

UNSHAKABLE: An Unshakable Peaceⁱ 1 Peter 3:8-17

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. I want to welcome those of you that are guests with us today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday. It is our prayer that our church already feels like home for you.

We would love the opportunity to connect with you. You can help us do that in one of two ways. You can text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you text that keyword to that number, you'll be sent a link back that will take you to a form to enter basic contact information. When you submit that form, it notifies me and I look forward to following up with our guests.

If texting isn't your preference, I certainly understand that. You can stop by our information center located in the lobby, under the banner that says, "Hope is Here." There we have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being with us this morning.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

I want to invite you to grab your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 3. We're in the middle of a teaching series called Unshakable, as we are working our way through the New Testament book of 1 Peter. So far, we've discovered our unshakable hope, unshakable walk, our unshakable love for one another, the unshakable church, the unshakable honor we show everyone, and how to have an unshakable family. Today we're looking at how to have an unshakable peace. We will be looking at verses 8 through 17 of 1 Peter 3, as Peter teaches us about peace.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: World Peace

One of the most popular questions asked of contestant at beauty pageants is, "What would you like to see happen in your lifetime?" To which the most common responses is, "world peace." Now, I don't think I've ever heard a good proposal, at a pageant, about how to achieve that.ⁱⁱ But that is a sentiment that is expressed by most people, not just pageant contestants.

According to an article by The New York Times, "Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 years, 8% of recorded history."ⁱⁱⁱ

I think this points to the desire for peace being something that is shared by us all. And we not only desire world peace, but peace in our homes, peace in our jobs, peace in our communities and peace in our country.

One thing that I seem to pray for often these days is peace in the Church. And not just maintaining peace in our own church, which is something we enjoy right now, but peace across the Big C Church. And that is the focus for Peter in our passage this morning. That even in the midst of surrounding chaos, Peter's desire is that the Church would be a testimony of true peace.

He is going to talk about steps to unshakable peace, practical application of unshakable peace, and then the results of unshakable peace. That will be our outline this morning as we approach this text. So, let's begin by looking at...

MESSAGE:

1) **Steps to Unshakable Peace.**

In the opening verses of our passage, Peter mentions 4 steps to an unshakable peace. Let's read verses 8 through 12 and then unpack those steps.

*⁸Finally, **all of you**, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

A couple of things of note here before we dive into the steps to peace. First, Peter continues what he began in chapter 2, verse 12, where he says, "We need to conduct ourselves according to the ways of Christ because the world is watching us." They're watching to see what being a Christian is all about. So, we have to live out our lives as a testimony. How Christians respond to government, to their bosses, in their marriages, and now in the church?

There is a document that dates back to 2nd Century A.D., written by a Church Historian by the name of, Tertullian. The document says that the Roman government was so disturbed about the growth of the early church that they sent spies into their worship services to gather intel. On one occasion, a spy

came back with a report that saying, “These Christians are very strange people. They speak of One by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And, my, how they love Him and how they love one another.”^{iv} What a powerful testimony.

The second thing of note is Peter addressing, quote, “all of you.” He is writing to Believers scattered all over because of persecution. So, when he says we are to display an unshakable peace, he’s talking about in the church with believers. All of you, he says, have a responsibility to peace with one another.

You know, there are many things that might threaten the Church of Jesus. For example, In China, the church gathers under the threat of their lives. In other places, attempts are being made to censor what the church. And in other ways, there are actual attacks on the church. But there’s nothing that threatens the Church more than disunity, division, and strife. Because if people look at the church and all they see is a lack of peace, the conclusion is there’s nothing different inside the Church than the rest of the world.

So, Peter gives us 4 steps to peace with fellow believers. First, he says to...

A) Seek unity.

The first step to living in peace is to seek unity. Peter says in verse 8, “*⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind.*” As believers in Jesus, we are to be like-minded, to share the same perspective.

Now, we tend to view unity of mind as agreeing in everything. But this does NOT mean that we all think the same on every single subject. Peter, here, is addressing unity, not uniformity. The beauty of the Church has always been, from its inception, unity in the midst of diversity.

One of the things I have come to love about our church is the diversity within our fellowship. We don’t all look the same, have the same backgrounds, like the same music, nor do we all share the same political ideologies on everything. But we are unified in what is most important. The Bible is God’s Word, Jesus is God’s Son, He paid the price for our sin, in our place. And therefore, He is worthy of our worship and praise. Amen?

The word translated “unity of mind” in the original language means to be “of one mind in purpose.”^v Some translations translate this word as being

harmonious. That’s the idea that Peter is after. Peace will follow living in harmony.

When I think about living in harmony with one another, I think about our Worship Team. Each week, we are led by awesome people, incredible musicians, the best around! They love Jesus and use their gift to exalt Him. Isn’t our Worship Team amazing?!

