to share Him with their spouse. They wanted desperately for their husband to also come to Jesus.

These *desperate housewives* witnessed to their man constantly. They put tracks in his lunch box - pushed and cajoled. Yet few folks get nagged into heaven.

Before we go on let me say a word to the singles.

2 Corinthians 6:14 is clear, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” If you’re saved it’s a *sin*, as well as *foolish*, to marry someone who’s not.

I’ve heard it said, “If a child of God marries a child of the Devil, then the child of God is sure to have trouble with his father-in-law.” And no one wants that! If you’re a single Christian choose your mate wisely.

But what if you’ve already made that mistake? Or what if you embraced Jesus after you were married, and your spouse didn’t? He or she needs to change or they’ll go to hell. *So how do you change a spouse?*

Well, it’s not by nagging, badgering, manipulating.

A Christian spouse needs to learn to change their non-Christian mate not *with words*, but *without them*...

*By their godly, loving, winsome conduct.*

Peter says you’ll change your mate “when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.”

The Greek word translated “*chaste*” or “*hagios*” means “*holy, pure.*” You change you spouse not by *meddling*, but by *modeling* goodness and godliness.

In 1805 a missionary from the Boston Missionary Society preached to the Indians of upstate New York.

After his message Chief Red Jacket told him, “We will wait a while and see what effect your preaching has upon your own people. If we find it does them good, makes them honest, and less inclined to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you’ve said.”

Ladies, this may be the approach **Chief Stubborn Heart** - *the one you live with* - is taking toward your newfound faith. When he sees the Gospel change your life, then he’ll pay attention to what it can do for him.

Verse 3, “Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

Ladies, you can spruce yourself up and deck yourself out - but nothing will turn your husband on more than *a gentle, and quiet, and submissive spirit*.

Let me caution us against taking Peter’s instructions to an extreme. There’re Christians who believe it’s a sin for a lady to style her hair, or wear jewelry, or wear fashionable clothes. That’s not what Peter addresses...

Ladies, you can look nice - you can dress *mod*, but *modest*. Just don’t stress your outward attractiveness over your inward beauty - that’s Peter’s point.

Here's a great test for the ladies... *Do you spend more time in the mirror, than you do in God's Word?*

Beauty of the heart is what pleases God. Note Peter refers to spiritual beauty as an *"incorruptible beauty."* Even with an unlimited budget and the best plastic surgeon, physical beauty is still *"corruptible beauty."*

In other words, a man who marries a woman for her good looks is like a guy buying a house for the paint job. Eventually, the paint is going to chip, flake, and fade. Do yourself a favor and marry a godly woman.

Verse 5, *"For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."* Sarah called her husband *"lord."* She treated him as the king of the castle. *And he loved her in return.* Realize, *women need love - men need respect.*

Ladies treat your husband with respect, and he'll lasso the moon for you. There's nothing he won't do.

Two politicians were embroiled in a fiery debate. One shouted at his foe, *"What about those powerful special interest groups that control and manipulate you?"*

The politician who was under attack shouted back, *"Now wait just a minute, you leave my wife out of this!"*

A wife does have powerful sway over her husband. A smart wife uses it to build him up, not tear him down.

Now Peter comes to the husbands, and provides us three commands for how to treat our wife – dwell with your wife, understand your wife, and honor your wife...

Verse 7, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them...”

And I can hear some of the husbands now, “I got this! I live in the same house, sleep in the same bed, eat at the same table. *I’m dwelling with my wife.*”

But living under the same roof isn’t the same as dwelling with your wife. Too many husbands are at home, but in body only. Their mind stays glued to the TV, or computer, or work. Men, your home is more than a hotel that you check into at night. God wants you involved and engaged with both your wife and kids.

Dwell with your wife, but dwell “with understanding...”

Men, get to know your wife. Make a study of her. Spend time with her. Talk *with her*, not just *at her*.

It’s said, “Every husband needs to know what makes his wife tick, what tickles her, and what ticks her off.”

A Harvard University study revealed that the average married couple spends 37 minutes in communication... not 37 minutes a day - but 37 minutes a week...

On a recent flight I picked up a Delta magazine that had a report on the habits of pet owners. It said the average dog owner talks two hours a week to his dog.

