
a *Grace Notes* course

First Peter

Lesson 7

1 Peter 3:15 to 4:5

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1 Peter

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1 Peter 3:15 to 4:5**1 Peter 3:15**

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"

But sanctify

"But" -- contrast. Instead of allowing fear to grip your heart, let the contents of this verse be your mode of operation. What is the remedy to "fear" and "trouble?" "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

The context is still the quotation from Isaiah chapter 8. Isaiah spoke to Judah on the eve of the Assyrian invasion. His message -- God is all sufficient in His power. Isaiah spoke these words when a great conspiracy formed against him. They were eager to destroy his reputation. As storms of personal accusations arise against you, how do you handle them?

"Sanctify" -- The word "sanctify" means set apart. Since the Lord is supreme, give him a unique place in your heart.

Principle

Give God a special place in your heart.

Application

If we enshrine or enthrone God in our heart, we place Him first in our values. We make Him distinctively foremost in our lives.

It is our responsibility to "set apart" or enshrine God in our hearts. That makes us a "sanctifier." No one else can do this for you. Only you can set apart. Your parents cannot do this for you. Your wife cannot do this for you. Your husband cannot "set apart" Christ in your heart. This is your decision. You come to a crossroads in your life when you make this decision. You come to realize that Christ is your entire life, not just a portion of it.

"Lord, I am yours: lock, stock and barrel; hook, line and sinker; body, soul and spirit." That

relieves us from being the boss. The Lord alone has authority over our lives. Many Christians accept Christ as Savior but not Lord. "Savior, yes. Lord, no. Take your hands off my life. Mind your own business. I'll run my own affairs." That is why many of us spend a great deal of time in the divine wood shed.

When we back our belief with life and lip, we sanctify the Lord in our lives. If we do not sanctify the Lord in our lives, we have little to say. We cannot back up what we say. Life does not match lip. If non-Christians see nothing in us that supports what we believe, then we do more harm than good.

Do not write a check for \$10,000 if you have \$1,000 in the bank. Some people are all talk in witnessing. Their lives show they have not set the Lord apart in their hearts. It is better to write a check for \$1,000 if we have \$10,000 in the bank. It is our responsibility to write the check. We should back what we say with how we live.

We never know when an opportunity will present itself. We are creatures of mood and moment. At times, we do not feel like sharing our faith and the opportunity slips away. We lost the opportunity. Some of us may not even recognize the opportunity -- we are that dull spiritually.

"So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also" (Romans 1:15).

Set the Lord on a pedestal and put Him on the pinnacle of your life. Give Him His due. Crown Christ King in your heart. Bow before Him and say, "Lord, thank you for the sweet and the bitter. You have the right to do with my life what you please. My life is yours." Only committed Christians can live like this. Christ is more than their Savior; He is their Lord. He is more than a fire escape from hell. These Christians match their lip with their life.

the Lord God

God is "Lord." Once Peter himself said to God, "Not so, Lord" (Acts 10:14). Do you see the incongruity and inconsistency in this statement? If

we say, "Not so" to the Lord then we dare not call Him "Lord." How can we contradict the Lord as Lord??

Later in Acts, chapter 10, Luke calls him "Lord of all" (Luke 10:36). The old statement that "If he is not Lord of all then he is not Lord at all" may not be fully true but there is some truth in it. He is not Lord over any area of our life that we do not yield to Him. He is still Lord in principle but not in that area of our experience.

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). "For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:8-9).

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality" (Colossians 2:23-25).

in your hearts,

"Hearts" -- our entire being. The heart is the center of the self. Reverential awe should rest at the center of self. "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

Principle

God holds the right to rule our lives.

Application

The New Testament calls Jesus "Lord" 663 times and "Savior" 16 times. Jesus expects to be Lord of your life. He insists on being Lord of your home. He will not play second fiddle to your priorities.

The earlier we learn this lesson, the better. That will keep us from treating our own opinions as the most important. He is Lord of our work. Whether you are an employer or an employee, He must be Lord at your workplace. He must be Lord at school. You dare not cheat because it is outside the domain of Jesus' lordship over your life. He is Lord over your financial life and budget. He is Lord of your sex life. Your eyes and ears are His. You do not watch or listen to things that displease

him. He has the right to do anything He pleases with His property without any whining from us. Our lives are not our own; they are His.

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

When we set apart the Lord we make Him #1 in our lives. He is priority.

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

Do we suppose that we can ignore Jesus' lordship and still expect God's blessing upon us? The more we make much of Jesus the more blessing comes our way. It is impossible to make too much of Jesus. Nothing delights the Father more than making much of Jesus Christ (glorifying Him).

Jesus is not content with 90% of our affection. Your wife would be very unhappy with you giving 10% of your love to another woman! We cannot reserve anything for ourselves and still call Him Lord of our lives. He will not play second fiddle. He will not take a minor role in your business or home. He cannot be Lord and take second place.

Putting Christ in the center of the heart will orient us to eternal things. If we give Jesus Christ singular place in our hearts nothing can impair our proper orientation to life. If we come to a reversal in life, we maintain stability.

Without this, we are vulnerable to the whims of life. If our relationship to God is the most important thing to us we can never lose that.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." Because of the immutability of Christ, the chances and changes of life cannot touch us. Even in suffering we are free from instability. None of us can escape suffering but suffering cannot invade the things that we value the most.

and always be ready to give a defense

"Always" -- we are ready at any time to share Christ. Our defense of the faith should not simply be on occasion but we should "always" be ready to do so. Be ready to testify at a moment's notice.

"Be ready" -- prepared. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. In the plural "ready" means to be ready in many different ways. There is no one way to witness for Christ. Each individual is different so we must take different approaches with different people. We need to be flexible in our appeal. If we stereotype our method, we will not reach some people. Those who occupy their minds with the Lord are then always ready to share their faith.

Secular Greek used the word "defense" in the court room as a legal term meaning to talk off from. It used "defense" for an attorney who, by talking, got his client off a charge. This is oral defense of Christianity.

"Defense" occurs 8 times in the New Testament.

"But the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17).

Principle

Every Christian's faith is on trial and the juror asks us for evidence of our Christianity.

Application

Our neighbors, the jurors ask about the evidence we have for what we believe. They consider charges against Jesus Christ. We should present a good case for Christ in the courtroom of life. Can you defend your reason for your life as a Christian?

The world is suspicious of Christians. It is inevitable that they will call upon Christians to justify their belief. "Tell me how you know your sins are forgiven." Eventually people will detect that there is something different about you. You do not operate like most people. When this stirs their curiosity you will have an opportunity to speak the gospel.

Many people have the custom of writing off Christianity as so much religion -- "Everyone has a religion and you have yours. After Christians go to church on Sunday they live different on Monday. It makes no impact on their lives." True, most people do not let their religion interfere with their lives. They might as well trade in their testimony. What good is it? What is different about your life?

Are you ready to orally justify your case for being a Christian? Do you give personal testimony to Christ? "Life" testimony is not good enough. We must give oral testimony to what we believe.

Christians should be willing to defend their faith. Do you believe that your faith is defensible? Are there good reasons for what you believe? Can you intelligently state your reasons for being a Christian? What is your position? Is your faith firsthand? Did you believe second-hand from your parents? If it is firsthand, then you have reasons for why you believe. Have you thought through what you believe?

The jurors will take the evidence of our lives, weigh it, and make their decision accordingly. Christians are on trial for their life, their Christian life. As the world examines us, they will make their judgment based on what they hear. They want information to form a judgment. They want an accounting of the evidence for our Christian life.

The truth of Christianity does not primarily depend on academic defense by theologians but on you and your personal testimony. You mingle with the world but theologians, off in ivory towers, rarely see the people you encounter. People in your sphere see you every day. Every day they form judgments and give their verdict about you. By this they determine whether Christianity is valid or phony, real or false, whether they want it or not. You are a walking defense of Christianity. You are on trial every moment of your life. How do you stack up?

Maybe you feel that you are not on trial. You see no need to defend the reality of knowing Christ. "After all, I don't know the Bible. I'm no theologian. I'll leave that for the preacher and theologian." This flatly contradicts Peter's point in this passage. If you do not defend Christianity you will lose the case. Non-Christian jurors pronounce your life and faith guilty of fraud. He says, "You are guilty of inducing others to part with their belief when you are no different yourself."

to everyone who asks you a reason

"To" -- Give a clear cut testimony "to" everyone who asks about why we believe what we believe.

"Asks you" -- While under duress, some non-Christians will ask Christians why they believe. They want to know about one thing -- our "hope." Hope in the Bible is more than a wish -- it is confidence. Our "hope" is our confidence about God and eternity.

The word "reason" in the Greek is our English word "apologetics" (to give a defense of our faith). To give a "reason" is to give a rational account for your claim to Christianity.

Principle

We need to know why we believe what we believe.

Application

People take greater interest in our life than in our theology. Personal experience makes a testimony effective.

