

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

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

FINISHED WITH SIN (1 PETER 4:1-6)

Because Jesus suffered in the flesh, we're to **"arm ourselves"** with a certain understanding when it comes to sin (vs. 1).

- How does understanding suffering help us **live in victory over sin**?
- First, when we understand what **our sin did to Jesus**, it causes us to hate sin and want to forsake it forever!
- Jesus had to **suffer because of our sin**.

Christ experienced **death in His body because of the sins of others** but was made alive by the Spirit.

- So, when **we are willing to suffer because of the sins of others**, we experience a new kind of life in the Spirit that we didn't know before.
- **"Finished with sin"** doesn't mean we attain perfection through suffering and never will sin again; it's just that **suffering enables us** to live in a new kind of victory.

Sin dominates our lives most often because we **lack the willpower to embrace the path of self-denial**.

- It's impossible to willingly suffer for Christ unless we **embrace self-denial**. But when we do, that trains us to practice **self-denial over sin**.
- It's more likely that we'll spend our, "remaining time" **no longer living for human desires**, but for the will of God (vs. 2).

"Arming ourselves with an understanding of sin" also involves us **understanding the meaninglessness and emptiness of sin** (vs. 3).

- We've all already spent enough time pursuing sinful things that are **ultimately massive wastes** of time.
- In the moment, sin might offer us **temporary pleasure**, but in the end, it always pays us out in pain, regret, and shame.

The list of willful sins that unsaved people choose to do **emphasizes behavior that lacks self-restraint** and feeds the desires of the flesh (vs. 3).

- Sadly, many Christians think that they're "missing out" by **not engaging in the very things** that cause the most destruction and heartache in our world.
- The world lives for these things, but **we as Christians have an understanding** of how destructive and evil they truly are.

When we don't **join the unbelieving world in ungodly behavior**, their reaction towards us is usually not neutral—they act surprised and often slander us (vs. 4).

- The presence of righteousness **always brings conviction**, but when a spiritually dead person feels conviction, they often don't know what to do about it and **simply attack the ones that might have caused them** to feel that way.

We may be judged by unsaved people in this life, but one day they will be **judged by God** (vs. 5).

- On the day when this account of their lives is required, **all who have lived in the sins Peter has described** will clearly see how foolish and wasteful they have been.
- Even those who have lived the **"good life"** of pursuing sinful pleasure will see that life as a **massive waste in the measure of eternity**.

"Those who are now dead" (vs. 6) seems to refer to deceased believers in Christ.

- While they were alive, **the gospel was preached** to them.
- While on earth, they were **judged in the flesh according to human standards**, or even condemned or martyred for their faith.
- But now, they **"live in the spirit"** because **they lived according to God's standards**.

ALERT & SOBER-MINDED (1 PETER 4:7-11)

"THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR..." (VS. 7)

Christianity teaches that time is marching towards a glorious conclusion and consummation where **Christ will return to the earth** to judge evil, reward the righteous, and set up His Kingdom.

- The world will grow increasingly evil as we get closer to that day, and **the deceptions of sin and wickedness will grow increasingly** more sinister and cunning.

Because of this reality, we're to be **"alert"** and **"sober-minded"**—the idea is that we're to be **expectant and levelheaded**.

- We're to be ready for Christ's return at any time, but we're not to get caught up in **the frenzy or madness of end time conspiracies** or date setting either.
- We're to be alert & sober-minded about the hour in which **we're living so that we can be people of prayer** (vs. 7b), which transforms us to be people of active faith and service.
- **Matthew 24:44-46**

"MAINTAIN CONSTANT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER..." (VS. 8)

The love of God that we're called to extend to one another is **patient, kind, and it isn't self-centered**.

- But the one attribute of Christian love that is the most unique is that it's a **kind of love that repeatedly forgives and extends grace** in the face of sin and failure (Prov. 10:12).
- Because we love, we're willing to pour out constant **forgiveness and grace** when we're sinned against.

"BE HOSPITABLE..." (VS. 9)

Our love is shown in **our hospitality**—the friendly and generous reception of guests, visitors, or strangers.

- Not only are we to open **our lives, homes, wallets, schedules, and what we've been blessed with by God** to others, we're to do so **"without complaining."**
- When is the last time you **opened your schedule or home for someone you didn't know** very well in order to minister to them?

"USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR MINISTRY..." (VS. 10-11)

If we've been born again, we have the Holy Spirit, and if we have the Holy Spirit, we've been given **supernatural empowerment from God to minister and serve** in the body of Christ.

- We're called to manage the gifts we've been given as **"stewards"**—to use and invest them to serve others for God's glory! Not to sit on the sidelines because of **fear, apathy, or laziness**.
- If we've been given a **"speaking"** gift—let us use it to speak the truth of God as we **encourage, upbuild, exhort, and serve the body of Christ**.
- If we've been given a **"serving"** gift—let us use it to meet practical needs within the body while **we lean into the strength that God** provides.
- In all of this, we have a responsibility to be about our Master's business so that **we're ready** for the day He returns.

THE FIERY TRIAL (1 PETER 4:12-19)

Every Christian who seeks to live a godly life will experience a **certain amount of persecution** (2 Tim. 3:12).

- It may be **on the job, in school**, or in your family, and it may come in the form of ridicule, losing friends, or of **getting slandered**.
- Unfortunately, for many of us, these **"fiery ordeals"** of persecution and suffering are disorienting, and **we have no idea how we're to respond**.

1. DON'T BE SURPRISED (VS. 12).

Persecution or alienation of Christians isn't some strange, **unusual occurrence that only happens in certain contexts**—it's a normal part of the Christian life.

- We have **different lifestyles, values, worldview, and Master** from those in the unbelieving world.
- Satan is the god of **this world** (2 Cor. 4:3-4), and he hates us! So **we should expect opposition**.

2. SEEK GOD'S PERSPECTIVE (VS. 13-14).

Our suffering means fellowship with Christ—it's an honor and **privilege to suffer with Jesus** and be treated by the world the way it treated Him (vs. 13). If we share in His sufferings, we'll also share in His glory.

- Jesus will reward us greatly for choosing to follow Him in spite of the **opposition, persecution, and ridicule** we will endure on the earth.

Our suffering connects us to **a unique ministry of the Holy Spirit** (vs. 14).

- We experience the blessing of the Spirit of glory **"resting" on us**.
- We see this in the story of Stephen's martyrdom—he was **"full of the Holy Spirit"** and even saw Jesus in Heaven and experienced God's glory (**Acts 6:15; 7:54-60**).

3. EXAMINE YOUR LIFE (VS. 15-18).

When we experience **persecution or suffering**, we need to be honest with ourselves about some things.

- We must be willing to ask, **"Am I really suffering because of my Christian faith, or am I suffering because of something else?"** (vs. 15)
- Sometimes we're suffering because of sinful choices, rotten attitudes, **hurtful words**, or prideful demeanor.

We should feel a degree of shame if we're suffering because of our own wrongdoing, but **if we're simply suffering** as a **"Christian,"** we have no reason to be ashamed (vs. 16).

- Judgment begins with us in **"God's household"**—but this kind of judgment of suffering has a **positive, purifying effect on us** (vs. 17).
- Suffering evaluates **the allegiances and priorities** of our hearts.

Now is the time of our **"fiery ordeal,"** but the **ungodly will have their fire later**.

- This path of salvation comes with great difficulty as the fire we endure now purifies us, but the fire the ungodly will endure will **punish them** (vs. 18).
- So if all of this is true, let those of us who suffer according to God's will **entrust ourselves to our faithful Creator** while we continue to do what is good (vs. 19).

"BE ON THE ALERT, STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH..." 1 COR 16:13

- Is the **desire of our heart** to be "finished with sin"? Or are we still **living according to human and worldly desires**?
- Do we know how to say **"no" to our flesh**?
- Are we okay with saying **"no" to the unbelieving world by not joining in on things** we know are wrong and sinful?
- Are we **expectant and levelheaded** about Christ's return? How are our prayer lives?
- Are we willing to **extend repeated forgiveness and grace** towards those who wrong us as we show them God's love?
- Are we **hospitable and welcoming**?
- Are we using **our spiritual gifts to serve**?
- Are we surprised when **the unbelieving world doesn't share our values** and rejects us?
- Do we seek **God's perspective and comfort** as we're experiencing hardship and persecution?
- Are we really suffering as **"Christians,"** or are we **suffering because of something else**?