That means we talk more to our dog than our wife.

To understand our wives we’ve got to communicate.

He also commands us, “giving honor to the wife...”

Husband respect your wife, and the contribution she makes to the family... *Treat her special around the house, brag on her in public, compliment her on the job she's doing with the kids. From time to time reward her with a day off, or at least buy her some flowers.*

Men, you know what it means to be rewarded and appreciated at work for a job well done - well, it means even more to your wife coming from her husband!

Peter says, honor her **“as to the weaker vessel...”**

Despite all the feminist rhetoric and propaganda we hear today, most women are more gentle and fragile physically and emotionally than are most men. There're certainly exceptions, but generally it's true!

Peter calls it **“weaker”** - but women are weaker than men only as a crystal goblet is weaker than a plastic coffee mug. The mug is heavier, more durable, easier to knock about. But the finery and fragility of the crystal makes it more valuable. A wife brings a tenderness and gentleness to a family that a husband lacks.

Peter is telling us to honor our wife for her sensitivity.

When a female china-back crab molts and sheds her shell it takes several days for a new shell to harden.

This leaves her extremely vulnerable. Yet for those several days the male crab covers her with his body.

She attaches herself to his belly and he carries her until she's once again able to protect herself.

And men there are times when your wife becomes vulnerable - she gets *a little crabby* - and needs your help. She needs you to *cover her* and *carry her*. This is what it means to *“honor the wife as the weaker vessel.”*

*“And as being heirs together of the grace of life...”*

Your wife is not just *your wife* she's also *God's girl*. Treat her not as your *servant*, but as a *sister* in Christ.

And for a very good reason, *“that your prayers may not be hindered.”* Ever tried to pray after you've been fighting with your wife, and it was your fault? The only prayer that gets off the ground is one of confession.

When there's friction between Kathy and I, there's static on the line with God... And I need to repent.

Verse 8, *“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”* Remember our writer is Peter - the man who took a sword and tried to split the skull of the High Priest's henchman who came to arrest Jesus.

Malchus swerved his head at the last second, and Peter clipped off his ear. This was sword-slinging Pete.

Now this same Peter has changed his tune. He says don't return evil for evil - bless those who revile you.

An incredible change occurred in Peter's mentality.

I'm sure it started after his attack on Malchus. Jesus reached down into the dirt, picked up the severed ear, and miraculously reattached it to the man's head.

Jesus returned good for evil, blessing for cursing.

In the coming weeks Peter learned the power of love. They beat Jesus, reviled Him, nailed Him to the cross - but though He could've, Jesus didn't retaliate.

Jesus took all their hate and venom - and absorbed it. He retaliated with love. And in doing so, Jesus *won* our forgiveness. Peter always wanted to follow Jesus, now he's learned the path leads through the cross.

Verse 10, "For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit." *Think* before you speak.

Remember the acrostic... **T-H-I-N-K**.

"**T**", is it true?, "**H**", is it helpful?, "**I**", is it inspiring, encouraging?, "**N**", is it necessary?, "**K**", is it kind?

If it's not all five, then zip your lips!

Verse 11, "Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil." Years ago in the early days of the Microsoft explosion, the New Yorker magazine published Bill Gates' personal email address.

Overnight he was swamped with messages. It didn't take Bill long to install some filtering software that sent through the important mail, and disposed of the junk.

Bill Gates could only handle so many messages at a time, *but not God*. God never gets swamped.

He personally handles and responds to each request, and petition, and intercession, and praise, and prayer that's sent to Him. *"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers."*

Verse 13, *"And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."*

*If our home is with Jesus - if our treasure is laid up in heaven - if our citizenship is in God's Kingdom - and our life is hid with Christ in God – then what can any one on earth do to really harm me? My friend, Gayle Erwin, once sent me a fax that read, "Your stock in heaven is rising. Invest everything!"* What a great tip!

*"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..."* Once my brother went downtown to do some street witnessing. He approached a guy in a turban and a long robe. Ken started telling him about Jesus.

Yet the guy was prepared - more so than Ken.