Is your faith a first hand discovery or a second-hand story? Do you know why you believe what you believe? God does not ask us to preach. He simply asks us to answer with our personal testimony. "This is what I was and this is what the Lord did for me. This is what I am and this is what I am going to be."

Nothing is as potent as a personal testimony. On the witness stand defending the truth of Christianity, we cannot say, "I believe so and so." We must give witness to the facts. Our neighbors, the jurors, say, "We don't care what you think. We want to know what you know. What did you see or hear?" Based on our testimony, they will decide for themselves whether to accept or reject Christ.

In one sense, God is the true judge and our neighbors are the ones on trial. As He conducts court, He gives them a chance to respond to their advocate, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1-2). We bear witness to Christ. By sharing our personal testimony, we have the privilege of giving non-Christians an opportunity to accept the clemency God has already given them through Christ. If they accept, as we have, His finished work on the cross, they will possess eternal life.

Jesus Christ is our "hope." We have no hope apart from Him.

for the hope that is in you,

"In you" -- the in-you confidence. "Hope" in the Bible is not a wish about the future but a conviction and confidence about what God will do. When people who bad-mouth Christians see what this hope does for believers, they will marvel at Christians' stability.

"Because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Colossians 1:5).

"If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister" (Colossians 1:23).

"To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

"In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2).

"That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil" (Hebrews 6:19).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The Bible depicts non-Christians as having "no hope."

"That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Principle

Christians have confidence about time and eternity.

Application

Confidence comes with accepting Christ. Christians have stability about time because they know they have eternal life.

We will never do a good job witnessing until we are confident about our place in God's program. Christ is our hope, not our religion or good works. How the world needs to hear this!

Do you pass the suffering test? In case you flunked the test of suffering, you will face another exam by God. If we pass this test, we qualify to witness. One of your friends says, "Why do you not fall apart like you used to do?" Confidence brings stability in the adversities of life.

If you have not believed that Jesus paid the price for your personal sin, you can have confidence that you will have eternal life if you believe that Jesus died for your sin.

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18)

with meekness

"With" -- in company with. When asked about your hope, you answer in company with the two attitudes of "meekness" and "fear."

"Meekness" is in-wrought grace.

Principle

God wants us to witness with the attitude of in-wrought grace.

Application

If I have received grace from God, I should communicate with grace to others. Meekness has to do with treating others with a grace attitude. A grace attitude is one that acknowledges "everything that I have, I have from God."

Christians should not look down their self-righteous noses at non-Christians. Christians are sinful as well. We should not view ourselves as experientially better than non-Christians but simply recipients of God's grace. We need to extend the same grace to them that God does toward us.

We are no better than those without Christ. We need to remember what we were. We give our testimony in the spirit of what we were. We share with them our personal struggle. We put ourselves in their place.

We cannot win people with arrogance. An overbearing attitude may win an argument but it will not persuade non-Christians of the reality of Christianity. A grace attitude will disarm those we wish to influence for Christ.

Do you witness with the attitude that people must be fools if they do not accept Christ? Do you try to ram your belief down their throats? Is your approach to evangelism a bludgeoning method? The case for Christianity must come by the attitude of "meekness."

and fear

"Fear" -- respect or reverence. "Fear" means we respect people while witnessing to them. We recognize their significance as a person. They are a soul for whom Christ died.

The Bible sets forth many passages dealing with attitude in winning those without the Lord:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

"A true witness delivers souls, But a deceitful witness speaks lies" (Proverbs 14:25).

"Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:1-3).

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1).

"To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

"Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:33).

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Principle

The attitude of respect for people is a crucial aspect of the witnessing process.

Application

If non-Christians do not accept your testimony, you still love them. Be patient in your testimony with others. Make your testimony a process. Learn how to condense your testimony. Learn how to compress it. Also, learn how to enlarge upon it.

It is not our business to win people to Christ. That is the Holy Spirit's business. Our business is to share about our personal experience with Christ. We cannot force people into the kingdom. Give your testimony with respect for the person with whom you share your spiritual journey.

We will make mistakes in sharing our faith. We are not perfect. God does not expect perfect people to share their faith.

We are the only born-again person some people will ever know. We are the only conceivable person who will be able to reach them. We may be the best Christian that some people know. That is especially true with our family.

1 Peter 3:16

"Having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed."

Having a good conscience,

The phrase "having a good conscience" develops "with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). We meet criticism by living a life beyond reproach.

The Greek word "conscience" is wider than the English word. It is not so much the intuition by which we discern between right and wrong as the soul measuring of itself.

Literally, conscience means to know with. We are witnesses to ourselves. We testify to our own conduct. This is especially true of the

consciousness we have of ourselves in our relation to God. This is self-testimony. It is the result of our application of the Word to experience.

Our conscience will never condemn what we believe to be right. This is a conscience that springs from a "faith unfeigned" (1 Timothy 1:5). A good conscience is knowledge that we do right and are well-pleasing to God. It is a mind free from liability to itself.

"This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" (Acts 24:16).

A "good conscience" is the best way to set forth a testimony. "Having a good conscience" means holding to norms of the Word of God. These are God's standards, not ours. If we hold these standards we can handle any witnessing situation. When people detract from us, our standards speak to the situation. This does not mean that we never fail, but that we operate with consistency and integrity.

Principle

Consistency in conscience establishes credibility with non-Christians.

Application

Unjust suffering puts Christians on the stand for all to witness. When asked to testify in court, we speak with the credibility of our conscience. If we do not have a good testimony we will not bear witness properly.

Our conscience is the internal monitor that establishes our standards for comportment. If we violate our conscience, the monitor lights up. We grieve the Holy Spirit. If we are carnal Christians, we will not bear suitable testimony to the wonder of Christ. We discount what we say with how we live.

Our conduct must not give lie to our confession. We uphold our witness with our conscience. We show that the slander against us is a lie by the authenticity of our lives.

The Christian is both defendant and attorney. We defend our faith with our mouths and back it up with our lives. Life and lip must match for a powerful testimony.

When non-Christians speak evil of us as wrongdoers, we bear witness to them with a consistent testimony. A changed life gets their attention.

The previous verse referred to the Christian standing before the courtroom of those around us who do not know Christ. As we stand in the spotlight of this courtroom our conduct must match our testimony.

those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed

Conduct is the basis for Christian testimony. Conduct justifies our testimony.

The immoral conduct of a few Christian leaders can cast a pale over all Christians. This can blunt our testimony until we can establish our own character of conscience. In this way our conscience is no obstacle to our affirmations.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it" (Acts 4:13).

"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you" (2 Corinthians 1:12).

Principle

The best way to stop criticism is through a consistent life.

Application

We cannot escape criticism in this life. This is especially true for Christian leaders.

If we claim to be Christians and we live carnal lives, who will give a dime for what we have? Whom will we persuade to come to Christ? We meet criticism with changed lives that are beyond reproach. This will silence slander. It will disarm the critics of their criticism. The only unanswerable argument for Christianity is a consistent Christian life.

Does your life recommend Christ? Nothing we say with our mouth will undo the damage we do with our life.

1 Peter 3:17

"For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

For it is better,

It is axiomatic that Christians will suffer in God's plan. The only option is whether we will accept that suffering as the will of God for us.

There is a suffering of higher rank -- "better." It is better to suffer for "well doing" than for "evil doing." It is better to suffer for a just cause than to suffer for deserved discipline. All suffering is good for the Christian but undeserved suffering makes us partners in Christ's suffering.

if it is the will of God,

"If" -- In the Greek, this "if" is a wish. It is Peter's wish that Asia Minor Christians suffer in the will of God for well doing. "I wish it was true that you suffer for 'well doing' but it isn't true." Obviously it is not the will of God that we suffer for wrongdoing. It is better for us to suffer in the will of God than out of it.

Suffering is the sovereign plan of God -- "the will of God." If it is inevitable that we suffer in God's plan, we need to make sure it is because of a good testimony rather than a poor testimony.

"For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:19-21).

Suffering never comes to us except by the will of God.

"For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15).

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the

dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5:10-11).

to suffer for doing good than for doing evil

Some people are surprised that they suffer for doing the "good," yet that is precisely the will of God at times. If we growl, grumble and accuse God of injustice in our lives, it sabotages our living in His will.

Principle

Nothing is as important to the life of the child of God as the will of God.

Application

Suffering comes by the will of God. Nothing is more important than the will of God for the child of God.

What God ordains for us is His will. We are not only to be in the will of God, but we are to live to the will of God. We live an exciting life because God has something planned for us tomorrow and next year. Maybe tomorrow we will be in heaven. We do not know the future but God does. Therefore, we need not fear the future. We now live to God.

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2).

What God ordains for us is the best for us. Child of God, if you face difficulty and are at wit's end, come to rest in the will of God.

1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."

