

1 Peter 3:13-22^{iv}

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

^{iv} About the Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Today's reading explains how Christians should relate to those outside the community. Peter recognizes that those who follow Christ often encounter painful trials, just as Christ did. The Christian's call in Christ is both the reason and the source of strength to answer evil with good.

Christians are to give an explanation, possibly before formal tribunals but more likely in day-

to-day interactions with hostile neighbors, for the hope that characterizes their attitude both in the present and toward the future. The Christian attitude is grounded in Christ's example.