

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 16TH - 17TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

## UNRESTRAINED (1 PETER 4:1-6) REMEMBER 3:13?

The rest of 1 Peter hinges on v3:13: "Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good?"

- Jesus received suffering for the things He did and said that honored God. In a similar manner, **we too will suffer because we stand firm on biblical teachings.** We should have "the same understanding."

## ARE WE "FINISHED WITH SIN"?

Peter tells us that true Christians are people that want to put a distance from themselves and sinful living. **To be "finished with sin" doesn't mean we live perfectly, but that we have a desire to not intentionally sin.**

- **Pursuing things of the "flesh" (greed, lust, hatred, etc.) should be a closed chapter for the follower of Christ.**

## NOT WASTING ANY MORE TIME

We're encouraged in v3 to move on from the wasted efforts of living in the broken and "unrestrained behavior[s]" and "evil desires" of the world.

- The "unrestrained" lifestyles that damage people and bring about God's judgment are **drunkenness, orgies, carousing** (partying/intoxication), and **idolatry.**

## SURPRISED AND SLANDEROUS

V4 is provocative! The hedonistic Romans, much like our culture today, were "surprised that [Christians] don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you."

- **A genuine Christian life will always look bizarre to mainstream culture, and what begins as surprise, will lead to a tearing down of the character of Christ-followers.**

## HOW WE TREAT HOSTILE PEOPLE MATTERS

We need not forget the previous chapters teaching on how we handle hostile people.

**We are to respond to persecution with gentleness, love, and respect.**

- Jesus is the perfect and righteous judge who will hold all of us into account. We do not need to try and take vengeance into our own hands.

## ALL EVIL WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

Why is it important that we not only abstain from evil but also treat ungodly people well? Because **one day, Jesus will return and hold all people accountable for their lives.**

- Peter said the gospel is given to us because **even if we're "judged...by human standards" and die, we will live forever because we lived by God's standards.**

## ALERT & AWARE (1 PETER 4:7-11)

### WE DON'T HAVE FOREVER

All of the major events in God's plan for mankind's redemption have taken place, and all things are set for Christ to return except for every person having the opportunity to hear the gospel (Matthew 24:14).

- Even if this takes generations, we all have finite lives and we're not promised longevity. This means **we must live intentionally.**

### FIRST, WE MUST HAVE A PRAYER LIFE

We are to not only pray, but to purposefully pray with a clear mind for others, for the Kingdom to advance, and for our needs.

- We have a tendency to be selfish and sporadic with prayer, but **the Bible tells us to be focused on God and others before ourselves and to make prayer a priority in our daily lives.**

### SECONDLY, WE MUST LOVE THROUGH FORGIVENESS

Peter says we are to "maintain constant love for one another since love covers a multitude of sins."

- *Covers means willing to forgive.* True love for others "doesn't keep a record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13). **We're to show grace and forgive without ignoring, justifying, or condoning sin.**

### THIRDLY, WE MUST DEMONSTRATE A DEEP LOVE

**Love** in this chapter is the Greek word **agape**, meaning the deepest kind of love.

- **True agape love is constantly being stretched to its limit by the demands made on it.** This means **loving people deeply is difficult and often painful, but it honors God and may bring many to Him!**

### SPEAKING AND SERVING (V11)

We demonstrate love for others by speaking the truth in love and by serving. This can be done in practical ways like hospitality, and in spiritual ways through the gifts of the Spirit.

- **We're called to teach, feed the poor, lead others to Jesus, display grace and mercy, pray for healing, etc. because as Christians, we're to love people.**

### LIVING LIKE JESUS IS COMING BACK

We live in sobriety and awareness of Jesus and the Word because we not only love Him, but we understand we will be held into account. We should also love others enough to live in such a way that we can touch their hearts and bring them to Christ as well.

- **Life must be lived on purpose, both for our sake and the sake of those around us!**

## SUFFERING (1 PETER 4:12-19)

### "THE FIERY ORDEAL"

When Peter told the persecuted Christians not to be surprised by suffering, his choice of words may have hit close to home.

- At this time, Nero wasn't only inciting social persecution, but was taking Christians, dipping them in tar, and lighting them on fire for candle light in his garden in Rome. "Fiery" was an eerily sobering word.

## NOT SURPRISED, BUT STILL ASTONISHED

Though Christians shouldn't be surprised by persecution, we should always be disturbed by the fact that it happens.

- We must be careful that long-term astonishment of evil doesn't cause bitterness to rise up in us. **The trials of this life must be met with a dependence on God and a trust that He is in control.**

## REJOICING IN SUFFERING?

When we suffer for biblical principles, we identify with Jesus because He suffered for righteousness.

**Persecution also makes us more reliant on Jesus.**

- **Prayer during persecution grows us closer to Jesus, and we learn to trust and appreciate Him more because we understand more clearly what He did for us.**

## SOMETIMES SUFFERING IS OUR FAULT

Many people suffer because of poor choices or sinful lifestyles. We're not to think God is with us when we live as **murderers** (also hatred), **thieves, evildoers,** or "meddlers."

- **There are ramifications for our actions, but we often act as victims and blame shift. Not all suffering is God's will. Many times, we suffer because we're not living correctly.**

## SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRUTH

Many people reading this letter were being persecuted because they identified as Christians and stood by biblical teachings. **We will be marginalized or even hurt if we stand firm on the Word.**

- **If we claim Christianity but have never been marginalized or hurt, our faith may not be as evident or genuine as we think.**

## TWO KINDS OF FIRE (V18)

Persecution is part of **the refining fire** God allows us to go through in life in order to bring us closer to Him, gain empathy for others, and make us stronger believers. **If we lean on Christ through the "fire," we will be saved.**

- **Those who despise the refining fire of God will eventually face another kind of fire, God's judgment.**

## TRUSTING A "FAITHFUL CREATOR"

If we are to "suffer according to God's will," we must "entrust [ourselves] to a faithful Creator while doing what is good."

- **If we are to make it through this life and into Heaven, we must not only trust God in all seasons, but we must live in an obedient manner that honors Him and His Word.**

## UNRESTRAINED AND UNAWARE

- We live in a culture of unrestraint and willing ignorance of the consequences of their lifestyles. This is not how Christians are to live.
- We are to understand that we are not promised tomorrow. So, **we must live intentional lives devoted to Christ, who will return and hold us into account.**

## IT IS EASY TO SLIDE BACKWARD

- We start to falter in life when we're not trusting God through hard times or following the teachings of the Bible every day.
- When we are not **consistently and intentionally praying, reading, and in community,** we not only start to slip away, we do not love others properly, and the Kingdom of God doesn't advance.

## WHICH FIRE DO WE WANT TO FACE?

- In a society that foolishly evades the conversation of consequences and responsibility, we set ourselves up for a chaotic present and a devastating future.
- **We will all face a fire. The question is if we want a fire in this life that actually builds us up and saves us, or one that will be eternal judgment.**

## A LOVING AND FAITHFUL CREATOR

- God's will is not for anyone to face His wrath or eternal judgment (2 Peter 3:9). **God loves us and wants the best for us now and forever.** That is why He wants to refine us.
- Though standing firm on Jesus and His Word is difficult, it will not only improve our lives now, it will save our souls.
- We must put our trust in our "faithful Creator."