Even though 1 Peter 3:18 is one of the greatest verses in the Bible, Peter introduces it incidentally while dealing with the broader issue of Christian suffering. This superb section of Scripture sets forth the wonderful work of Christ on the cross.

For Christ also

"For" -- The previous verse declares that it could be the will of God that we suffer for well doing. Now Peter sets before us the greatest example of suffering, the Lord Jesus himself. By connecting

this "for" to verse 17 we see the connection between Christ's suffering and our blessing. This "for" guarantees our eternal blessing.

"Also" -- Jesus, like us, suffered for well doing. Jesus is not an example of suffering for non-Christians but for Christians. We cannot perfectly follow the example of Christ any more than we can imitate Rembrandt. Since we cannot follow his example, we cannot enter heaven and therefore we need a Savior. Only the death of Christ on the cross saves sinners. We cannot perfectly keep the ten commandments. We do not have it in us.

Principle

Only Christ can sufficiently suffer for sin in God's eyes.

Application

Some people complain "What have I done to deserve this?" They believe that all suffering is from sin. They gain satisfaction from this thought, "O.K., I had this coming. I'll stand up and take it like a man." When the pain is over they say, "There! I've paid the penalty. I'm square with God." This is double suffering, because now they grieve their Lord by suffering for sin rather than accepting the finality of Christ's suffering for sin.

suffered once

"Suffered" -- Jesus died on the cross innocently and undeservedly. This is the point of bringing Christ's suffering into this passage. Jesus suffered undeservedly and we suffer undeservedly.

At the cross God the Father poured all of the sins of the world upon Christ. Jesus and he died for all sin there. No more dying is necessary for sin. No one needs to pay any further penalty than what He paid. Now God is free to save those who believe in Jesus but only by way of the cross. He is satisfied with the suffering of Christ.

Principle

Only Jesus' suffering holds efficacy before God for our salvation.

Application

I submit to you the Bible fact of the eternal efficacy of the death of Christ. We cannot add to the finished work of Christ on the cross. Christ

plus nothing equals salvation. If this good news reaches your heart, you will enter into a right relation with God eternally. God will completely eliminate your sins eternally. You will know emancipation from paying for sins yourself. Christ's death eliminates all the sins of all time.

Christ's death for sin is the opposite of "good works" salvation. "Good works" gospel is spurious, a mere counterfeit of the real thing. Joining a church, baptism, trying to do good and being nice to your neighbor is not the gospel of the Bible. The finished work of Christ accomplished our redemption forever. The split second we accept this message God puts to our account in the bank of heaven all that Jesus is. This cannot happen apart from the cross. When we come to the cross this takes place.

Have you accepted Christ's death for your salvation?

once

"Suffered once" - once for all. Jesus suffered for sin once for all. There is no need for anyone else to suffer for sin. His suffering holds perpetual validity, not requiring repetition (Hebrews 6:4; 9:28; 10:2). The word "once" means a single occurrence -- one time. Jesus' suffering was a single occurrence to the exclusion of any other similar occurrence - once and for all, once and never again.

The word "once" shows Christ's suffering was conclusive in God's eyes (Hebrews 9:26-28; 10:10,14). Jesus' death for sin was unique because He suffered once for sin. This is in contrast to Old Testament sacrifices which were constantly repeated (Hebrews 7:27; 9:28; 10:10, 12, 14). Priests brought sacrifices repeatedly to the altar, but Jesus died once for sin to give us access to God.

In the New Testament, Jesus is the sacrifice for all sin for all time. Unlike the Old Testament sacrifices, his death occurred once. Christ's suffering for sin never to need be repeated. He eliminated any further sacrifice for sin. He paid the price fully. Now God can fellowship with us with integrity.

"For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God" (Romans 6:10).

Jesus defeated all sin for all men for all time. Jesus finally defeated sin in his death. There is not need for any repetition of his sacrifice because his sacrifice was sufficient for everyone for all time.

"Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another -- He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:25-28).

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

Principle

Jesus' death for sin was totally efficacious (effectual).

Application

On the cross, something happened that never needs repeating. Jesus suffered for sin and no one needs to suffer for sin again. Sin was finally defeated. On the cross, God dealt with humanity's sin in a way that is satisfactory for all sin, for all people, for all time. No one ever has to sacrifice for sin again.

Jesus' death eliminated any need for further sacrifice for sin. He paid the price for sin fully so we do not need to suffer for sin at any point. His sacrifice was the utter sacrifice. He fully paid the price for sin.

Something happened on the cross that never needs to happen again -- no one has to suffer for sin again. On the cross, God ended any further need for suffering for sin. The cross is sufficient suffering in God's eyes for all people, for all sin, for all time.

The work of Christ on the cross finished suffering for sin. We have a finished salvation, an

accomplished redemption. Nothing we can do can add to the finished work of Christ upon the cross.

We need not do penance for sin. Jesus is the only person who has the coin that God Almighty will accept in payment for sins because He was the only "just" person who ever lived. The good news is that He paid for our sins fully.

No further enactments of Calvary are necessary. No further sacrifice of the body of Christ is necessary because He suffered "once" for sin. He suffered once and for all. Any attempt to react to add to the price he paid on the cross discounts His finished work on Calvary. To reenact that work is blasphemy.

Have you accepted the finality of the suffering of Christ for your sin?

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12).

for sins

"For" -- The death and resurrection of Christ are the ground for what we do what we do. The word "for" carries the idea on behalf of. Jesus died on our behalf. Jesus' death on the cross is our substitute for suffering for sin. Jesus is the only sacrifice that could ever take away sin. His sacrifice was once and for all.

The word "for" explains Christ's example of suffering for doing right (1 Peter 2:14). Jesus was not exempt from suffering. His perfect life outraged people. This did not intimidate Him because He put His case in the hands of God. This should motivate the Christian to place their situation in the hands of God.

"Sins" interrupt the relationship between God and people (1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 2:2). Christ's sacrifice for sin resolves that broken relationship. He stood in our place to suffer for sin (Galatians 3:13). By Jesus' offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, He vicariously took our place. He died once for all sin. The whole object of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is to restore that lost relationship.

Jesus' sacrifice was substitutionary. The Father appointed Jesus to take the place of our suffering for sin. Jesus was God's delegate for hell. He took

our hell that we might have His heaven. This is a great interchange at least for us, not for Him.

Principle

Jesus was our stand-in for sin

Application

Jesus' work on the cross was vicarious. God's holiness demands sacrifice for sin.

When we receive a receipt marked, "Paid in full" it is a great feeling. Jesus paid our sin debt in full.

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12).

the just for the unjust,

One of the great titles of Jesus is the "Just." Jesus is the "Just" person. As the Just one He suffers for the unjust. His suffering brings cleansing to us when we accept His death on our behalf. Christ's person qualified Him to suffer for sin. 1 Peter 2:22 says Jesus did "no sin." He suffered for our sins, not His sins.

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

"For" -- instead of or in place of. Jesus' work was vicarious. He suffered in our place.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus took my hell. He died instead of me. He died to pay for my sins, not His. There is no credit to us that Jesus forgave our sins. No glory to us -- all glory to Him.

The object of Jesus' sacrifice is to restore our lost relationship with God.

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Galatians 1:4).

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

"Unjust" is a title for those without Christ. This means that those without Christ are unjustified. They are not declared right in God's eyes. They are not forgiven or pardoned. They do not have the benefit of Christ's death for their sins. They must bear their own sin.

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites" (1 Corinthians 6:9).

Principle

Jesus substituted for our place in hell by going to the cross.

Application

This is the substitutionary work of Christ in our place. We should have died on the cross for our sins. Jesus took our place there. The holiness of God demands that He reconcile His perfect righteousness with our sin. Jesus' death on the cross meets that demand.

Are you an "un"? Are you unjust? "Un" means no, not, negative. If you do not know Christ's death for your sins you are a big negative in God's eyes. What will alert you to your condition? An accident? What will it take to awaken you to your actual status before God as an "un"?

If you try to save yourself by operation bootstraps, you insult the integrity of God who made it clear that only Jesus' death on the cross can save us from sin. If we try to pay for sin ourselves with our religious pennies, we do not realize that we are totally bankrupt in God's eyes. In our bank there are no assets. We have nothing in the checkbook to barter with God.

In God's bank (Jesus' death on the cross) we have all the assists we need to hold eternal status before God. Have you come to the place where you are ready to stand solely on the finished work of Christ on the cross for eternal salvation?

that He might bring us to God,

The sacrifice of Christ brings us into audience with God.

The words "bring us to" means lead into the presence of someone -- to lead before, to bring

into the presence of, to bring to. This carries the idea of the ceremonial sense of "presenting" at court. Since Jesus takes the initiative this is His saving work, not ours.

