

1  **He's coming! Focus!**

1 PETER 4:7-11

2  **Remember**

- ▶ Peter has challenged the believers who are the readers of this letter.
  - ▶ They are scattered, they are persecuted, they are maligned, they are reproached, they are abused, they are suffering Christians.
- ▶ He has called on them (and us) to:
  - ▶ keep the basis of your faith, the Word of God
  - ▶ keep the focus of your faith, the person of Jesus Christ
  - ▶ keep the goal of your faith, holiness
- ▶ He calls us to live exemplary pure winsome joyful lives, even though you must suffer in the process.

3  **Why live the Christian life?**

- ▶ We are to focus on living the Christian life in this world because of:
  - ▶ Our PRECIOUS SALVATION (1:1 - 2:10) -- Our salvation is so precious it should demand the best out of you.
  - ▶ Our PRESENT SITUATION (2:11-4:6) – We are called upon to be a witnessing community, no matter how difficult it is.
  - ▶ Christ's PERSONAL SECOND COMING (4:7 – 5:11) – In this third section of Peter's letter, he reminds us that Christ's return is imminent.

4  **2<sup>nd</sup> Coming not a new idea**

- ▶ 1:4 – *There is an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, that will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*
- ▶ 1:13 -- *Therefore, when you have prepared your minds for action by being self-controlled, put your hope completely in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ.*
- ▶ 2:12 – *Peter talks about maintaining your good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in the things in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation.*

5  **Relate!**

- ▶ These verses sum up so much of what we are to be doing in our Christian lives, that we could spend a lot of time here.
- ▶ "It is only the Holy Spirit who in an economy of words can say an eternity of truth." – John MacArthur

6  **1 Peter 4:7-10(LEB)**

*Now the end of all things draws near. Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for your prayers. Above all, keep your love for one another constant, because love covers a large number of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Just as each one has received a gift, use it for serving one another, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.*

7  **1 Peter 4:11**

*If anyone speaks, let it be as the oracles of God; if anyone serves, let it be as by the strength that*

*God provides, so that in all things God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.*

8  **The Incentive**

9  **The finish line is ahead**

- ▶ After mentioning in 4:6 the Christians who had already died, Peter shows his readers that the goal line (the *telos*) draws near (ἤγγικε).
- ▶ *Telos* -- Not a time word. It doesn't mean the end or cessation of something temporary.
  - ▶ It means the goal, the consummation, the completion of our lives is just ahead. And that can only refer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ and our glorification with Him.
- ▶ *Āngike* – Imminent. “*Has drawn near*”

10  **Is the coming of Christ really near?**

- ▶ Paul commended the faithful Thessalonian church because they were waiting for Christ: *and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, the one who delivers us from the coming wrath.*
- ▶ But that was nearly 2000 years ago. So why does God's Word say that Christ's return is “at hand” or “imminent” or “has drawn near?”

11  **If Christians knew when Christ would return....**

- ▶ Still 70 years away – be lazy and indifferent knowing they would likely die before He returned.
- ▶ Just 2 weeks from now – they would be in a panic.
- ▶ So God decided it was best that we did not know. Acts 1:7 -- *But he said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority.”*

12  **Romans 13:11-12**

- ▶ *And do this because you know the time, that it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we believed. The night is far gone, and the day has drawn near. Therefore let us throw off the deeds of darkness and put on the weapons of light.*

13  **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**

- ▶ *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*
- ▶ A “twinkling” is the time it takes for light to bounce off your pupil. (Lot quicker than a wink.)

14  **The Instructions**

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOU ARE WAITING...

15  **3 key areas**

- ▶ Personal holiness – *be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer*
- ▶ Love – our relationship to others
- ▶ Service – our relationship to other members of the body of Christ to encourage them

16  **Be of saved mind and thoughts**

- ▶ Σωφρονέω – comes from a word “to make safe” and a word for “mind or thoughts”

- ▶ James 1:21 -- *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.* (ENGRAFT the Word!)
- ▶ Soul = mind, will, emotions
- ▶ Colossians 3:2 -- *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

17  **Isaiah 26:3**

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on thee: Because he trusteth in thee.*

18  **Be of sober spirit**

19  **Prepare for prayer**

- ▶ Because Jesus is coming soon, Christians are to be:
  - ▶ Clear-minded (*sōphronēsate*, lit., "be of sound mind"; cf. Mark 5:15)
  - ▶ Self-controlled (*nēpsate*, lit., "be sober"; cf. 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8)
- ▶ So that they are able to pray (cf. Eph. 6:18).
  - ▶ Prayer, of high priority in persecution, is to be clear, reasonable, sober communication with God.