He started quoting Scripture, but he had twisted it and taken it out of context. He ended up painting Ken into a corner. Then he pulled out a pocket NT and waved it in my brother's face - and asked him, *"How did David kill Goliath?"* The man then answered his own question, *"He killed him with his own sword."*

It was at that moment, my brother decided to go to seminary, and take the time to learn why he believed what he believed. And as a result, today, he's *"always ready to give a defense"* of the hope he has in Jesus!

Verse 16, *"having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."* Peter says not all suffering is created equal. It's a noble thing to stand for Jesus and be persecuted. It's shameful to suffer for an evil act.

*"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust..."* Jesus suffered for a noble cause. He died in our place once and for all. *"The just for the unjust."*

Jesus died, *"that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared..."* Remember, there was 120 years of *"divine longsuffering"* prior to the flood.

Noah warned and worked for twelve decades. Don't ever say that God isn't patient. He wants us to repent.

In Ephesians 4 we're told that after Jesus died on the cross He descended into Hades - not to hellfire and torment per se, but to Abraham's bosom - the place He spoke of Luke 16 - the abode of the believing dead.

And it was there that Jesus preached - *and all heard the wonders of God's grace and His work on the cross.*

To those who believed, His sermon was a validation that God had sent His promised sacrifice... To the disobedient spirits, those who rejected God's promise, it was the confirmation that their punishment was just!

Peter continues to speak about the flood, "in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water."

Only eight souls heeded Noah's warning and boarded the boat. The history of the human race was salvaged by 8 souls: Noah, his 3 sons, and their wives.

Today, the flood of Noah has tremendous historical and geological relevance. This story is attested to in almost every ancient culture. There's a corrupted, yet compatible account... And the best explanation of the fossil record is the massive effects of a global flood.

But the flood's relevance is not only *historical*, and *geological* - its also **typological**. Verse 21, "There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)" In other words, not water baptism - *that does little more than a bath*. It's the initiation of the Spirit that cleanses us inwardly!

The Spirit does for us what the flood did for its survivors. It purged a sinful Earth, and provided Noah's family new life - a new start. Jesus did the same for us.

And "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him." Now that Jesus is risen and exalted to God's right hand, all that He died to cleanse is under His authority. All creation ultimately answers to Jesus.

Chapter 4, “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...” In other words, persecution (*suffering physically for Jesus sake*), has a purifying effect on God’s people.

Persecution **crystallizes our commitment**. Being faced with physical loss forces people to take a stand!

It encourages the believer, verse 2, “that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” Once you pay a price for following Jesus a seriousness sets in. From then on there’s no turning back. You’re all in!

“For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles - when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.” Peter is saying we’ve wasted enough of our lives indulging the flesh - now let’s make our time count serving the Lord.

“In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.” If you’ve been a Christian for any length of time, you’ve probably already heard people comment, “Ah, he’s no fun anymore.” “She use to be cool. What happened?” Former friends start to snicker.

But understand, *in the end the jokes on them*. Verse 5, “They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. God gets the last laugh!

“For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead...” In the OT the Gospel was preached in seed form. The name “Jesus” may not have been mentioned, but God promised a deliverer!

“That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” In other words, folks living in OT times, were judged just as we are today... *did they put their faith in God’s promise?*

“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.” Take prayer seriously! “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for *love will cover a multitude of sins.*”

Evan Gattis is not the most graceful outfielder on the planet. He’s capable of making an error or two. But the Braves coaches like him in the line-up because he can hit! He can rake a baseball with the best of them!

*And in baseball hitting covers a multitude of errors.*

And this is what Peter means. Perhaps you’re a bumbling, stumbling saint - you’ve got some rough edges - but if you *love a lot*, God will find a place for you on His team. You don’t have to be skilled or gifted to count for God. He packs his line-up with heavy-hitting lovers! *“Love will cover a multitude of sins.”*

Verse 9, “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” God has given to each of us certain spiritual gifts, and each of us needs to use our gift! Remember, when it comes to spiritual gifts... *it’s use it or lose it...*

And notice the gift that’s mentioned in verse 9 - *the gift of hospitality*. Some people have the gift of making other people feel at home, and loved, and wanted.

One Sunday a man was on his way to church when he stopped to pick up a hitchhiker... The hitchhiker came to church that day, and was invited by another member to lunch... Still another member took him home that afternoon and allowed him to bathe, even gave him a fresh change of clothes... Finally, someone else from church bought him a bus ticket home...