At the court of kings in the first century there was an official called the Prosagogeus (the introducer). He gave access to the king. He decided who should be admitted into the king's presence. He held keys of access to the king's presence. The person who holds keys to go into the presence of the Father is Jesus Christ. He gives us access into the presence of God. Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18

Jesus' suffering brings us into the audience chamber of the King (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; 3:12). This is the right of access to God's presence. In secular Greek life an "introducer" would give access to the king. It was his function to decide who would be admitted into the king's presence and who was kept out.

Principle

The ultimate purpose of the cross is to bring humanity to God.

Application

We will never find God by ourselves. We would not know whether to go north, south, east or west. Only Jesus knows the way. Only He can bring us to God. Someone brought us into this world, now someone needs to bring us into the next world. Jesus is the only one who can bring us to God. John 10:16; Hebrews 2:10

being put to death in the flesh

The Romans put Jesus to death. Death was an experience that the Lord Jesus never knew from eternity. He constantly related to the other two members of the Trinity until this point. At His death He personally represented every member of the human race in His death. Even in His death, He brought good news.

"In the flesh" – the physical death of Christ on the cross. This defines that his death was a physical death. Here Peter transports us to the foot of the cross. It was the humanity of Christ that died on the cross, not His deity.

but made alive by the Spirit

"Made alive" comes from two words: to make and alive. This does not mean that Jesus was energized with a dynamic personality. It means His human spirit returned to His body. He became alive in His human spirit and body (Matthew 27:46).

At the resurrection, the Father restored Jesus to fellowship. Jesus' resurrection conquered death by His human spirit returning to His body lying in the tomb. Christ received resurrection. Jesus was in the grave for three days then the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead.

"Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:24).

"Made alive" means to restore physical life. God restored Jesus' physical life at the resurrection. Jesus restores our physical life for eternity when we come to Him for salvation.

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

Note the contrast between "death in the flesh" and "alive by the Spirit." We should not capitalize "Spirit" here. This refers to the human spirit of the Lord Jesus.

The resurrection of Christ is a major foundation fact upon which Christianity is built (1 Corinthians 15:17). Five different times Jesus declared that He would die and rise again (Matthew 12:39-40; 20:17-19; 26:30-32; Luke 18:31-32; John 2:19-22).

Principle

The resurrection is the foundation fact upon which Christianity stands.

Application

The gospel consists of three parts: the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Without the resurrection there would be no gospel.

"And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

Do you believe 1) That Jesus died for your sins (took your hell)? 2) That He was buried to confirm His death? 3) That He rose again to give you eternal life?

1 Peter 3:19

"By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison"

In 1 Peter 3:19-21 Peter focuses on two great judgments:

1) the judgment of Noah's day and 2) the judgment of fallen angels.

Peter presents the ark of Noah's day as the type of Christ's suffering on the cross. In verse 21 he gives the antitype (the reality behind the type) as salvation by Christ's baptism at Calvary.

By whom also

The remainder of this chapter is very difficult to interpret. The best interpretation is that Christ descended into Hades after his crucifixion to proclaim to fallen angels that their fall was unnecessary (2 Peter 2:4-5). This interpretation would equate the fallen angels with the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-2.

"By whom" refers to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit transported Jesus to Tartarus and enabled him to preach to fallen angels.

He went and preached to the spirits in prison

"He" refers to the Lord Jesus.

"Went" -- to be transported. The Holy Spirit transported Jesus to Tartarus, the residence of fallen angels. Tartarus is not hell but an underworld for demons (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

We better translate the word "preached" as, made an official announcement. This is different from the usual word to preach. It means to make an official announcement by a public crier. The issue is not the gospel here but a victorious proclamation to fallen angels that they did not have to fall because Jesus did not fall. Verse 20 clearly indicates to whom he made the announcement.

Jesus here asserts his triumph over the sin issue. Jesus came to undo the original fall -- the fall of angels. Angels were tested and failed. Jesus was tested and succeeded.

"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15).

"To the spirits in prison" -- fallen angels of Genesis 7 (2 Peter 2:4). This was an angelic infiltration into the human race. These angles could not repent but they were brought to subjection (verse 22).

Principle

God will one day vindicate Himself.

Application

God demonstrates His vindication of Christ in the resurrection. In His ascension, God seated Him above all angelic powers. As we embrace new life in Christ, we too overcome what brought the angels down.

1 Peter 3:20

"who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." who formerly were disobedient,

The people of Noah's day rebelled against God's message while the ark was of being built over a 120-year period (Genesis 6:3). The "spirits" of verse 19 are probably those who rebelled against God during this 120-year period.

People of Noah's generation remained hardened in disobedience of unbelief. With all the warning they received over a 120 years, they remained unmoved. They laughed at Noah for building such a ship on dry land. Their disobedience of unbelief scorned Noah's message.

The people of Noah's day showed negative volition over a 120-year period. This rebellion was an angelic inroad into the human race as angels married human females (Genesis 6:1-4). Jesus went to Tartarus to proclaim victory over Satan's scheme to mingle humans and angels. The incarnation of Jesus was no mingling of human and angel. Jesus defeated this angelic distortion by

taking on true human nature and living without sin throughout his life.

when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah,

God held back judgment for 120 years during the construction of the ark. God gave the people of Noah's day time to repent (Genesis 6:3).

"Longsuffering" -- God's patience was a long holding out under provocation. "Waited" comes from two words, wait and eagerly. The double compound means to wait out to the end. God's patience with their negative volition was extensive.

while the ark was being prepared,

"Prepared" means that Noah was in the process of fitting out the ark. The construction of the ark was a tremendous undertaking. No human ship builder showed Noah how to build a ship of such magnitude. The process of building the ark was itself a sermon of approaching judgment. People wrote him off as a religious "kook."

The ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Because of its' size, it attracted attention to itself. It drew questions about God's purpose in the world.

in which a few, that is, eight souls,

The eight souls were Noah, his wife, three sons and their wives (Genesis 7:13).

"In which" is the ark. They were saved by the ark, not water!! By analogy, Jesus is the ark.

were saved through water

This phrase says they were saved through water, yet the water could drown them. They were actually saved by the ark. The same water that buoyed up the ark drowned unbelievers. It was the same water but the difference was that those saved were in the ark. The analogy is that we died in the waters of Christ's death, the ark of eternal salvation.

The water buoyed up the ark, saving those on board. They were saved before boarding. They were also saved by being on the ark. On the other hand, those not on board were destroyed by water.

"Through" -- intermediate agency. The water indirectly saved the eight souls by buoying up the boat. The ark, built by faith in God's promise was a sign to Noah of a future salvation. The water was a type of death from which God delivers believers. God brings believers to heaven through the death of Christ. God shelters Christians in the refuge of the ark. God saves us through the waters of judgment in the baptism of the ark (Jesus' death). The ark (Jesus) suffered the water's judgment.

The water was the intermediate agency and the ark was the immediate, or primary, agency. The flood's fury fell on the ark but it did not sink it. It was buoyed because of it. This is a picture of Christ's death for our sin (verse 18). The wrath of God descended on Christ at the cross. When it looked as if all were lost, He rose from the dead! Judgment came upon Christ on the cross but He rose from the dead.

In the antitype, God saves the believer in the baptism of Christ at Calvary. The baptism of the ark is a type of this. It was Christ who was baptized into God's judgment on the cross, the antitype.

Water was judgment for the unbelievers of Noah's day. God immersed them in water. Those "under" water were unbelievers. Those eight people above water were safe. So the baptism here of the eight was a dry baptism, not a water or wet baptism. They were dry in the ark.

Principle

Noah's baptism in the flood illustrates our participation in the death of Christ.

Application

Through Christ's death, we die to sin and the penalty of sin. We are free from paying for sin ourselves.

1 Peter 3:21

"There is also an antitype which now saves us-- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"

There is also an antitype

The word "antitype" comes from two words anti (against) and type. An antitype is that which is set

over against the type. The antitype is reality (Hebrews 9:24). The eight people in the ark were the type, but now we have the reality. The reality is the point of this passage.

The type here is the ark, the baptism into Christ's death is the antitype. Baptism of the flood answers to the baptism of Christ's death. The baptism of the flood symbolically foreshadows Christ's death for our sins. This is the picture of identification with Christ in His death.

TYPE:

ARK – type of Christ WATER – type of Christ's suffering

ANTITYPE:

Baptism of Christ's death at Calvary, which now saves us—baptism

The antitype goes back to "water." "Water" is the antecedent (gender). The water represents judgment and symbolizes baptism in the death of Christ. As the flood wiped out the old world, baptism represents a break with our past life.

This baptism is not water baptism for believers. Those who were wet were unbelievers and they drowned. Baptism in water does not save us because those immersed in water died in Noah's day!

The waters of the flood saves, but only as a counterpart, not actually. Old Testament sacrifices were counterparts of the reality of Christ's death on the cross. Those sacrifices did not save them, only in type. Waters of the flood saved the inmates of the ark only in type.