20  **The best way to pray**

- ▶ Our best prayer times are when our thoughts are upon God's thoughts in His Word
- ▶ We hear from Him. We touch His heart by listening to Him.
- ▶ We think His thoughts after Him by meditating on the Word we have just read or engrafted.

21  **Above all else...love one another!**

- ▶ Peter says that after we (1) spend time with God in His Word, hearing His thoughts, and then (2) pray effectively because we are in communion with God, the first thing that should happen after that is that we show the Love of God to our family in Christ!
- ▶ It is our first priority among horizontal relationships. Our love = our credentials

22  **1 Corinthians 13**

*Love never ends.  
But if there are prophecies, they will pass away.  
If there are tongues, they will cease.  
If there is knowledge, it will pass away.  
... And now these three things remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

23  **Love each other 'til it hurts**

- ▶ Love each other deeply (4:8)
  - ▶ Deeply (*ektenē*, "stretched" or "strained") was used to describe the taut muscles of an athlete who strains to win a race.
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- ▶ Not "sloppy *agape*." But a demanding, intense, sacrificial love.

24  **How do you love intensely?**

- ▶ "The answer is by crossing the barriers of human emotion.
- ▶ "That is to say loving the unlovely, the unlovable, loving your enemies, loving those who have not treated you kindly, loving when it doesn't seem rational, doesn't seem reasonable, loving to the point of sacrifice that it costs you something, costs you much, maybe costs you everything.

25  **How do you love intensely? (2)**

- ▶ "The kind of love that requires all your spiritual muscle, stretching to love the unlovable in spite of insult, in spite of injury, in spite of being rejected, in spite of being treated unkindly, ungraciously, in spite of being treated with hostility, in spite of being misjudged, mistreated and misrepresented. That's fervent love."
- ▶ -- John MacArthur, 2014

26  **Love covers a multitude of sins.**

- ▶ *Covers over* (*kalyptei*, lit., "hides")
  - ▶ This kind of strenuously maintained love is not blind but sees and accepts the faults of others (cf. Prov. 10:12; 1 Cor. 13:4-7).
- ▶ If as a church we ever get to where we are running around poking at each other's sins, we are destroyed.
- ▶ While we are in this flesh, we will sin.

27  **Love covers sins (2)**

- ▶ Only love will keep us together
- ▶ Love is always hiding, *kalupto* (continued action)
  - ▶ It is aware of the sins and hurts of others and does not bring them up for discussion.
  - ▶ To put it simply, love forgives and forgives and forgives and forgives and forgives and if we don't have that in the church, we're in real trouble.

28  **It didn't come easy for Peter**

- ▶ The Jewish Talmud (rabbinical commentary) said you had to forgive someone 3 times for the same sin
- ▶ Peter was showing off how magnanimous he was when he said to Jesus, "How often must we forgive someone, 7 times?"
- ▶ Blown away when Jesus said, "Until 70 x 7" – in other words, "until you lose count"

29  **Compassion, not criticism!**

- ▶ Some commentators have struggled with the meaning of "cover a multitude of sins"
- ▶ But it is clearly in the context of our relationships with one another.
- ▶ Just as God's love covers our sins permanently when we received the gift of salvation paid by Christ's death, our love for one another must cover over the sins of others. Our focus must be COMPASSION, not CRITICISM.

30  **What about you?**

- ▶ What will be your eulogy?
- ▶ Will you be known as someone who showed COMPASSION rather than CRITICISM?
- ▶ If Christ were to return today, would He be pleased with your stewardship of His grace? Or would you be ashamed of what He would find?

31  **Serve through hospitality**

- ▶ Show hospitality willingly – not grudgingly
- ▶ Hospitality is considered to be a spiritual gift here (4:10).
- ▶ Peter reminds us that each of us is to serve (*diakonountes*; cf. *diakonos*, “deacon”) or minister to others.
- ▶ The phrase faithfully administering (*hōs kaloi oikonomoi*) could also be translated “as good stewards.”
  - ▶ A “steward” was one who served as a house manager; he had no wealth of his own, but distributed his master’s wealth according to his master’s will and direction.