

1 Peter 4:12-19 – Part C

1Pe 4:14 (NKJV) 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.

I wonder if you have ever been “**reproached for the name of Christ**”? If you have, then you know that it is not that enjoyable when someone accuses you or chides you or openly criticizes you for your faith. There is nothing pleasant about it all, so many Christians are very cautious about getting involved or speaking up about spiritual matters simply to avoid the reproach that naturally comes along with being a Christian. Certainly, any of us can find reasons to shy away from activities that would draw some attention to our personal faith, and especially in the culture of which we are a part. Obviously there are some venues when we would all share our faith openly – a Christian men’s or women’s conference, or in a church setting, or maybe with some people we meet of like faith. No problem sharing in any of those settings at all. However, that certainly is not what Peter is addressing here. This particular word for “**reproached**” is the Greek word “*oneidizo*” and it means to be railed at, to be reviled, to be assailed with very abusive words.¹ The NKJV uses “**reproached**”, the NASB uses “**reviled**”, the ESV uses “**insulted**”, the AMP uses “**censured and suffer abuse**”, and the HCSB uses “**ridiculed**”.

“**Reproached**” is a verb that is a present tense verb in the passive voice which simply means that someone else was actually doing this to these early Christians. It involved being slandered, slurred, insulted, having their character defamed, being falsely accused, being maligned, being slighted, and often physically beaten and even martyred. This is much more than someone simply not liking you, but it is the kind of defamation that comes from an actual hatred for you, and especially a hatred for your Christian beliefs and faith. Ultimately, this is a hatred of God, and therefore a hatred against anyone who identifies with Him. So, the more that you personally and genuinely identify with Jesus, the more reproach you will most likely experience. Jesus said it this way in the first sermon that He ever preached in [Matthew 5:11](#) when He said,

Mt 5:11 (NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile (*oneidizo*) and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

[Luke 6:22](#) says virtually the same thing,

Lk 6:22 (NKJV) Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile (*oneidizo*) you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

Paul reiterated this reality in [1 Timothy 4:10](#) when He said,

1Ti 4:10 (NKJV) For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

The problem that we as Christians often have is that we have isolated ourselves to our little “holy huddle”, and most likely there is no one in this setting that is going to reproach us for our faith in Christ. Now, I certainly am not against church. To the contrary, I am very much in favor of it. It is the only God-ordained institution in the New Testament and we are commanded by God not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, so there is no way that I am going to be critical of meeting with other

¹ Zodhiates, *oneidizo*, 1047.

believers on a regular basis. This is where we meet for fellowship and where we study the Word of God on a consistent basis. Why do we place so much emphasis on the Word of God? Simple. It is because God Almighty, the eternal Creator God, has something to say to His people, and many times it is a message that literally counteracts the culture in which we live and galvanizes our hearts to obedience to His instructions for our life.² However, that does not preclude me from being around people that need Jesus – not at all. In fact, I actually love being with lost people because it is there that I can actually share my life and my faith in Jesus with them. The worst thing that we as believers can do is to become isolated from the world. I love meeting people that are lost and without hope because I know that we have the answers that they need for their life. Any sermon that someone hears should do much more than just mention God. It should be all about God, who He is, what He has done, and what He is going to do. Every sermon should count – every sermon.

Because the larger passage in [1 Peter](#) is speaking specifically of a suffering which is the result of someone being persecuted for their Christian faith, this is a specific kind of reproach that Peter is addressing. This is not a reproach because we did something wrong or stupid. This is a reproach that is the direct by-product of you as a believer identifying with Jesus Christ. Do not miss that point. This is a reviling, an insulting, a defaming of character, and a maligning of you personally because you are more than willing to identify with Jesus Christ, to identify yourself as a fully devoted follower of Christ. I wonder if you really are willing to identify with Jesus in such a way that it may bring about reproach on your personal life. Let me put that in the form of a question. What would your life look like in Christ if you were NOT preoccupied with all of the things the world has to offer? It would be things like comfort, convenience, gadgets, appearance, reputation, image, 401K's, name brands, promotions, titles, accolades, just “stuff”, and much more.³ What if those things did not occupy so much space in your mind and in your life? If that were the case, and so much more of your life was devoted to the glory of God and to the Word of God, would it mean much more reproach to you personally to be fully and completely identified with Jesus? I imagine it would.