The ark suffered the judgment of the storm of the flood. The ark was baptized by the flood. Believers were sheltered in the refuge the ark. In it they came out of the flood to a new earth. By analogy, today God saves us by the death of Christ from our sin. At Calvary, Christ was baptized into the wrath of God. Through that baptism, believers are saved. God saves us by the death and resurrection of Christ.

(not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God),

This is not referring to the washing away of our sin. Baptismal regeneration states that we become a Christian by water baptism. The waters of

baptism cannot put away sins. Peter makes it clear that he is not dealing with H₂O. Therefore, this is not dealing with the external rite of baptism. Water baptism does not save for it is simply a counterpart or picture of salvation. To prove this, the Holy Spirit adds this parenthesis.

"Answer" is literally a pledge, the pledge of a good conscience toward God. This word is a business term. In business contracts, there are commitments that make it binding. God says to Christians, "Do you accept the terms of salvation?" Our position of death in Christ gives us a good conscience toward God.

From what does baptism save us? From a bad conscience. Baptism does not save from sin but from a bad conscience. Baptism is a testimony that we have been saved from sin.

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the pledge of our position before God. The resurrection of Christ saves us eternally. The resurrection is the factual indication that the death of Christ was adequate to save us.

At the resurrection and ascension, God accepts the death of Christ to save us. Here is the basis for our salvation. If the ark were not buoyed up by the flood, Noah and his family would have been lost. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we could not be saved. Our hope rests on the resurrection of Christ.

Principle

The resurrection of Jesus gives us confidence that God will accept us into His presence.

Application

Today, like in Noah's day, we escape through the baptism of Christ's death. In Christ, God gives us a new "status quo". This gives us a "good conscience toward God." When we enter the true ark (the death of Christ for our sins), God will save our souls. The resurrection stamps a guarantee that God will bring us into His presence in eternity.

God shut the door of the ark and those inside are safe eternally. God saves us in the same sense that the water saved those in the ark. The water lifted the ark and the death of Christ saves our souls.

1 Peter 3:22

"who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him."

If we read verse 18 immediately into verse 22 we understand the continuity of thought. Jesus died, rose again and then He

ascended and received exaltation from the Father. The sequel to the death and resurrection is the ascension and exaltation of Christ.

The context of the whole book of 1 Peter argues comparing the suffering of the Lord with the suffering of His followers.

Christians are not exceptional in their suffering. Believers in Noah's day had to endure the scoffing of the unbelieving. We endure the same today.

Verses 19-22 rest on the two phrases "being put to death" and "made alive in the spirit."

who has gone into heaven

This is Jesus' ascension. Peter witnessed Jesus' ascension personally (cf. Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:6-11).

and is at the right hand of God,

The right hand of God is the place of paramount honor, power and authority. This is the session of Christ in His human nature (Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him

Here are three ranks of good angels. God exalted Christ above Michael, above Gabriel, above the Seraphim, above the Cherubim. God exalted Him to the very apex of the universe (cf. Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

All are subject to Jesus in his ascension. This is the climax of the argument running from 1 Peter 3:18-22. There was no positional truth for Christians until after the ascension of Christ.

Principle

The ascension of Christ to the throne of the Father guarantees our standing in His presence.

Application

Opposition from man or demon cannot thwart God's program of saving His saints. Jesus gained the victory when He rose from the dead and made His victorious proclamation to the fallen demons. The final proof of this is His ascension when God gave Him authority over all the earth.

We live in a culture of freedom. This freedom passes into licentiousness. This opens us to demon activity. Jesus is the victor over these forces. God vindicates us in Him. We need not fear. We need to live in the light of the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

1 Peter 4:1

"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us

The "therefore" resumes the idea of 3:18 that Jesus suffered unjustly (1:11; 2:24; 4:13; 5:1). Jesus suffered undeservedly. He did not earn or deserve suffering. In 3:18, Jesus took up the cross and died for our sins. He was made sin and judged for us. He became our substitute and He is therefore the only way of salvation.

Peter now draws a new inference for Christians to deal decisively with sin. The phrase "arm yourselves with the same mind" indicates the impact that Jesus' suffering should make on us. Since He dealt decisively with sin on the cross, we should do the same. Since we are dead to sin positionally, we are free from the controlling power of sin.

in the flesh

Christ suffered in the "flesh" or body. As God, Jesus did not die. Eternal life cannot cease to exist. Jesus, therefore, did not die in His deity. That is why He became true humanity. As true humanity, He died with a human body. With that body He lived a life free from personal sin. It was as man that He suffered undeservedly. However, it was the second person of the Trinity who went to the cross.

Principle

If we are dead to sin we are free from sin.

Application

Christ suffered for us in His physical body. The child of God should hate sin because it took Jesus to the cross. Sin causes decay, degeneration, violence, corruption, disease and death. These things are the by-products of sin.

There are two reasons Christians suffer:

1. For sin
2. Undeserved suffering

God designs blessings for us for both types of suffering. If we sin, God brings discipline into our lives. His design for discipline is to restore, not punish. Jesus has already taken the punishment for our sin so God does not punish us for our sin. If we confess our sin, God converts discipline into blessing. Any suffering that comes our way after we've confessed our sin is undeserved suffering.

God designs discipline for our blessing. Whether we enjoy God's blessing for our lives, depends on our acceptance by faith, of God's correction. By faith we confess our sin and experience God's blessing. This means we believe that Jesus took the punishment for the sins we commit as Christians.

God blesses us in undeserved suffering as well. This is a major argument of 1 Peter.

arm yourselves

"Arm" means to put on armor, in the same way a soldier would. This is the only occurrence of the Greek word in the New Testament. "Arm" was used of a Greek soldier taking up his heavy weapons for war. The noun was used for a soldier who was heavily armed with javelin and large shield. The main idea is that this soldier is heavily armed.

Since Christ found it necessary to go to the cross and suffer because of our sin, we should develop the same kind of thinking. God wants us to significantly arm our minds with the same mind that Jesus had in the way He approached undeserved suffering.

There is a suffering that comes from breaking off from the fast crowd (4:1-6). The old friends will not take it lightly that you no longer run with them. This is a form of undeserved suffering.

Principle

To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Application

Are you ready for spiritual battle? Have you prepared yourself for spiritual war? Have you fitted yourself as a spiritual soldier with heavy armor? We need to become as heavily armed as we can to fight spiritual war. We need to deal decisively with sin.

As we bring the Word of God into the battle with sin, the Word changes our thinking about sin (Psalm 119:9,11). If we appropriate the Word to our lives, the influence of that fast crowd weakens. The influence of our peers weakens against the power of the Word.

Every time we resist temptation, we become more equipped to resist the next temptation. Each time we conquer sin makes us better able to face the next attack. As we build momentum of conquering sin, we become more spiritually mature. Spiritual maturity guarantees infrequency of sin in our lives.

also with the same mind

"Mind" literally means to put in the mind. "Mind" is a particular manner or way of thinking, a disposition or manner of thought, an attitude. This word "mind" can mean purpose, intention, design. This word deals with forming motivations.

This particular word for "mind" is a rare term in the New Testament. The only other usage of this word in the New Testament is in Hebrews 4:12:

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

God's Word discerns morally questionable motivations of our hearts.

We need to intentionally resolve to deal with suffering the way Jesus dealt with suffering. Jesus

formed His motivations and unbendingly followed the will of God in undeserved suffering.

Principle

Orientation to suffering comes by developing the mind (motivation) of Christ.

Application

Since we face a life-long battle with sin, we should deliberately arm ourselves with the motivation of Christ. With each occasion of suffering that comes our way, we need to form the motivational principle of Christ's attitude toward suffering. When persecution comes to our mind, we maintain an unbending orientation to follow God.

We need to draw on the same resolution Jesus did toward undeserved suffering. God wants us to think as Jesus thought. This has to do with forming the intention or purpose of our thought life. If we accept identity with Christ, we accept the principle that sinning is no longer acceptable.

It is the Word of God that forms the motivations of our thinking (1 Peter 1:13; Philippians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16). Every Christian has a built-in Bible teacher (the Holy Spirit) who makes the Word of God come alive to each situation. Non-Christians cannot think God's thoughts because they do not have the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is a closed book to them. Christians, on the other hand, have the power to conquer sin by developing the mind of Christ. Much of the Christian life is a life of the mind and motivation.

If we do not have our gun loaded and the safety pin off, we will not get a shot off in our spiritual battle. In the military, a new recruit goes through hundreds of drills. This changes his thinking into disciplined excellence. As Christians learn familiarity with our weapons and attitudes about how to use spiritual weapons, we form the attitude of Jesus.

We develop our attitudes the hard way, as a young person develops toughness of mind in boot camp. There are times when we wonder whether it is worth it all. That is where some of us quit and make our first mistake, because we do not arm ourselves with the attitude that Jesus did about suffering. When we get into suffering we must use

God's thinking process. This is the stuff by which God blesses us in suffering.

If you are ever going to suffer for blessing you must have a mental attitude when you are under pressure. When we live in jealousy, vindictiveness, implacability and worry, all suffering is cursing.

