

“When you are slandered. . .” 1 Peter 3:8-18a

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Introduction

I. Defining Slander

What does it mean to slander someone? To slander someone is to _____ them. It is to harm the _____ of another person by lying about them, by falsely accusing them, or by misrepresenting their actions or intentions. When we slander someone, we rush to hasty or malicious conclusions, and then publish these conclusions as _____.

II. How the Bible speaks of slander

Slander is _____. Peter calls us not to “return evil for evil, reviling for reviling” (v.9). He quotes from Psalm 34, saying that we are to keep our tongue from evil, and our lips from speaking deceit (v. 10).

David, speaking as God’s anointed king, saw slander as worthy of _____, even ‘destruction’ in Psalm 101:3-5:

“I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil. *Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy.*”

Slander does not just stop with the tongue, however. Slander allows the wicked heart to justify _____. After reviling takes root in the heart, it often becomes a precursor for hurting the person physically. If you make someone out to be a criminal, or if you portray them as wicked and terrible—something even sub-human—it becomes easier to justify all kinds of violent acts against that person or group of people.

III. Our Response

A. Internal

v. 8: “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”

Before he even gets into the subject at hand, he calls the Church to be _____. Before we can respond rightly to reviling and insults leveled against us, we first must remember that we are _____ in Christ. Christians do not suffer slander and reviling alone. There is no such thing as a _____ Christian. Because we suffer for the name of Christ, all Christians suffer together.

Practically, this means we ought to _____ with our brothers and sisters when they face the cruel tongues of godless men. We ought to pray for them, encourage them, and refuse to give their enemies a hearing.

B. External

Peter spends a greater deal of his time on explaining how we ought to respond externally—to those who slander us. This is because unity as brothers is generally easier than moderation toward enemies.

Luke 9:55-56: “And he said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy people’s lives but to save them.’”

Peter calls us to *watch our* _____ and *watch our* _____.

Watch Your Tongue

v. 9: “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless.

v. 10: “Let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.”

Watch Your Hearts

v. 14-15a: “Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy”

IV. Be Prepared to Give a Defense

As we do respond to those who revile and slander us, Peter expects our response to be grounded in our _____. This hope, according to Peter, should be so unexpected, so lively, so apparent to our opponents and those watching from the ‘sidelines’ that they are caught off guard by it. It should strike them as entirely strange. And they will start asking questions.

Peter says that we should be prepared to answer this question. We should be prepared to give a defense for the hope that we hold fast to.

v. 15: “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.”

Conclusion

v. 18a, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.”