Weeks later the hitchhiker sent a letter to the man who stopped to give him a lift. Enclosed was a newspaper clipping. It read, **“Man turns himself in for murder.”** It turns out the hitchhiker had been on the run.

He'd robbed a store and killed a teenage boy in the process. But because of the church's kindness he was drawn to God. He wanted to be forgiven, and knew as part of his repentance he would need to turn himself in.

The Lord works many a miracle through the gift of hospitality. I wonder if it's not true, **that more folks have been won to Christ through this gift, than any other?**

Verse 11, **“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.”** There's also the spiritual gift of speaking God's Word. If you have it, speak only what He tells you. We need God's Word, not mere opinions.

**“If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”** Good deeds and spiritual gifts coupled together do great things. They minister to men and bring God glory.

Verse 12, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you...” Don’t be surprised by persecution, as if you were never warned.

If this wicked world nailed Jesus to a tree, did you expect them to roll out the red carpet for His followers?

Don’t consider it “*strange.*” I think all Christians need to *warm up* to the idea of *fiery trials*... they’re coming.

And we should be able to “rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”

Christians are asked to share in *Christ’s momentary sufferings*, but they also share in *His eternal glory!*

We may suffer today, but we’ll rejoice forevermore!

“If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.” Following Jesus involves more than joy and peace - it also means drawing fire, and being treated unfairly, and suffering for Christ’s sake.

It’s been said, “No pain, no palm... No thorns, no throne... No gall, no glory... No cross, no crown...”

Verse 15, “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”

If you suffer as a believer you glorify God, but if you're ridiculed for evil, or you're sticking your nose in other people's business - then you've caused shame.

**“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...”** I have no doubt the biggest obstacle to the evangelization of the world is selfishness and hypocrisy in the Church. *We can't draw people out of darkness if we as Christians are asleep in the light!*

Judgment, God's sorting, should start in the Church.

**“And if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”** If God isn't squeamish about disciplining His own children - don't think for a second, He won't hammer a wicked world.

Verse 18, **“Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”**

If Christians limp into heaven with a poor witness, where does that leave the unbelievers? We owe it to a lost world to shine clearly and brightly for Jesus' sake.

**“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”** Some Christians encounter opposition and assume they missed God's will. But here, Peter talks of those *“who suffer according to the will of God.”*

You can get into trouble for following God's will!

Chapter 5, “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder...” Notice Peter classifies himself as “*a fellow elder.*” This is why its preposterous for Roman Catholicism to refer to Peter as the first pope.

Peter never exalted himself as “*Pontif Maximus*” or “*High Priest.*” He thought of himself as “*a fellow elder...*” - and as “*a witness of the sufferings of Christ.*”

Though he followed at a distance, Peter was there when Jesus was tried, and scourged, and nailed to the cross. He was an eyewitness of Jesus’ sufferings.

“*And also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.*” Peter saw Jesus in His suffering, but he also saw Him in His glory - both after His resurrection, and on Mount Hermon at what’s called His transfiguration.

In Matthew 17:2 we’re told Jesus was “*transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*” His humility was peeled back, and the disciples got a peek at His glory!

And these experiences humbled Pete. He wasn’t *first* among the elders. He was *a fellow elder* and *a witness*.

And Peter encourages his peers in ministry, “*Shepherd the flock of God which is among you...*”

Good shepherds **tend and mend - feed and lead.**

A faithful shepherd is constantly vigilant. He protects the vulnerable flock from thieves and predators.

And we're to "serve as overseers..." The word "elder" means "overseer." A pastor sees the big picture, and thinks ahead, and looks out for God's people. He should be several steps ahead of the rest of the flock.

He anticipates needs. He safeguards against danger.

There was a time when the elders of our church spent most of their time together reviewing financial statements and making business decisions. Today we've developed other structures to handle those functions, and we've freed up the elders to do what God has called them to do - *minister to God's people*.

At Calvary Chapel the job of an elder is to *handle benevolence, exercise discipline, pray for the people, and try to stay in contact with the sheep they tend.*

We're to serve "as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly..." An elder should never be forced to serve, only out of duty. They should want to serve!