We correct that attitude by confessing sin. When we are in fellowship, the cursing turns into blessing. We can never harbor attitude sins and at the same time enjoy blessing in suffering. The longer we log attitude sins in our mind the greater the problem. It will be more difficult to reconcile as time goes on. The only thing that can break this momentum is confession, a shift into God's way of thinking. "Father, I am implacable and am fighting you."

It is one thing to confess sin and it is another thing to conquer that sin. We stabilize our Christian life with truth.

for He who has suffered in the flesh

By arming ourselves with the mind of Christ we will no doubt suffer the same suffering of Jesus. He suffered in the body and so will the Christian. If we suffer like Jesus suffered, we cease from sin. When we identify with Christ's suffering, we free ourselves from sin. God expects us to make a clean break with habitual sinning.

has ceased from sin

"Cease" means to stop, to make an end. When we think like Jesus thought, our sinful thinking comes to an end. This verse does not say that the Christian has ceased completely from sinning for that would be sinless perfection. No Christian can reach a stage of sinless perfection, but can come to a place of victory over sin.

This verse says that the Christian has ceased at a point in the past with the results going on (perfect tense). God gave us release from sin when we received Christ as Savior. God broke the power of sin at Christ's death. We can translate "cease" as "has been made to cease." We have been made to cease from sin in the death of Christ.

We do not fight for victory over sin because Christ has already won the victory. We fight a victory already won (Romans 6:6-11, esp. v. 7). God gave

us release from sin by Christ's final suffering for sin. We react to undeserved suffering as a saint, not a sinner. It is God who gave us release from sin. God broke the power of sin by Christ's death.

Also, God did not free from sins (plural) but from "sin" (singular). Sin in the singular is the depraved capacity for sin that we received when born into this world. The potential for sin is always present in that nature because it never improves, never alters or changes. It cannot improve by education or refinement.

Principle

Dead men do not sin.

Application

We lose our tenderness toward Christ if we do not deal decisively with sin. He died to deal with sin and he dealt with it decisively on the cross. If we do not deal with it ourselves, sin will invade our daily relationship with Him.

We deal with sin first in our mind, not by outward rite of religion. Our natural mind is dark and alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 4:18). That make us disingenuous with God. We are blind to our own wicked motivations until we deal with sin.

Some of us are so dull spiritually that we do not even recognize what springs from our sin capacity. Spiritual callousness sets in our soul and we become immune to deal with deadly sin in our lives.

We cannot know the will of God while in this shape. We remain under the jurisdiction of the old taskmaster of the sin capacity. A Christian who gets out from under this taskmaster makes a clean break with the momentum of sin. To take orders from the old slave master is to act out of character, like wearing a mask.

Identification with Christ's finished suffering sets up a compatibility with Christ that makes it difficult for us to sin. A man just released from the army has his discharge papers. He is now a civilian and free from the authority of the army. As he walks out of the gate of the military base he meets his sergeant who snarls: "Get in the kitchen and do the dishes." Out of force of habit he may have a tendency to obey but then he remembers

that he has his papers so he says, "Oh no, you have no more authority over me. I have my discharge papers."

When the sin capacity orders us to do something, we need to realize that we have a new boss. His name is Jesus. Whenever we sin, we act out of character. Alas, we do act out of character. When we do this we fail to appropriate the finished work of Christ to the sin master of our lives.

1 Peter 4:2

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

that he no longer should live

"That" is a term of purpose. We arm ourselves with the mind of Christ so that we can live to the will of God. When a person comes to Christ, our life changes. New birth transforms our experience right to the essence of our motivation (v.1).

The words "no longer" also occur in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

God does not want us any longer to live to self. The law of the jungle governs most people but the child of God does not rule his life by self. He is sick of living for self. As long as strictly self-interests satisfy us, we will remain outside the will of God.

the rest of his time in the flesh

"The rest of his time in the flesh" is the remainder of our time on earth as a Christian. We had a pattern of life before becoming Christians. Now we are oriented to the will of God for the rest of our lives.

When a person forms the new motivation of verse one, this also negates the old motivations. This is what Peter means by ceasing from sin (v.1). It is possible for a Christian to live with negative motivation throughout his lifetime. He can believe that the lusts of the flesh fulfill his ultimate needs.

for the lusts of men

The word "lusts" means desires. This is our lust pattern. The lust pattern manifests itself in sexual sin, approbation lust, power lust. We should no longer live to the desires of men. We do not please men as our ultimate aim but enter the domain of freedom from pleasing people.

If we live for pleasing people, we become puppets of their pleasure. They pull the strings and we do the jig. God's view is that when they pull the strings we do not dance. God's people should be free from pleasing people as their core value.

The world hates those who are different. The doctrine of this world is uniformity. It does not want a deviation from their values; it does not accept nonconformists, dissenters, protestants. It wants everyone stamped out on the same assembly line, everyone to be identical. God's doctrine is individuality. That is why everyone has a different fingerprint. Every snowflake is different and every leaf is different.

Principle

God expects the mature Christian to be free from peer pressure and independent of its influence.

Application

We no longer run with the fast crowd that we ran with before we became Christians. As long as we run with the fast crowd we will not enter the sphere of the will of God. When we break away from the fast crowd we move into the "no longer" bracket.

The fast crowd always looks glamorous. A girl graduates from high schools and goes to college and runs into the fast crowd. At first, that life appeals to her. Then later she breaks off from them after seeing the implications of living like this. She moves into the "no longer" bracket. As soon as she hits the "no longer" bracket, the fast crowd turns on her.

Some athletic or sorority organization puts pressure on her. Does she have the independence and maturity to stand alone? Some girls just jump into this crowd. Some groups, at first, look glamorous such as a football club. She thinks this is the greatest thing and these are the nicest people in the world. She goes around saying how

wonderful they are. They always present their best side until she breaks out.

When she breaks out, they immediately hit her with pressure. She sticks to her guns and keeps to her "no longer" bracket. When she does this she enters into the blessing of the will of God.

When a Christian enters the "no longer" category the opposite happens -- she enters God's blessing. This "no longer" bracket begins with confession and proceeds with inculcation with the Word.

but for the will of God

If we count ourselves dead to sin in the death of Christ, we can live to the will of God. When Christians live for the will of God, they affirm that the will of God is best for them. Making the will of God our rule of life demonstrates our essential motivation for life (v.1).

"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (John 7:17). If we are willing to be lead, God will show us his will. We must be willing to do his will before he will show it to us.

"So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done'" (Acts 21:14).

Acceptance of God's will is an important attitude for the believer. God opens doors and closes doors. God is the God of providence. No circumstance comes into our lives without His will. We do not knock doors down. We wait until He opens the door. A closed door is as good as an open door if the Lord closed the door. We love open doors but we are not enthusiastic about shut ones.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

We prove the will of God as God transforms our minds.

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

It is possible to understand the will of God. God's will is no esoteric idea difficult to grasp. God does

not tease us with His will by making us wonder what it is.

"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9).

Are you "filled" with the will of God? It is one thing to follow the will of God occasionally and it is another thing to fill our whole lives with the will of God. When we operate like this we will not run contrary to the will of God.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

There is no doubt about the will of God here. Christians need to develop a capacity for appreciation for what God has done in their life.

"For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15).

A life of integrity shuts the mouth of our critics.

"For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Peter 3:17).

The will of God is for Christians to suffer for integrity, not inconsistency.

"Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19).

Those who suffer in the will of God understand God's providence in allowing suffering to enter their lives.

The word "will" carries the idea of purpose and design. Purpose plus design equals the will of God. God has a purpose for our lives. When we enter God's plan for our lives we enter maximum blessing.

Principle

God wants our volition to comply with His volition.

Application

Suffering is for God's glory and our good (Romans 8:28). If we suffering according to the will of God, we will not allow Satan to slander God's character when we face trial.

We do not cave into the devil's lie when he subtly suggests "God is not good because he allows you to go through this problem. God is not fair or kind. If God is good he would never let you suffer like this." Satan loves to slander God's character when he tries us to the breaking point (Job 1:21; 1 Samuel 3:18; Matthew 11:26).

When we submit to the will of God, God settles our soul in the trial. We know that we are in the place that God desires for us. Would you rather be a failure in the will of God than a success out of the will of God? That is a hard pill to swallow.

We are safer in the will of God in the most savage place in the world than outside the will of God in the safest place in the world. We should not settle for cheap substitutes for the will of God. People try to sell us on substitutes for name brands. They claim that it is the same, only cheaper. We get what we pay for. Do you let Satan substitute something in place of the will of God?

1 Peter 4:3

"For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries."

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime

This phrase literally reads in the Greek: "For enough, the having passed by of time, the will of the Gentiles to work out." The "having passed by of time" means to go out of existence. Our life before Christ ceased to exist when we embraced Jesus as our Savior.