The word “**if**” that begins v14 is the “**if**” of a fulfilled condition and could actually be translated as “**since**” or “**because**”.⁴ There is a very real kind of spiritual naivety and gullibility that seems to think that our lives will always be protected from persecution and suffering, and that God will always be filling our lives with His great blessings and protection. The charismatic movement with their health and wealth gospel and all of their self-help teachers have beat this dead horse to death. For them, the gospel has simply become a kind of spiritual insurance and protection from any kind of adversity or pain. To be honest, I am not sure what Bible the charismatics are reading. That kind of perspective reveals a certain level of spiritual ignorance. Listen to what Jesus told His disciples in [John 15:18](#),

Jn 15:18 (NKJV) "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

[2 Timothy 3:12](#) says,

2Ti 3:12 (NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

² Kim, 29.

³ Kim, 28.

⁴ Wuest, 1 Peter 4:14, 119.

1 John 3:13 says,

1Jn 3:13 (NKJV) Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

Think of it this way. Whenever a believer is genuinely following Christ, there will always be a conflict with sin and with the world. It is unavoidable. This conflict is an undeniable part of counting the cost to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.⁵ There is no escaping that spiritual reality. If you are a faithful follower of Christ, your life will always be a confrontation to the way that lost people in the world are living. In today's culture, it should be evident that the respect that Christians once held has been eroded away and now there is a widespread hatred of anything and anyone who attempts to discredit people's actions and their personal lifestyles. Politically it is called "hate speech". I was listening to the local news one evening recently of a Home Owners Association (HOA) in Augusta somewhere which was demanding that everyone who had a cross in their yard that they left there from Easter actually remove it or suffer some HOA penalty. That simple emblem of the Christian faith was despised by so many people that they demanded that it be removed. Out of my personal curiosity, I wonder how many Christians succumbed. Before long you may not be able to put your church logo on the windshield of your automobile or truck. It will not be long before you will not be allowed to wear a Christian cross around your neck or use the name "Jesus" in public without some kind of retribution. If you have a T-shirt with your church name or some Jesus slogan on it, you will not be allowed to wear it simply because it offends people.

I will tell you what offends me. It is the person who claims to be a true and genuine believer, but who is not willing to publically identify with Jesus Christ and who is not willing to submit to His will for their life. Forget the lost person. That offends me much more than anything that the world says I do that offends them. It is the man who claims to be a Christian, but does not love his wife like Christ loved the church, or the wife who has no respect or honor for her husband and is always nagging at him, or the young person who is not willing to honor and obey his or her parents, or the Christian at work who is lazy and always complaining. That is what troubles and bothers and offends me personally – not some lost person who does not know any better and is not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. Peter is talking to believers about their willingness to do more than just identify with Jesus in name only, but to be fully submitted to His will, His wisdom, and His ways, even if it means suffering.

This is simply the culture in which we live and it will not improve, but only become worse and worse in the years ahead. It will not be long before the culture will be demanding that the crosses on church steeples be removed and a church's tax exempt status be removed so that large tax burdens can be levied on the churches against their property. This has already happened in places like California. Fifty years ago this would have been considered criminal, but today it is considered essential and necessary to protect people from being unduly offended by the Christian faith. Like it or not, the local church and those believers associated with it have become the target and the bullseye for the world's hatred and vicious animosity towards Jesus Christ. At a very personal level, I welcome the opportunity to suffer for the name of Christ. I welcome the privilege granted to me by my Father in heaven to identify with Jesus. I do not have a martyr's complex. I am kind of a physical wimp actually. I am not a raging spiritual bull, but I do have a love for Jesus that outweighs and overshadows any trials that may be

⁵ MacArthur, 249.

brought into my life because of my faith in Christ – and I pray that you feel exactly the same way. I pray that your love for Jesus is so strong that nothing will ever be able to shake your faith and your faithfulness to Him – not even death.

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