And "not for dishonest gain but eagerly..." Financial reward should never be the goal of a spiritual leader. The elders at Calvary serve voluntarily and "eagerly."

"Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock..." An elder or pastor should never be pushy or manipulative. We should never throw our weight around - and seldom pull rank.

Leaders in the Church should earn the trust of the flock by their godly character, and lead by example.

Verse 4, "and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Elders and pastors are Under-Shepherds.

Jesus is *“the Chief Shepherd”* - and He promises a crown to the leaders who serve His interests faithfully.

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

The Greek word translated *“resist”* is *“oppose.”* God lines up on the other side of the ball from the proud.

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time...” Humble yourself before God, and He’ll see to it you get exalted.

Be puffed up, and God will let your air out.

Verse 7, *“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”* We need to turn our *cares* into *prayers*.

A friend of mine once told me, *“Sandy, always turn your cares over to God before you go to bed, He’s going to be up all night anyway.”* Psalm 121:3 tells us, *“He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”*

*“Be sober, be vigilant...”* Get ready, and be on-guard. *“Because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

It reminds of the female lion tamer. She was a beautiful woman who had a wonderful way with lions. With a flick of the whip she could make them lay their head in her lap - gently nuzzle and cuddle up with her.

When her show was over a heckler shouted, “Ah, that’s nothing! I can do that!” The ringmaster charged him, “Ok, if you can do that just step into the ring.” The man replied, “Sure, just get the lion out of there first!”

Here’s the problem with many Christians - we cuddle up with the lion! We accommodate the devil and his influence. We need to resist the devil in Jesus’ name.

I’ve been told the roaring lion is not the one you worry about. He’s the decoy. When Bambi prances down the path the roaring lion jumps out - snarls and growls - makes fierce noises. But all he can do is roar.

He’s the old, toothless lion. He still remembers how to look menacing, but he’s as harmless as a kitty cat.

But the old roaring lion can strike fear into the heart of little Bambi. She sees him, spins around, and flees in the opposite direction - right into the jaws of the young lions who’ve been waiting for the kill.

Satan is the roaring lion! He’s toothless. Jesus has declawed him on the cross. By the power of Jesus he’s now as harmless as a kitty cat. The only way Satan can defeat you is through fear and intimidation. If you don’t stand strong and follow Jesus - if you run in the opposite direction - you’ll end up running into trouble.

This is why we’re told, verse 9, “Resist him, steadfast in the faith...” Don’t run from Satan, resist him!

To run you have to turn your back, and when you do you expose the only part of your anatomy not protected by your spiritual armor. Remember, Ephesians 6 describes the armor of God - and there’s protection for every area of the body, except the back!

This is why we can't back down. We need to "resist!"

Stand strong. Trust the Lord. Call on His name! Rely on His blood. James 4:7 tells us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Put up a resistance and he'll flee.

And persevere - keep on keeping on - don't grow tired or discouraged, "knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

You're not alone. Christians all over the world are experiencing persecution - some far more than us!

Verse 10, "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while..." Compared to the glory awaiting in heaven, even a lifetime of suffering is just "a little while." Peter says, "May the God of all grace... perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

And now a few personal remarks, "By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly..." "Silvanus" is Silas. This was Paul's traveling companion on his 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys.

Apparently, at this time Silas was with Peter, and he possibly penned this letter as Peter dictated it to him.

"By Silvanus," Peter wrote, "exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand."

"She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you..." It's possible Peter wrote from the literal city of Babylon. But there's not record of him getting that far

east. A better interpretation is to assume he's in spiritual "*Babylon*" or "*Rome*" - the capitol of paganism.

"*And so does Mark my son.*" Peter had the same kind of relationship with Mark, Paul did with Timothy.

Mark was Peter's young protégé, his son in the faith.

In fact, the early church fathers, Ireneaus and Eusebius, tell us that Mark's Gospel was in reality the *reflections of Peter recorded by his disciple, Mark.*

The letter ends, "*Greet one another with a kiss of love.*" Not a lustful, erotic kiss - or a hypocritical *Judas' kiss* - but a kiss of *Christian love!* Either a holy kiss, or a hearty handshake is always a wonderful gesture.

"*Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*"