Now that we have become Christians, we mark that passage of time as non-Christians as a thing of the past. We clearly mark the distinction between our life before and after knowing Christ. Years without Christ were the wasted years -- the time between birth and new birth. Our entire career before Christ was a waste and we were sick of it. That life did not satisfy us. It was a wretched treadmill of vacuous sin. We came to hate our sin and bad habits.

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

"Lifetime" is time as a series of events. We get our English word "chronology" from this word. This is the time when we ran with the fast crowd. Peter lists that fast crowd's life style by six examples later in this verse. Some people get into this fast crowd in an instant. (Maybe that is why they call it the "fast" crowd!) Before coming to Christ we simply put in time on Earth. We went through the motions of life without any true purpose or meaning.

"Enough" means sufficient, adequate. Peter greatly emphasizes this word in the Greek by being placed first in the sentence. Living that life in the past is emphatically sufficient! "Enough" pertains to what is sufficient for some purpose and resulting in satisfaction. We came to a place when we said, "Enough is enough already! I have had it with that kind of life. It does not satisfy."

"Sufficient for the day are its troubles" (Matthew 6:34)

Principle

Knowing Jesus personally gives ultimate satisfaction.

Application

At a point in our life we came to realize that our former life without Christ was "enough." We had our fill of it. When we met Christ that life no longer satisfied us.

It is difficult for us to think about past sin and the harm that we did before coming to Christ. Our sin built upon itself until it sent us into a spiral downward. Sin is not a static thing because it creates a momentum of sinning. At the point when sin completely controlled us, it was only then that we came to realize the futility of our lives.

in doing the will of the Gentiles--

Peter encourages us to live for God's will in verse two. Now He states our past purpose of life. Verse two concluded with the idea that Christians now live to the "will of God." "Doing the will of the Gentiles" stands in contrast to doing the will of God. God rearranges our furniture.

The word "doing" implies in the Greek that we worked out fully the will of the Gentiles but came to a point where we closed that course of our lives.

The word "will" in "the will of the Gentiles" means that which we desire with the implication of accompanying some reasoned plan to accomplish the desire. "Gentile" is a synonym for a non-Christian. Non-Christians always rationalize their sinful way of life.

"Not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God" (1 Thessalonians 4:5).

Christians have a new passion. We no longer live like we used to live. If we do, we are phonies. We would need another dip. When God comes into our lives He rewires us. Our drives and desires, our likes and dislikes all change. Salvation revolutionizes character. The Savior changes us from the inside out.

Our former friends and life-style are now a thing of the past. We do not live for sin and Satan. We no longer immerse ourselves in that life style. We are aliens to that kind of living. Our new values do not allow us to yield to the customs of our culture.

Principle

We can reach a point of maturity when we can stand independent of the crowd.

Application

Most people are not independent of the crowd. If a group of people puts pressure on them, they cave into their will. They are herd bound. Once they get into the fast crowd, the peer pressure of the crowd itself will glue them to their destructive lifestyle.

when we walked

"Walked" signifies to go on one's way, to depart from one place to another, to go from one place to another. This is the Jet Set mentality. Some people run from Paris to Morocco to Hawaii seeking pleasure. On the local level some people run from one bar to another, from one party to another. They hang out in many places.

Life on the run is a characteristic of the fast crowd. They keep changing places to find something better. The search for greater pleasure eventually ends in emptiness. That is why they change locations. The old place of sin gets boring very quickly. Often they also change locations because of illegal operations such as drug use.

Note other uses for this same Greek word for "walk:"

"These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 16-18).

"Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3).

Asia Minor Christians walked in six ugly sins before they became Christians. These characteristics mark the will of the Gentiles. Those without Christ have strange standards. These standards change every day for the worse. Standards of morality and decency are disappearing in North American society.

Peter does not insinuate that all non-Christian people are marked by all six standards of the Gentiles. Many respectable non-Christians live without this lifestyle. Their sin is more respectable. Nevertheless they may be the most respectable people in the Lake of Fire. How would you like to be the most respectable person in Hell? Non-Christians love to plan their own lives (1:14). They fashion themselves by their own plans. They fashion themselves according to their lusts. Christians live by God's standards.

"Walked" in the Greek also means that we closed our former course of life at a point in the past. Our life before salvation is a closed matter. Old things have passed away. We now say goodbye to it forever. That chapter of life is done with.

in lewdness

Lewdness means excesses, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness; debauchery, sensuality. Lewdness is wanton or unabashed sensuality. These people parade their deviant sexuality not caring what people think of them. They have no concern about even their reputation, much less their character.

"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy" (Romans 13:13).

"Lewdness" may relate to the Phallic cult of that day. This cult participated in unrestrained sexual activity. This was a dominant religion of that day. Everyone wanted to belong to that church! Their goddess was Aphrodite (Greek name; the Romans called her Venus and the Semitic peoples called her Ishtar).

"Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19).

"For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

The behavior of these people completely lacks moral restraint. "Lewdness" usually carries the implication of sexual licentiousness or extreme immorality. They live like promiscuous dogs.

"Lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced" (2 Corinthians 12:21).

Some Christians in the church at Corinth were guilty of this sin.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness" (Galatians 5:19).

The prominent idea is shameless conduct. Lewdness takes part in actions that disgust and shock public decency. These people carry open outrage against decency. They tolerate no check or rein on their will.

Principle

Lewdness is characteristic of a society without any standards.

Application

Unrestrained obscenity and pornography are examples of lewdness. The Internet will launch unrestrained lewdness into greater influence in our world. Girls will unabashedly and provocatively portray their whole bodies to the entire world. The

filthier, the more blatant and flagrant, the more the pornography will spread. We give people what they want and what customers demand.

The world demands filth because it runs alienated from God. Without God, there can only be arbitrary standards.

lusts

"To lust" means to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else, to covet. The word "lusts" simply means passionate desires of any kind. When we direct our inner drive toward something outside the will of God we live for a purpose different from what God has planned.

Before becoming Christians we gave our thought life over to vile thinking, not only to sexual sins, but to bitterness, rivalry and many other mental attitude sins. Lusts cover many categories: power, approbation or money lusts. These things are equally the lusts of the flesh (Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16, 24; Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 2:18; 1 John 2:16).

The word "lusts" also describes the orientation of the soul, the natural tendency towards things evil. Such lusts are not necessarily base and immoral. They may be refined in character.

Principle

People who gratify their lust patterns do not develop toughness of soul when trial comes.

Application

When we live to gratify lusts, we will not develop toughness of soul. When suffering comes we will fall apart.

Using the passages below, evaluate your thought life.

"I have not coveted anyone's silver, gold, or clothing" (Acts 20:33).

"Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully" (Matthew 5:28).

"Many foolish desires" (1 Timothy 6:9).

"Youthful desires" (2 Timothy 2:22).

"The former desires when you were ignorant" (1 Peter 1:14).

"Do not gratify the desires of the body" (Galatians 5:16).

drunkenness

This word for "drunkenness" implies the consumption of a large quantity of wine. This is debauchery via drunkenness. "Drunkenness" comes from two words: overflow or bubble up and wine. The idea is to tie one on, to be stoned.

The Bible identifies drunkenness as a sin, not a disease.

"Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise"
(Proverbs 20:1).

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Principle

Drunkenness is not a disease but a volitional sin.

Application

Inebriation is clearly a sin in the Bible. No doubt certain people have a biological tendency toward drunkenness but this does not preclude personal responsibility.

We live in a victim oriented society. The idea of being a victim is that we are not responsible for what happens to us; something or someone else is responsible. As long as we use biological tendency as an excuse for drunkenness, we will delay recovery.

revelries

"Revelries" are wild parties, drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior. This is the Greek word for an orgy. People love engaging in revelries to carouse. They love to go to the night clubs and party. They treasure merry-making.

In the first century these people took to the streets with their parties. These parties were wild, furious and ecstatic. They carried torches and sang songs to Bacchus as they marched through the streets. Sex orgies were a big part of these parties.

"Revelries" occurs two times in the New Testament. In each of these two occurrences the New Testament associates "revelries" with drunkenness. Where you have one you always have the other.

"Let us conduct ourselves properly as people who live in the light of day; no orgies, no drunkenness" (Romans 13:13).

drinking parties

"Drinking parties" or drinking bouts involved unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior. Drinking parties signify not simply a banquet but a drinking bout.

This is the only place where this word occurs in the New Testament. A cocktail party is one thing but this is a riotous party. Wild things come out of these parties. Usually the longer the party goes the worse it becomes.

Some people can only have a good time when they tie one on. They are greater lovers, greater singers when under the influence of alcohol. They can quote poetry or play the piano. They also can become dangerous and stab someone. They cannot have a good time without liquor. What is a party without booze?

This sin and the previous sin are sins of the group. People in a group start out drinking and end in sex orgies because group psychology changes their conviction for the moment.

Principle

Sins of the group carry people further in sin that they would go as individuals.

