

FORGED IN THE FURNACE

Responding to Anti-Christian Bias (1 Peter 2:11-24)

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Forged in the Furnace (1 Peter) pt. 5

THE BIG IDEA

Living as God's exiles scattered in Babylon inevitably leads us to experience bias against our faith. God calls us to respond to this bias with abstinence from scandalous behavior, pursuit of shared values, respect for social order, and imitation of Christ's way of life.

OPENING

- Why do you think that non-Christians in the U.S. ranked Evangelical Christians so unfavorably in last year's Pew Research Study?¹
- What are some examples of bias against Christians that you have noticed in the public square?

DIGGING DEEPER

- The "sinful desires" of v. 11 refer to any impulse that needs to be curbed.² While we typically associate this with sexual impulses, what other impulses might this include? How do these uncurbed impulses wage war on a Christian's soul?
- Peter's primary strategy for silencing bias against Christians is "doing good" (v. 12, 15). This means, "*Peter expects that his readers can live in a way that will be recognized as good even by the standards of unbelieving pagans, which presupposes overlap between Christian and non-Christian...values.*"³ How does this reinforce what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:14-16? What does this imply for how we should live "good lives" in our setting today?

¹You can read this survey yourself at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/15/americans-feel-more-positive-than-negative-about-jews-mainline-protestants-catholics/>

²Karen Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), p. 233.

³Jobes, *1 Peter*, p. 233.

- Christian leaders throughout history have urged Christians to submit themselves to the laws and authorities of the culture in which they live, no matter how biased against Christians that culture might be. Exceptions to this would be any law that *commands* a Christian to do something God explicitly forbids and any law that *forbids* a Christian from doing something God explicitly commands. What would be examples of these kinds of laws? How might a Christian disobey these laws while still living respectfully of the social order they find themselves in?
- Jesus is the ultimate example of someone who responded to suffering by doing good. According to vv. 22-24, what did Jesus refrain from doing? What did he do? Karen Jobes points out, “*The past suffering of Christ is the present condition of believers, while the present glory of Christ is the future glory of those who follow in the steps of the suffering Christ.*”⁴ How is Christ’s present glory a foretaste of our future glory? How does this help us entrust our future to God?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Many Christians today respond to bias against their faith with outrage, anger, protest, and retaliation. Why do you think this is? What effect does it have on the Christian who responds this way? What effect does it have on the culture?
- What is one “good” action you can take this week that those who are not Christians would also recognize as good?

PRAYER REQUESTS

⁴Jobes, *1 Peter*, p. 264.