**Sunday, July 25**

**Going deeper in 1 Peter 3:13-18**

**INTRODUCTION**

Peter has just finished talking about our relationships with other believers; relationships that are to be characterized by harmony, sympathy, tender-heartedness, family love, and humility. He then called believers in their interactions without those outside the faith to not return evil for evil and no insults. He pointed out this is the good life that God intends for us.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.* 13 Who will harm you if you are passionate about doing what is good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing it you are still better off. Don’t be afraid of them or their threats; don’t let it shake you up. 15 Instead keep your focus on Jesus the Christ who is your Lord and always be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks the reason that you live a hope-filled life, but do this with gentleness and respect. 16 Keep a clear conscience so that when people slander you for your good behavior in Christ, they might be ashamed. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Jesus Christ suffered for all our sins, the just for the unjust so that He might bring us to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit.

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. When have you suffered for doing what is right? What happened? Can you see any ways that the Lord was at work in those situations?

2. Why do you think we are better off (or blessed) when we pay a price for doing the right thing?

3. Why might followers of Jesus in Peter’s time be wrestling with fear? How does fear affect our relationships? How does following Jesus release us from fear?

4. What do you learn from Peter’s approach to evangelism in this passage?

5. How should gentleness and respect be our witness to others?

6. How does hope change our attitude and behavior?

7. How has Jesus’ example helped you when you have suffered?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Ask the Lord to help you trust Him today even if things are hard.

\*Ask the Lord to help you grow in gentleness and respect for those in your life that are far from God.

\*Thank the Lord Jesus that He has given you hope in any and all situations in your life.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

As we experience hard things in life, and we will, we are called to follow Jesus’ example. That means that we are called to share our hope when asked, live with integrity and a clean conscience and be willing to suffer for the sake of others just as Jesus suffered on the Cross so we could be forgiven and have new life. How will you do that this week?