Application

Do the people you hang out with influence you to do immoral things that you would not do as an individual? If this is so, change your friends. What is more important, your friends or your God?

and abominable idolatries

Idolatry in the first century was far worse than simple idol worship. The entire list of sins in this verse came with this idolatry. Also, brutality and debauchery were part of this worship.

The word "abominable" occurs in Acts 10:28 for that which is "unlawful." It pertains to what is bad and disgusting because idolaters love to do that which God does not allow. These people love to break the rules and go contrary to what is right. The forbidden is a lure for them.

Romans associates idolatry and immorality (Romans 1:22-25). Paul traces this to a lack of the gratitude to God. An idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas his idols represent (Galatians 4:8-9) and thereby to the different lusts of those gods (Titus 3:3).

Principle

We worship whatever is first in our lives.

Application

God hates idolatry even if the idol is yourself (Exodus 20:4-6; 1 John 5:21). Anything or anyone that takes the place of God in our lives is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

We may worship money (1 Timothy 6:10). Money is not the root of all evil, the love of money is the root of all evil. Money can cast a seductive spell on us. If we make \$100,000 a year we want to make \$200,000 a year. Money never satisfies us. We never have enough. Neither money nor fame can satisfy our heart. Many wealthy and famous people commit suicide.

If we have a closed Bible there is less likelihood that we will open ourselves to God's will. Our return to the Lord from idolatry will take longer. God must use some other means to get our attention. If we step into the pigpen, He may use a chisel, hammer or an automobile accident to get our attention. This is divine discipline.

What is first in your life? That is what you worship.

1 Peter 4:4

"In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you."

In regard to these

The "these" is the list of six values of the fast crowd of verse 3.

they think it strange that you do not run with them

"They" here is the fast crowd of verse 3.

"Run" means to run together with. Metaphorically it means to run a course of evil with others so as to be closely associated with them in a particular type of conduct. The fast crowd gathers together to live out the same values jointly. They get confidence from closely associating with each other. They justify what they do by mob thinking. The Devil's crowd does not tolerate anyone out of harmony with it's values.

The cults of Artemis and Demeter centered in Ephesus and the cults of Dionysius and Cybele in Phrygia and Pergamum are illustrations of these kinds of mobs.

The fast crowd depends on group influence so they want us to run "with" them. They maintain their course of evil by peer pressure. If you are going to be "with it," you must accept their extreme values.

It is surprising ("strange") to the fast crowd that the Christian broke away from them. They cannot imagine any value system other than their own. The fact that the Christian chooses values polar opposite to theirs' blows apart their assumptions about life. The mob is so closed in its view of life that when one of their crowd makes a decision like this, it is astonished. It seems so strange that a person would make this decision. It is a cause for wonder. They think you are crazy for leaving this party life. They wonder at this as something unusual. The Christian's testimony gets their attention.

Principle

God wants the Christian to run the race of life independent from crowd psychology.

Application

The mature Christian is free from mob thinking. Many people feel security in being herd-bound. Those who find their security in the mob will malign the person who stands independent from the mob. They deem independence to be an assault on mob values.

We are no longer the puppets of men when we stand independent from the crowd. We no longer please men as our central value. When we live for and suffer for the Lord, we free ourselves from that kind of slavery.

If we live for the Lord, who ultimately will judge us, we free ourselves from living for men. When mob pressure comes we can break away.

What gives a person this independence? Maturity comes from applying principle to experience. As we learn enough of the Word we become more independent from other influences in our lives.

in the same flood of dissipation

"Flood" is an extremely high point on a scale of extent: excessive, extreme. Literally, "flood" mean pouring forth or pouring out, then it came to mean wide stream. The classical Greek used this word of a tide that filled the pools lying off the beach. This is negative excess. The fast crowd would do anything, such as the things listed in verse 3.

The word "dissipation" portrays debauchery, profligacy, prodigality, wastefulness. Literally, "dissipation" is "unsavedness." Dissipated people have reached a point of incorrigibility (Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:6). They waste their life with profligacy and are prodigals. This word occurs three times in the New Testament and always refers to moral degradation.

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

"If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination" (Titus 1:6).

This behavior shows complete lack of concern for the consequences of actions. These people are reckless because they do not give thought to what they are doing. They are impulsive and therefore their behavior is senseless (Luke 15:13). The prodigal son lived without thought of the consequences of his actions.

"And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living" (Luke 15:13).

Principle

Radical living requires radical redress.

Application

Some people operate in debauchery and give no thought to the consequences of that life-style. The fast crowd thinks the Christian is nuts to leave their wild parties.

It does not pay for us to become promiscuous because we will ultimately face the consequences of our actions. In our day a consequence of debauchery is AIDS. There are other consequences such as having a jaded soul, making it hard to trust others. If we do not trust other people, we end in isolation from wholesome relationships.

The more jaded we become the more difficult it will be to overcome. Make a decision right now to leave that life of debauchery. Radical living requires a radical decision.

speaking evil of you

"Speaking evil" is literally to blaspheme but means in this context to malign. The fast crowd of verse 3 does not like Christians because the life of the Christian condemns them. People hate to have their sins exposed. The new life of a Christian stands in stark contrast to theirs so they love to rail at Christians.

"Having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (1 Peter 3:16).

They will slander you and lie about you. They will misquote you. They will try to do anything to ruin your testimony.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Principle

Dynamic testimony will draw criticism.

Application

The Christian's testimony threatens the value system of those who live without limits so the Devil's crowd will seek to injure your reputation. They will drop words to defame your character. They love to slander Christians because Christian testimony casts aspersions on the direction of their lives.

The surprise of the wild crowd causes them to slander Christians' new values and orientation. It seems incredible to them that you would walk away from a philosophy of pleasure: "Why lose all these pleasures?" They cannot comprehend this. "How can you go for that Jesus stuff?" They will use anything to ridicule Christians.

Do you care about what the fast crowd thinks about you? Are you in slavery to opinion or do you stand independent from the crowd? The group usually preys on people who do not have core to their character. They capture people who are swept along by the opinions of people. This is not true for the Christian.

The Christian who breaks off from the fast crowd becomes a point of conversion among the group. They crank up negative attitudes about this. The group develops bitter attitudes. They do not like to be jilted.

You may have to stand alone in the office or school. You may stand out like a speckled bird but when they come to a crisis they will remember you. When that divorce comes along they will remember that there is another alternative. Our testimony condemns them as nothing else could.

1 Peter 4:5

"They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

They will give an account to Him

The "they" are the Devil's crowd of verses three and four.

"Give" means to give back. The Devil's crowd will one day give an account to the Lord (maybe a verbal account). We can translate this phrase literally as "give back a word." However, a better translation is to give account. The fast crowd may not think that they are accountable to God now, but they will be accountable one day. None of

them will flee accountability for their immoral conduct. God will ask them to give an explanation of their behavior.

The first time Jesus came was not to judge, but the second time will be a different story. At His second coming He will come to judge.

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn [judge] the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22).

As God, Jesus must be absolutely righteous. As God, Jesus is omniscient and knows all the evidence. As God, Jesus is omnipotent and is able to execute thorough and swift judgment. The same Jesus who received judgment on the cross will be the Judge.

Principle

If God is just, there will be pay-day someday.

Application

Vance Havner used to preach a sermon called 'Pay-day Someday'. Everyone will render back to God an accounting of their lives.

Non-Christians will come to the end of life's short road. At that time, they will give back an accounting of their lives. Everything will come out -- all of their immorality, lies, thefts, blasphemy and murder. The central issue is not their sin, but whether they accepted the death of Jesus for their sin.

The issue at the Great White Throne Judgment for non-Christians is whether they accepted the finished work of Christ for their sin. If they did not do this, God will not admit them into His heaven.

who is ready

God will fulfill an obligation to Himself to judge. God does not expect people to live under a threat,

but He must be consistent with or true to Himself. We do not do what we do for the sake of doing good, but out of love for God. Thus, it is of the very nature of being related to God to be subject to requital or accountability. Sin works retribution against us. God conjoins accountability, love and forgiveness through redemption by the blood of Christ.

God holds Himself ready and prepares Himself to judge. He will leave no stone unturned.

to judge

"To judge" is in the future tense. Non-Christians will face the Great White Throne Judgment one day.

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Death is bad enough, but to face the judgment of Almighty God is worse.

the living and the dead

God will judge the "living" -- those unbelievers alive at the last judgment.

God will judge the "dead" -- unbelievers who died physically before the last judgment. God the Father gives the function of judgment to His Son to judge both the living and the dead.

"And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

God will judge non-Christians at the Great White Throne Judgment.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

Principle

Non-Christians will face accountability to God at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Application

If you do not know Christ these words must terrify you. There you will stand with all of your sins.

However, there is the wonderful news that Jesus paid for all of your sin, for all time, by His death on the cross. If you accept that truth by trusting God's promise, you will not face this judgment.