

INTRODUCTION

The attitude that the early believers had was one of expectancy

Our responsibility as believers is to **LONG FOR, LOOK FOR , AND LIVE FOR** the coming our LORD! We must all live with an ATTITUDE OF EXPECTANCY!

How we live and serve Him today will determine our joy in the day He does return and our rewards at the judgment seat of Christ that follows His return!

We must be wide awake, **LOOKING for our LORD at any moment!**

Here in *1 Peter 4:7-19*, Peter gives us some things that we should be doing because, as he puts it, **THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND!**

Last week we looked at three things:

I. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE NEED TO BE SOBER! (4:7a)

The word “sober” means “to be of sound mind, that is, sane.”

We must live our lives as if Christ might return at any time, yet we must still be planning for the future and continue serving until He does come!

II. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD WATCH UNTO PRAYER! (4:7b)

If we are “sober-minded” we will be watching unto prayer!

“Watching unto prayer” means to be alert in our prayer life!

III. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD HAVE FERVENT CHARITY (OR LOVE) AMONG OURSELVES! (4:8)

As believers, our love for each other is what should differentiate us from the rest of this world! Our love for each other won’t be what it should be if our love for Jesus is not what it should be!

A. This Love Must Be Fervent—(Vs. 8a)

B. This Love Must Be Forgiving (Vs. 8b)

C. This Love Must Be Hospitable. (Vs 9)

D. This Love Must Be Serving. (Vs 10-11)

“Minister” means “to be a servant.”

God Has Given Each Of Us Some Things To Serve With?:

Time, Testimony, Spiritual Gifts, Treasure, Talent

This morning I want us to look at four additional things here:

IV. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD BE READY TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST’S SAKE! (4:12-14)

Some might argue that we live in the land of the free and home of the brave! Thank God we are! But if you haven’t noticed that attitudes are changing toward true Believers in Christ and Churches that stand for the Truth, you’ve not been paying attention!

I’ve been saying the whole time I’ve been here that I believe that many Believers in our land could very well see some persecution before the Lord comes back to take us out of here!

Anti-Christian sentiment is at an all time high in our land and the Christian Law Association acknowledges that to be reflected in the increasing number of court battles they now facing with Believers being attacked in our justice system with lawsuits!

But listen, Paul told Timothy that persecution is a part of the Christian Life! Those who determine to live godly lives, will face persecution and possibly suffering to some extent!

2 Timothy 3:12—“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

But we need to understand that suffering, persecution, and trials are for our benefit. Don’t be confused about that!

Romans 8: 28—“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Trees must be pruned to get the best out of them!

Gold and silver must be refined with fire or heat to purify them!

Grain must be sifted to separate the chaff from that which is good!

THE END IS AT HAND—PART 2
1 PETER 4:7-19

So also, the Lord tests and tries His children that they may develop their true potential and reflect their Maker's glory!

What benefits do these things bring to our lives?:

A. They Make Us More Like Christ! (1 Peter 1:5-9)

The more we are like Christ, the better our resurrection in Him will be!

B. They Teach Us Patience And Help Us To Grow! (James 1:2-4)

We could say that ADVERSITY IS GOD'S UNIVERSITY!

When we suffer, and do so patiently, we grow and become more like our Saviour!

Suffering also gives to those watching us a wonderful testimony of our LORD Jesus Christ. (*Vs 14b*)

There is nothing that honors God more than our praising Him in times of tribulation and testing.

V. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN THAT WHICH DAMAGES OUR TESTIMONY FOR CHRIST! (Vs 15)

The context here is **comparing and contrasting suffering for Christ's sake or suffering because we are involved in the wrong kinds of things!**

If you suffer as a MURDERER, the LORD will NOT be glorified!

If you suffer as a THIEF, the LORD will NOT be glorified!

If you suffer as an EVILDOER, the LORD will NOT be glorified!

“EVILDOER” = a bad-doer; (special) a criminal!

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(Think the “*works of the flesh*” that are listed in *Galatians 5:19-21* “19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Also, if we are a BUSYBODY IN OTHER MEN'S MATTERS, the LORD will NOT be glorified! Don't be a meddler!

These are things we should not be involved in because it damages our testimony for the LORD! Be busy in the things of the LORD!

VI. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED TO SUFFER ON CHRIST'S BEHALF! (Vs 16)

Our LORD gladly bore shame for us, we should gladly bear shame for Him and not be ashamed of Him!

He was BETRAYED,

He was FORSAKEN BY FRIENDS,

He was FALSELY ACCUSED,

He was SPAT UPON, MOCKED, AND BUFFETED,

He was received an UNJUST VERDICT at His trial,

He was SCOURGED,

He was STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHING,

He was CRUCIFIED,

He was NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS!

Look at Acts 5:38-42.

We need men and women today who are not ashamed to stand up for Jesus Christ and the principles of The Word of God!

Luke 9:26—“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, Of him will the son of man be ashamed...”

What gave the Apostles and early Christians the boldness to stand up for Jesus? It was the Holy Spirit!!! (*Acts 8:1-4*)

2 Timothy 1:7-8a—“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;”

VII. BECAUSE THE END IS AT HAND, WE SHOULD BE READY TO STAND BEFORE GOD AT ANY MOMENT! (4:17-19)

All of us will one day stand before a Holy God to give an account of ourselves to Him! Unbelievers will stand before the LORD at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Revelation 20:12-15 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

All who have not repented of their sin and believed on the Gospel of Jesus Christ for their salvation will be there!

Believers, on the other hand, will stand before the LORD at the Judgment Seat of Christ! (e.g. The song “Face To Face”)

2 Corinthians 5:10-11—“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

How we fair on that day depends on us! What have we done with the opportunities and talents He has given us!

Look at 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

Because God's Judgment will begin “at the House of God” (*Vs 17*), it should motivate us to be as pure, and holy, and obedient as possible!

Peter Gives Us Two Things To Keep In Mind Since We Must Appear Before God:

A. We Must Be Mindful Of Our Estate As Well As Those That Are Lost! (Vs. 17-18)

Every second of every day people are slipping off into eternity!

Peter says, “*If the righteous scarcely be saved (v18a).*”

The word “*scarcely*” means “*with difficulty!*”

Now we know that there are some that will “*scarcely be saved*” i.e. They will be saved “*yet so as by fire!*” Everything they lived for will go up in smoke!

But that is not what this is talking about. This is talking about the possibility of our having to go through great trial and difficulty before we are delivered to our Heavenly home.

Our times of trial and persecution are times of opportunity for us to witness to our persecutors!

Remember the Philippian jailer who came to Christ in *Acts 16:25-34?*

It was not the earthquake which brought the Philippian jailer to the LORD, it was Paul's and Silas' testimonies and loving concern for him that brought him to faith in Christ.

THE END IS AT HAND—PART 2

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B. We Must Commit The Keeping Of Our Souls To God Even In The Midst Of Suffering For Christ's Sake! (Vs. 19)

As Believers, we must trust Christ through whatever comes our way for Christ's sake!

Conclusion:

How much time do we have left here on this earth? Only God knows!

Are you ready to meet God should He call you home today? Are you saved?

Are you sure? Don't put it off!

2 Corinthians 6:2—“ . . . now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

We who are saved must not waste the time that God does give to us, but we must make the best use of every opportunity we have to serve Him!

Ephesians 5:16 says that we should be, “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*”

Let us by the Grace of God, do all we can for His Glory! **Let us be willing to suffer, serve, share, and speak out for Him!**

Are you making the most of the things of which God has given you?

Remember we are stewards for God; and 1 Corinthians. 4:2 says, “*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful!*”