But think about them. They embody the idea of harmony. They don’t look the same, sound the same, have the same gifting, play the same instrument, nor sing the same part. But this amazing team comes together, each playing their part, in unison, with one another and they make awesome music because of that. Our vocalists sing different parts and that is called harmonizing.

Now, you probably didn’t know this, but in their ears, there’s a click track that keeps them on beat, keeps them playing together. They also encourage each other as they play. I want you to hear a sample of what they hear when they lead each week. Watch this video [\[play video\]](#).^{vi}

How cool is that? I bet you didn’t know that. But did you hear the click, and the voice, and the encouragement they gave each other? That’s what we are supposed to look like, Church! And here’s what I want to point out. Each team member, on our worship team, must align to that voice in order to play in harmony. If they don’t, they no longer make good music for us to enjoy.

The way that applies to seeking unity is that we must align our lives to The Word, God’s Voice. And in that we find our unity of mind. And we display the beauty of the Church to a lost world. That’s the first step to experiencing peace. The second step is to...

B) Have compassion.

We will live more at peace when we are compassionate. Again, verse 8. *⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart.* The idea here is compassion. And notice the ingredients of compassion, sympathy, brotherly love, and a tender heart. Let’s look at those.

First, sympathy. The word means to have a mutual emotion.^{vii} Romans 12:15 helps us here. It says, “*¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*” Having compassion means we share the emotions of others.

The second ingredient to having compassion is brotherly love. Now, I think this is very practical and personal for Peter. Do you remember who Peter's brother is? Another disciple; Andrew. He was a disciple of John the Baptist when John said of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God!" So, Andrew then began following Jesus. The next day, Andrew ran and found his brother, Peter. And In John 1:41, it says, *"⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ)."* What a great brother! True brotherly love results in pointing one another to Jesus.

So, we have sympathy and brotherly love. The final ingredient to developing compassion is a tender heart. Now, this word literally means, "living with guts."^{viii} It carries the idea of feeling something so deeply that you feel it in your gut. Have you ever felt something that way? Well, Peter is saying that the driving force to showing compassion toward others is a gut-level sympathy which is rooted in a love for them. When we truly love someone, we show compassion toward them.

Can you imagine the peace we would all experience with if we truly lived this out? Peace is found when we seek unity, harmony, and when we develop compassion toward one another. The third step to peace is to...

C) Be humble.

Humility is key to getting along with other people, especially in the church. Again, verse 8, *"⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind."*

If we are honest with one another, I think we would all admit that we struggle with this quality. The reason for that is similar to the culture when Peter wrote this instruction. Humility was seen as a weakness. Pride was a way of showing self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-assertiveness, which are things that we celebrate in our culture today. So, when Peter tells us to have a humble mind, it goes against natural tendencies.

But humility is often misunderstood. I've heard it said that being humble doesn't mean thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less. Being humble requires putting others ahead of ourselves.

Isn't that what Jesus did? Philippians 2 captures Jesus' humility. Paul says, *"¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any*

participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." And of course, Jesus' motivation to humble Himself was how it benefited us.

When we are humble, we look toward the interest of others more than we do our own. Combine that with compassion and the seeking of unity, and you and I experience peace with one another. The fourth and final step to peace is to...

D) Be gentle.

Peter explains gentleness in verses 9 through 12. Let's look at that. *⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

It seems Peter shifts gears here. He's been talking about how believers interact with other believers. It would be an assumption here that Peter is now talking about when an outsider would do evil and revile a believer. Surely that wouldn't happen inside the church. But I think again this is something that Peter is addressing even within the church.

Listen, we're all broken people. None of us are perfect, even in the church, and there will be times that we offend one another. Sometimes the wound will serve to call us out where we need to be called out. But regardless why you've been offended, and by whom you've been offended, our response should be gentle.

Peter uses Psalm 34, in verses 10-12. This Psalm is about God delivering those who are afflicted.^{ix} This was a great choice by Peter as the believers he

was writing to could relate. His point is that amid being persecuted, reviled, and facing harsh treatment, remain gentle, depending on The Lord to deliver you.

He gives a practical way to be gentle. It has to do with our speech. We are to be gentle in what we say, even in response to wrongs. He says that we are to bless those that revile us. We are to keep our tongue and lips from evil.

The word, “bless,” means, “to speak well of.”^x In other words, the way we train our tongue and lips to avoid speaking evil is to speak blessing instead. Boy this is hard right?! But this is what it means, according to the context, to be gentle.

It is impossible to do this in our own strength. In the flesh, we want to tear into someone. We want to repay evil with evil in return. We like to give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But Jesus says to turn the other cheek. And the only way we can do that is to depend upon the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-24 says, *“²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³**gentleness** [there it is. And], **self-control.**”* Gentleness even in the face of evil, is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives.

So, the steps to peace are seeking unity, to have compassion on others, to be humble, and be gentle. We’ve looked at the steps to peace. Now, let’s talk through...

2) Practical application.

Peter builds on his examples of being gentle by addressing other specific applications of promoting peace. Look with me at verses 13-17. *¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵but 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, ¹⁶having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

Peter is saying that for the most part, people will not harm you for doing good. But that is not always the case. Sometimes we will suffer for doing what is right. But even in those circumstances we can have peace. He says, “it’s better to

suffer for doing good knowing that in the end, in Christ, you will be exalted and those that cause your suffering will be put to shame.

From a practical standpoint, we need to keep eternity in view. Because when we keep eternity in view, then our light and momentary troubles are nothing in comparison to what our future holds. And that kind of perspective allows us to live above any suffering we might endure. Whether that be a medical diagnosis, relational strife, being made fun of, bypassed for a promotion, or whatever. We don’t look for a reward in this life, because we are guaranteed one in the next. When we can truly arrive at that viewpoint, we will have the peace that passes all ability to understand.

So, we’ve seen the steps to peace and the practical application of peace. Now, quickly, let’s look at the...

3) Results of peace.

I see three results, benefits, to living out peace in our lives. First, ...

A) Blessing.

In verse 9 Peter says, *“⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, **that you may obtain** [receive] **a blessing**.”* Then again in verse 14 he says, *“¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, **you will be blessed.**”* Peter talks about being the recipient of a blessing when we seek peace.

The word “blessed,” means to be happy and envied.^{xi} When we seek to be agents of peace, the byproduct of that is happiness. So, we are the recipients of God’s blessings. The second result of living out peace in our lives is...

B) Opportunity.

When people begin to see the blessings, happiness, in your life, they naturally begin asking questions. How you can be so joyful and at peace? Peter recognizes that in verse 15. *¹⁵but 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.*** A defense means to communicate a well-reasoned, well thought out, case the peace you have.^{xii} See, when we’re a people of peace, others will want that, and we will in turn have opportunity to share the hope and peace that comes with a relationship with Jesus.

The results of peace are blessing and opportunity. But thirdly,

C) God's favor.

Look again at verse 12. ***12For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*** The eyes of the Lord means His mind's eye^{xiii}, His favor, is on those living peace. AND, God's ears are open to their prayer. In other words, God, Himself is watching over and taking care of us. And this result of peace is like a snowball, it brings more peace. God is in control, He's taking note of all that is happening, He's going to take care of me, and in the end, He will be the one to exact judgment. Whew! That's a lot that I don't have to worry about, and it is the result of living at peace.

We've seen the steps to peace, the practical application of peace, and the results of peace.

CONCLUSION:

But the question still is, "Where can we find this kind of peace? It sounds so awesome. How can we live at peace?" The beginning of peace is rooted in first having peace with God.

Romans 5:1 says, ***"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** In other words, peace with God is the result of having been justified. Justified is a big theological word that means to be made right. And we are made right, forgiven of our sin, by placing faith in Jesus as Lord.

GOSPEL

PRAY

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003; Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicators Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Books: Waco, 1984; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2004; William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1976; Max Anderson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude*, Holman Reference: Nashville, 1999; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 3*, published by Enduring Word Ministries, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-3/>; Troy Rackliffe, *Stand Firm in Your Faith: Message 6*, preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Michael Gossett, *Anchored in Peace*, message preached at Green Acres Baptist Church, October 2, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.qabc.org/episode/anchored-in-peace-anchored/>; J.D. Greear, *Together We Endure: How to Experience Good Days (in the Midst of Bad Ones)*, sermon preached at Summit Church, July 26, 2020, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/how-to-experience-good-days-in-the-midst-of-bad-ones/>; Skip Heitzig, *Rock Solid: How to Attract Files*, sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, February 16, 2014, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/compilation/65>.

ⁱⁱ Illustration taken from Michael Gossett.

ⁱⁱⁱ Chris Hedges, *What Every Person Should Know About War*, article published by The New York Times, July 6, 2003, accessed online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/books/chapters/what-every-person-should-know-about-war.html#:~:text=War%20is%20defined%20as%20an,people%20have%20died%20in%20war%3F>.

^{iv} J. Vernon McGee, *Commanded to Love*, article published by Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee, March 26, 2017, accessed online: <https://ttb.org/resources/articles-news/features/2017/03/26/commanded-to-love>.

^v Strong's Concordance, 3675, homophrón.

^{vi} Video courtesy of Kyle Shovan.

^{vii} Strong's Concordance, 4835, sumpathés.

^{viii} Strong's Concordance, 2155, eusplagchnos.

^{ix} Schreiner, page 165.

^x Strong's Concordance, 2127, eulogéó.

^{xi} Strong's Concordance, 3107, makarios.

^{xii} Strong's Concordance, 627, apologia.

^{xiii} Schreiner, page 168.